

Graduate Outcomes in Irish Higher Education: enhancing the evidence base

Valerie Harvey
Head of Performance Evaluation
Higher Education Authority





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
- Internationalisation
- Research policy
- Teaching and learning
- Statistics and data analytics



Higher Education Authority

My areas of responsibility include:

- Graduate Outcomes Survey
- StudentSurvey.ie
- European surveys
- Institutional and System Performance
- Data Sharing projects



Let's talk about

Graduate outcomes and the evidence base:

- What does Ireland's skill and education supply look like today?
- What can we learn from the past?
- What does the future hold? Are we prepared?

Other non-employment outcomes

Building the evidence base in the HEA

Current skills supply in Ireland

2.8m people in employment in Q2 2025 (up 64k over 2024)

Approx 45% in “highly skilled” occupations

More likely to have employees in Professional Occupations, Managerial Occupations than European average

140k unemployed (up 7% or 9,600) - rate of 4.8%

Source: Labour Force Survey, CSO, Q2 2025; Solas SLMRU, National Skills Bulletin, 2024; and Cedefop Occupational Employment in Sector 2023



- The total number of jobs created in Q2 2025 was 172,643, a decrease of 1,369 (0.8%) when compared with Q2 2024.
- There were 88,935 job destructions in Q2 2025, which was 7,623 (9.4%) more than the number recorded 12 months earlier.

Fresh CSO data confirms 'silent slow down' as jobs growth stalls and losses accelerate



[HOMEPAGE](#) / [BUSINESS](#) / [ECONOMY](#)

Job cuts up by over 9% while number of jobs created falls

The results 'point to a more cautious hiring environment'





Current graduate supply

52.4% of working-age Irish adults have a third level qualification.

Over 265,000 students engaged in full-time third level education.

Over 450,000 people are engaged in life-long learning (rate of 16%, around the European average)

Source: CSO, Measuring Ireland's Progress 2023, April 2025
and

Source: Solas SLMRU, Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply, March 2024



Employer satisfaction

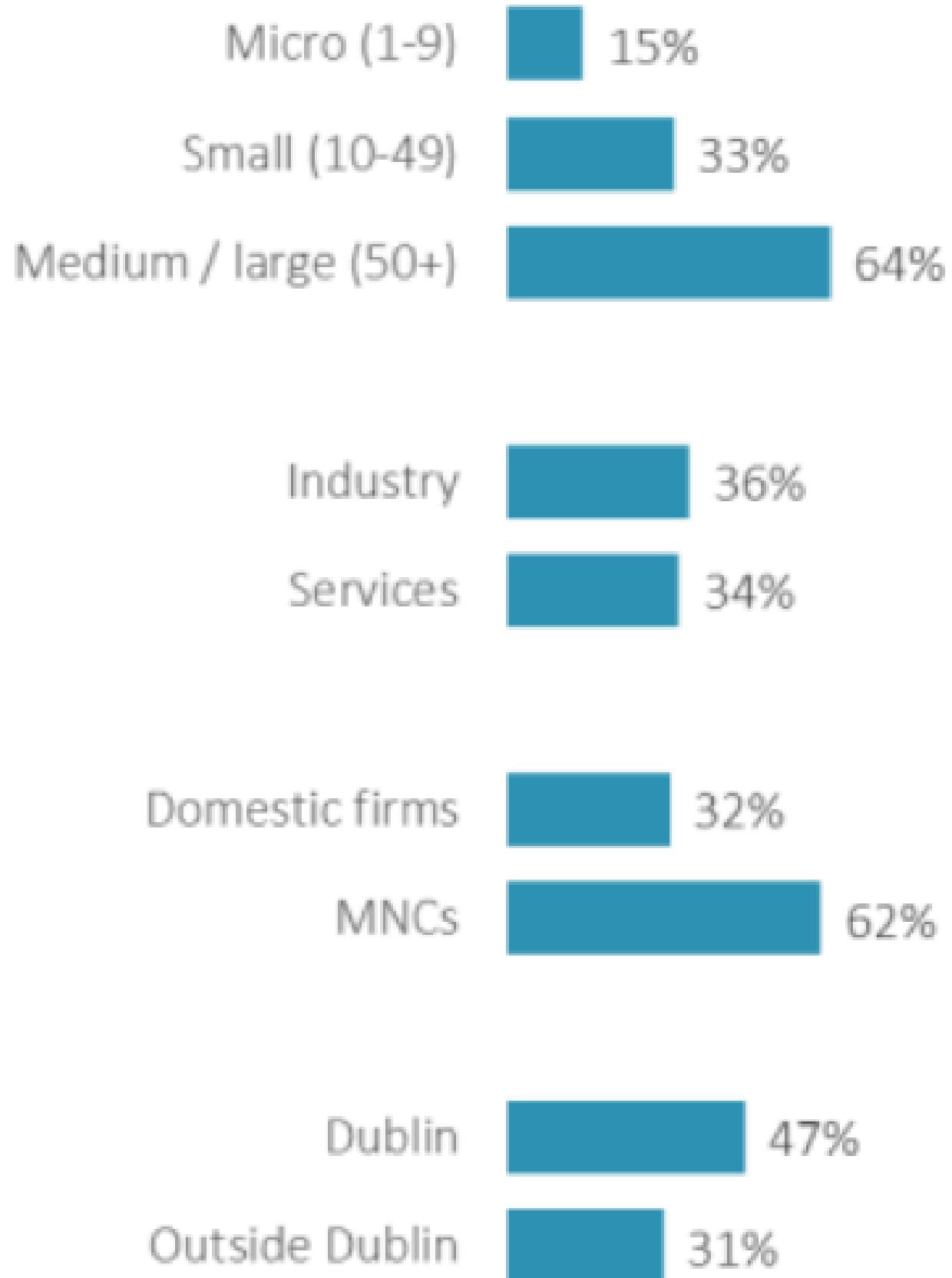
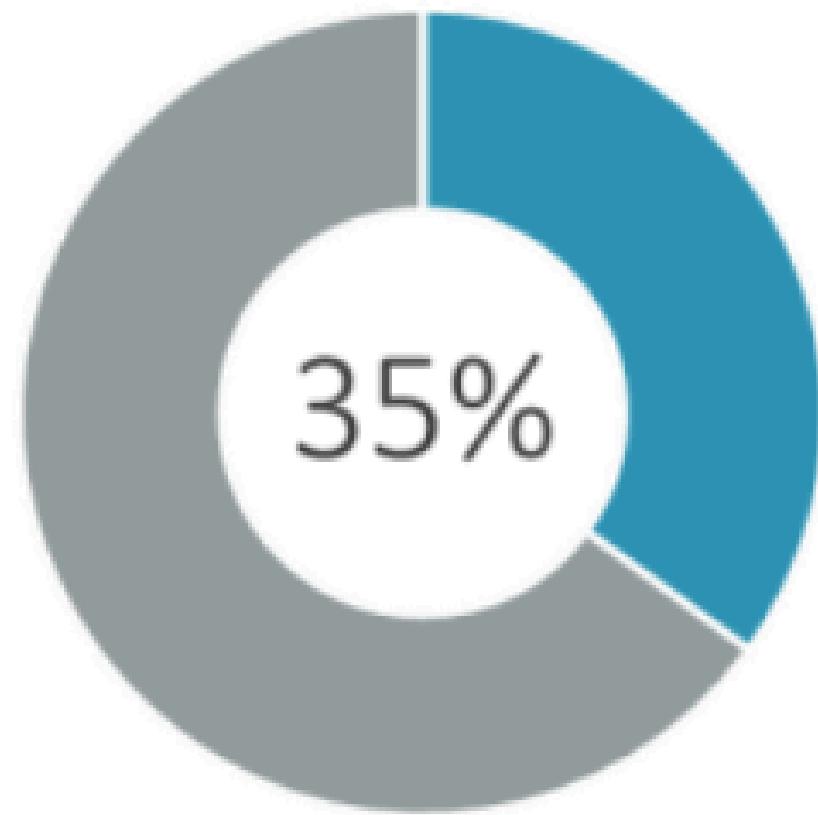
80% of employers are happy with higher education graduates, particularly for:

- Digital literacy
- Data literacy
- Collaboration
- Time management
- Flexibility

Lowest satisfaction for:

- Multilingualism
- Leadership

Businesses that recruited HE grads in past 2 yrs



Employers

35% of employers recruited higher education graduates in the previous two years.

Over half (51%) of employers indicated they are likely to recruit HE graduates in the next three years, with recruitment intentions highest among:

- those that have hired HE graduates previously (91%),
- medium/large companies (80%), and
- MNCs (71%).



Current skills supply Ireland

High levels of employment (seeing some increasing unemployment very recently)

- Strong pipeline of graduates
- Professional occupations
- Profile of graduate employment is larger, multinational companies, based in Dublin

Generally high levels of employer satisfaction (though decreasing)



"The shape and size of the modern HE system is rooted in its relationship with the labour market... Higher education is positioned at the heart of the 'knowledge triangle' of education, research and innovation designed to improve competitiveness and economic growth."

Source: Clancy, Irish Higher Education, A Comparative Perspective, 2015

"Research, higher education and innovation are not adjuncts to Ireland's economic strategy – they are the strategy"
– Minister James Lawless (Minister for Higher and Further Education)

1982 - 1997



1982 - 1997

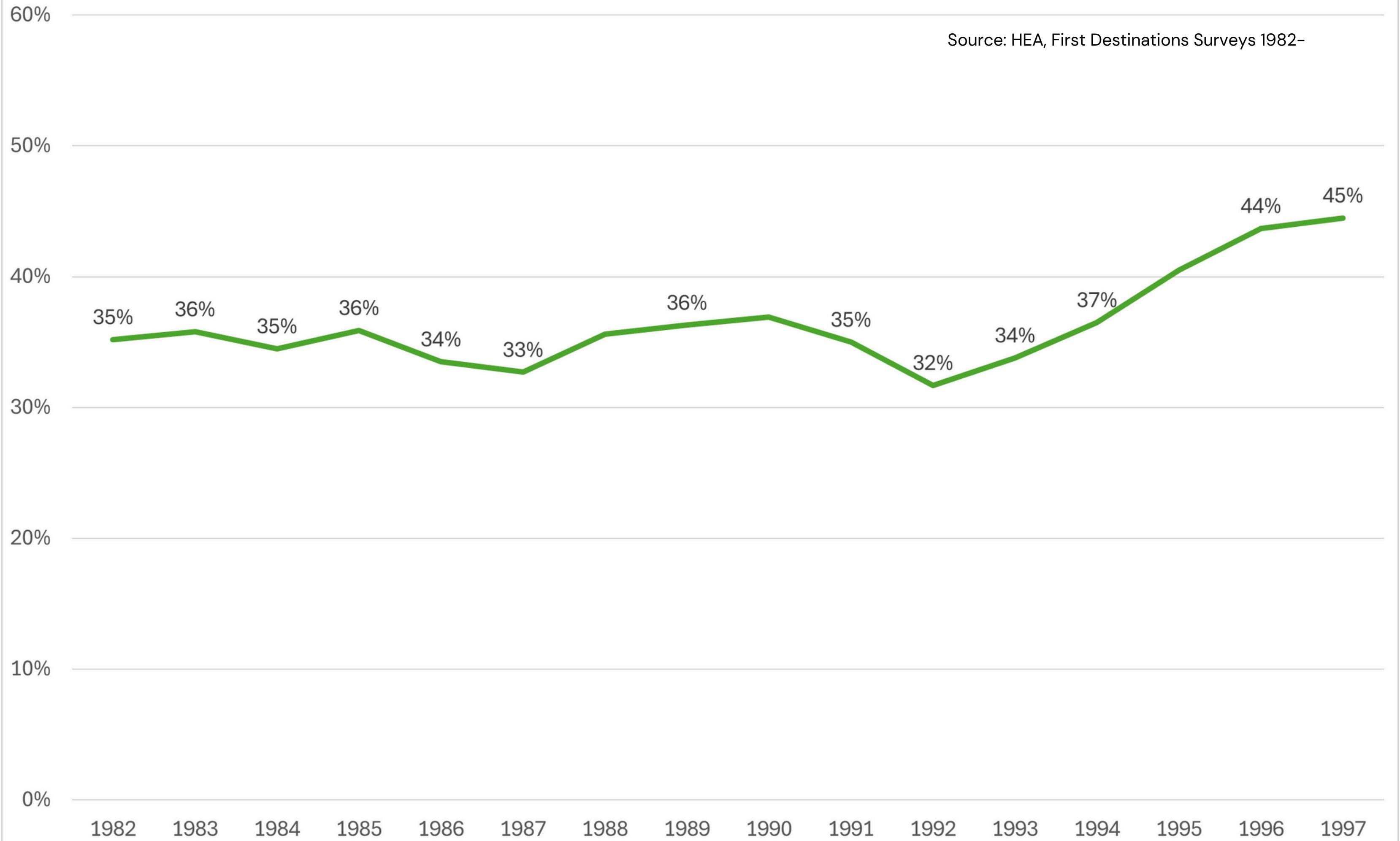
National debt reached 120% of GNP in 1988.
National borrowing reached 14% of GNP.

Mortgage interest rates reached 16% in 1982
(compares with 4% today).

Unemployment rate went from 10% to 17%
during the course of the 1980s. A total of
450,000 people emigrated.



Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1982-1997



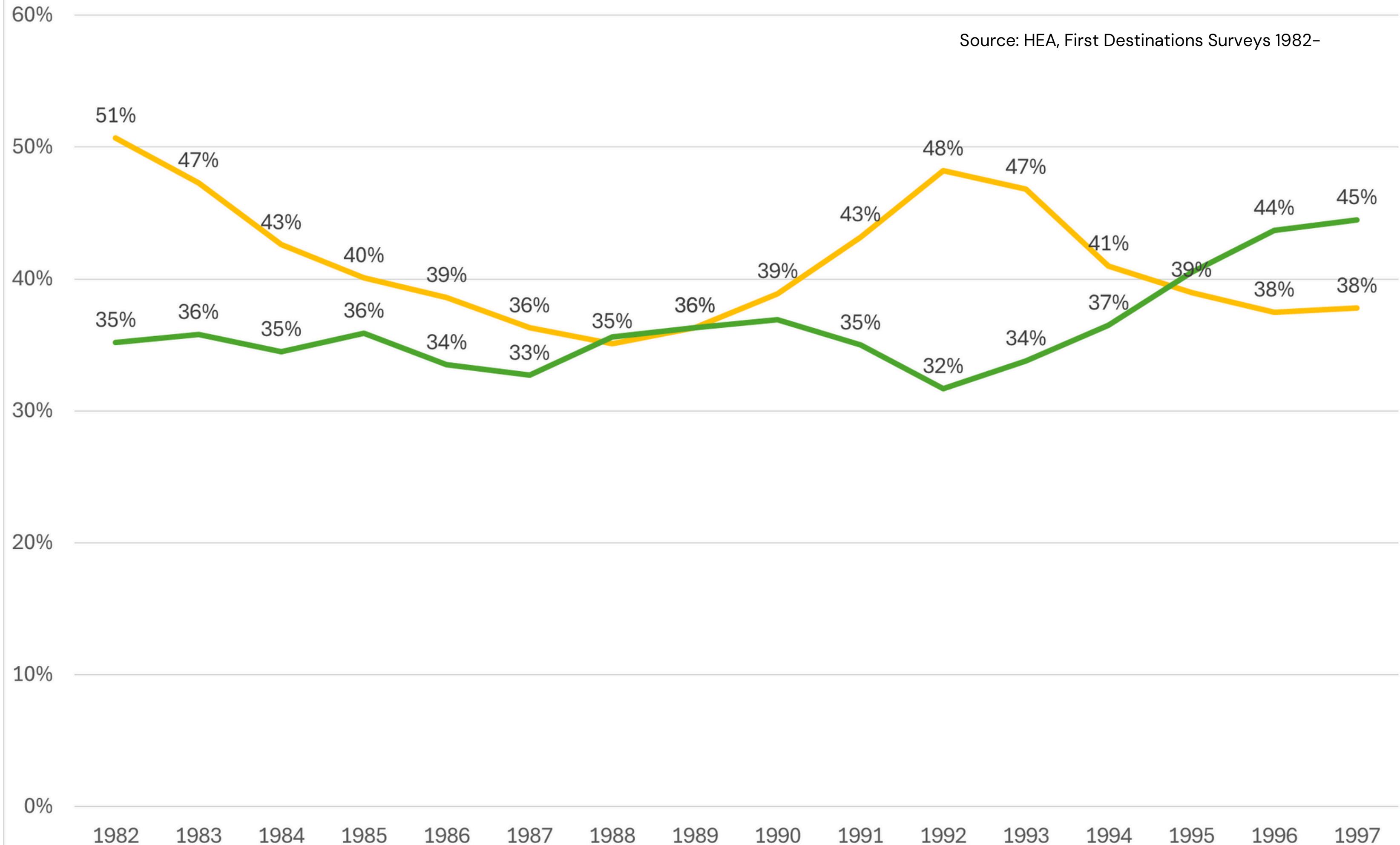
Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1982-1997

Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-



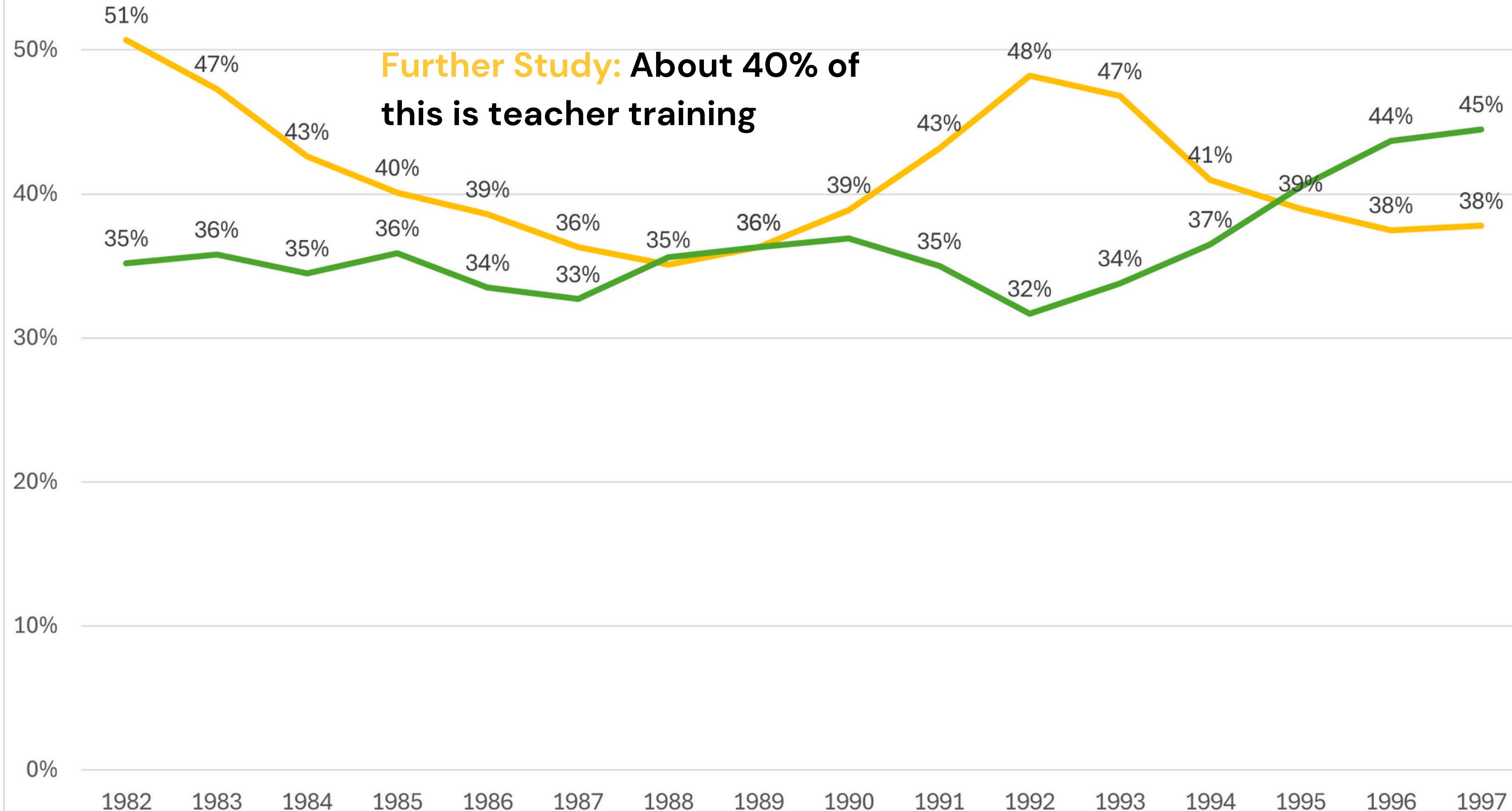
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Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-



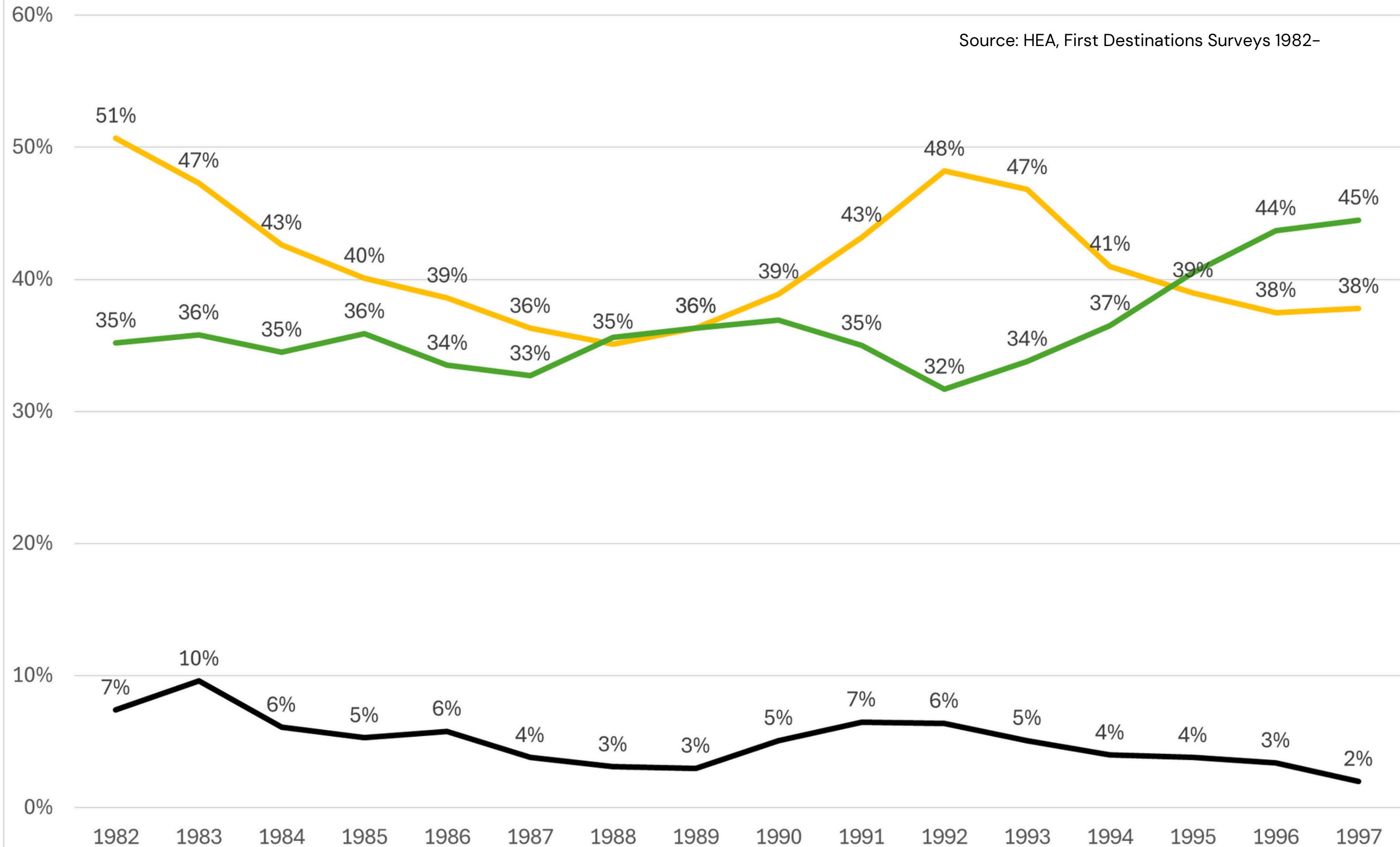
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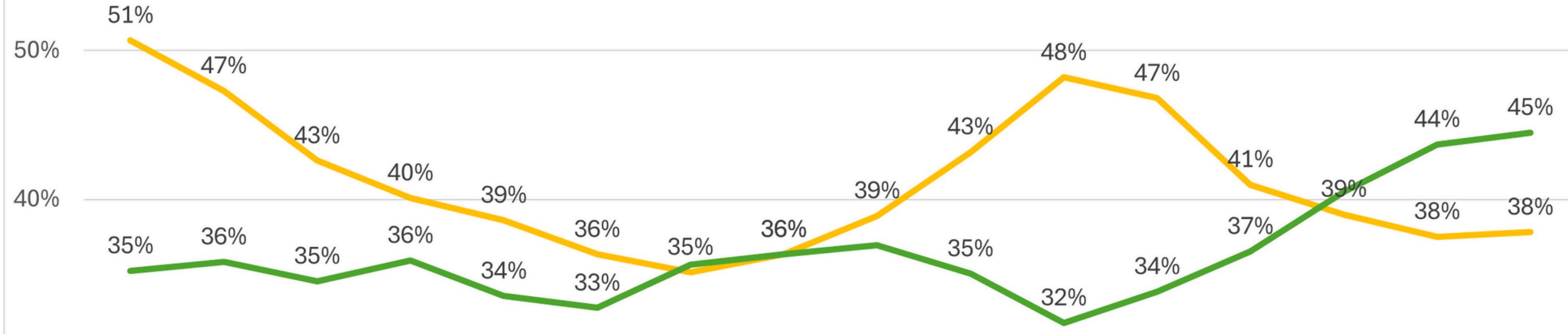
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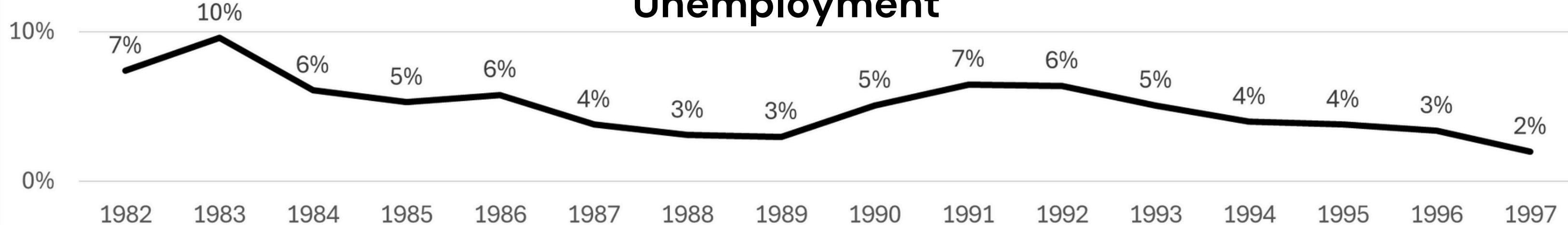


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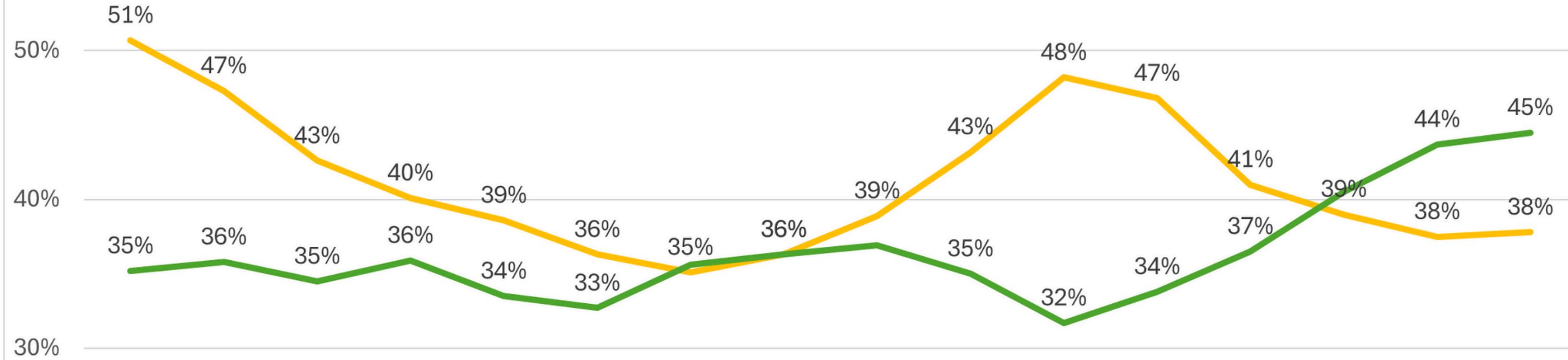


Unemployment

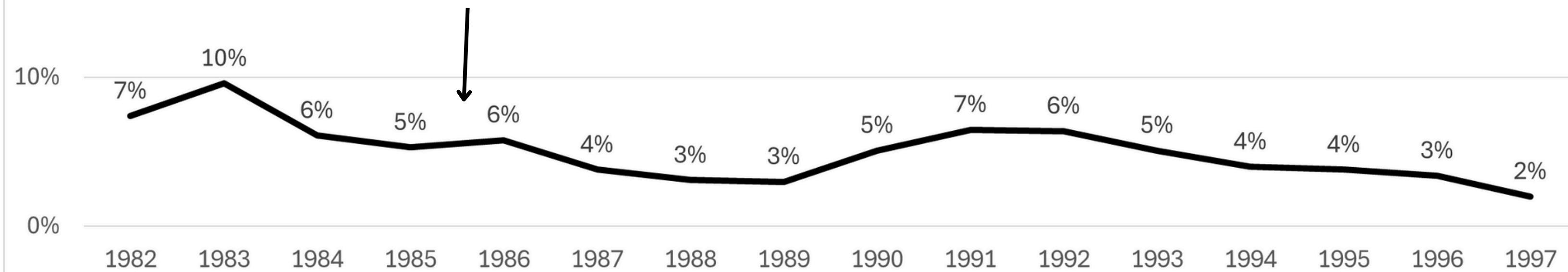


Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1982-1997

Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-

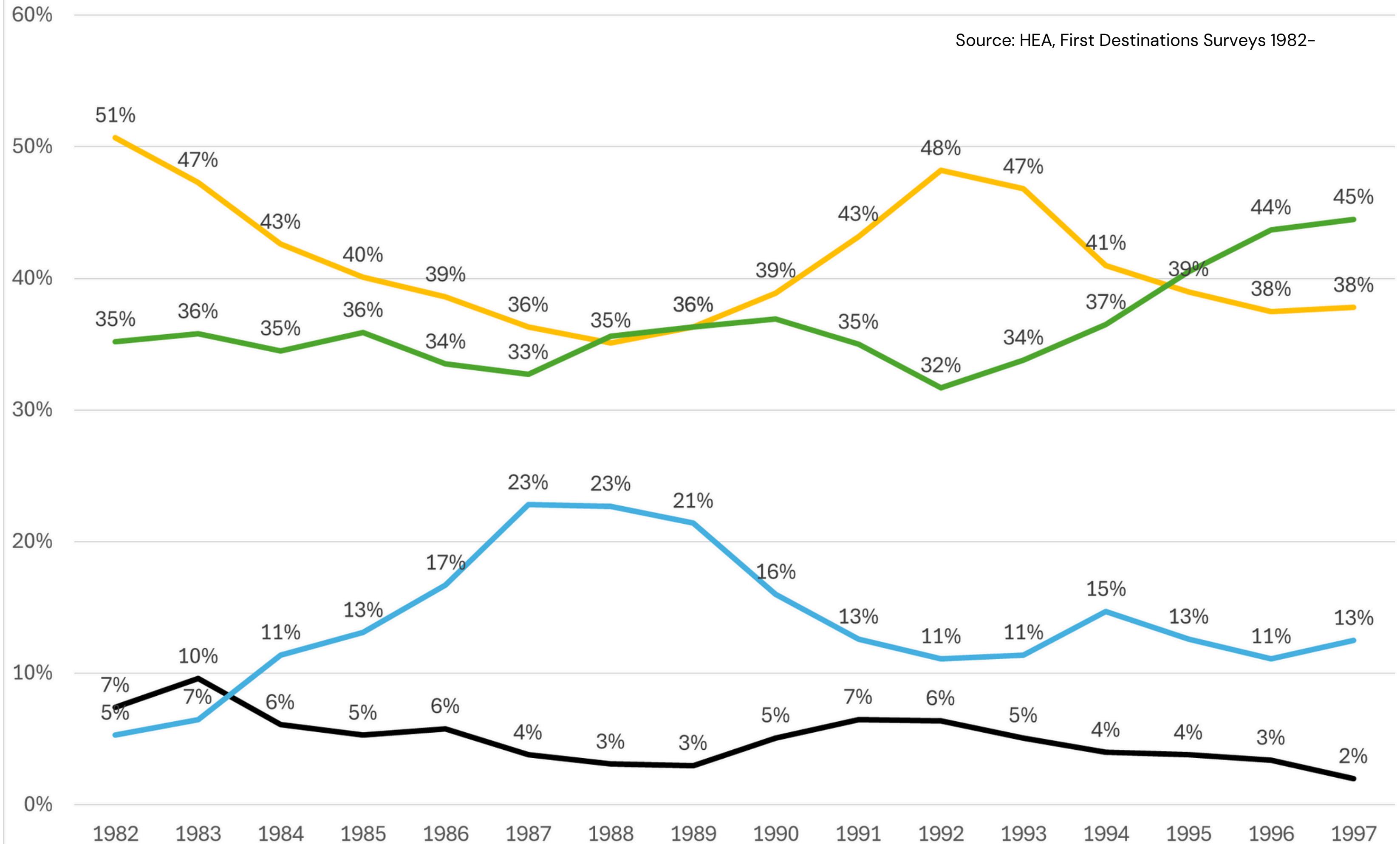


National unemployment rate reached an all time high of 17.3% percent in December of 1985



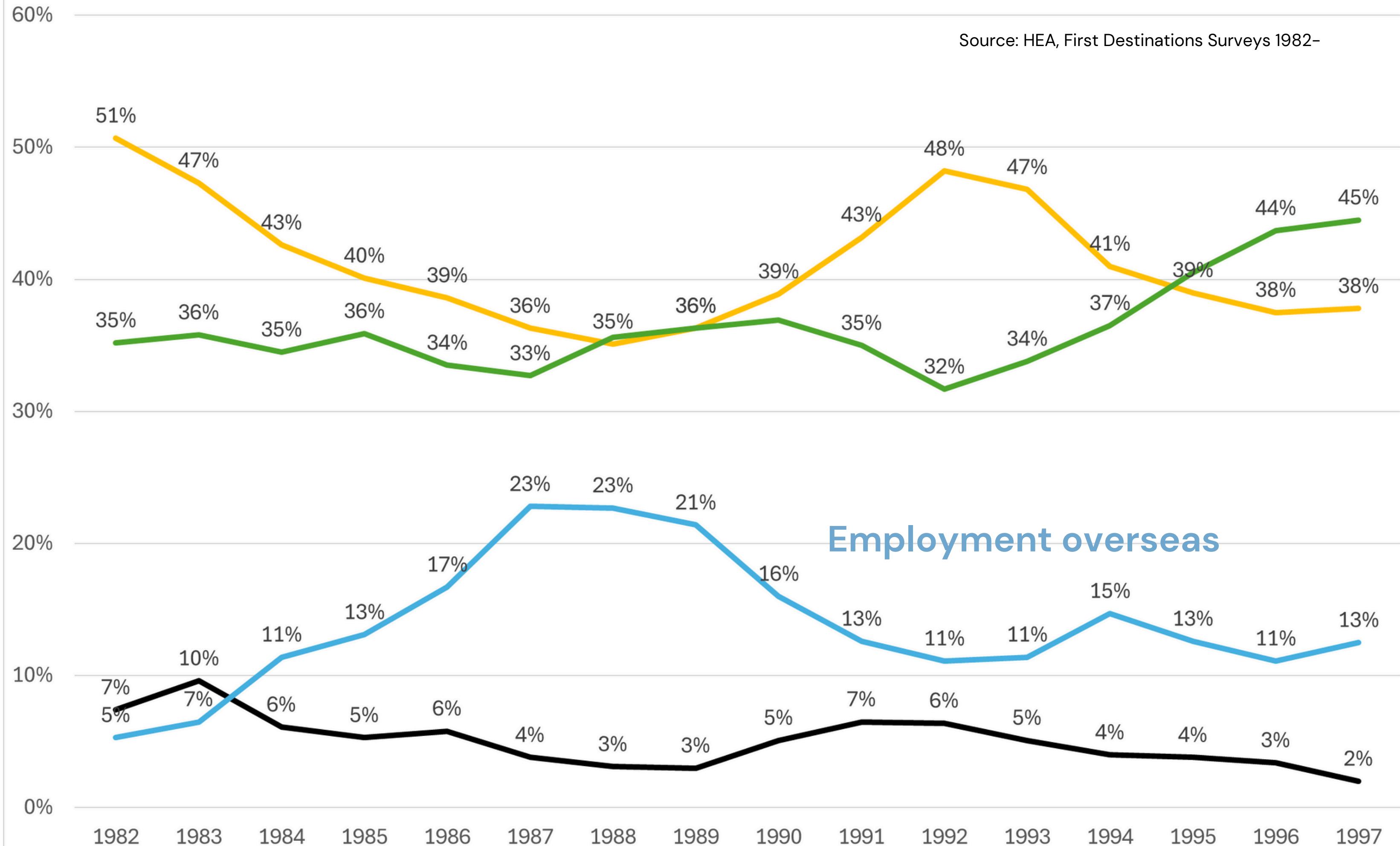
Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1982-1997

Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-



Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1982-1997

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1998-2008



1998-2008

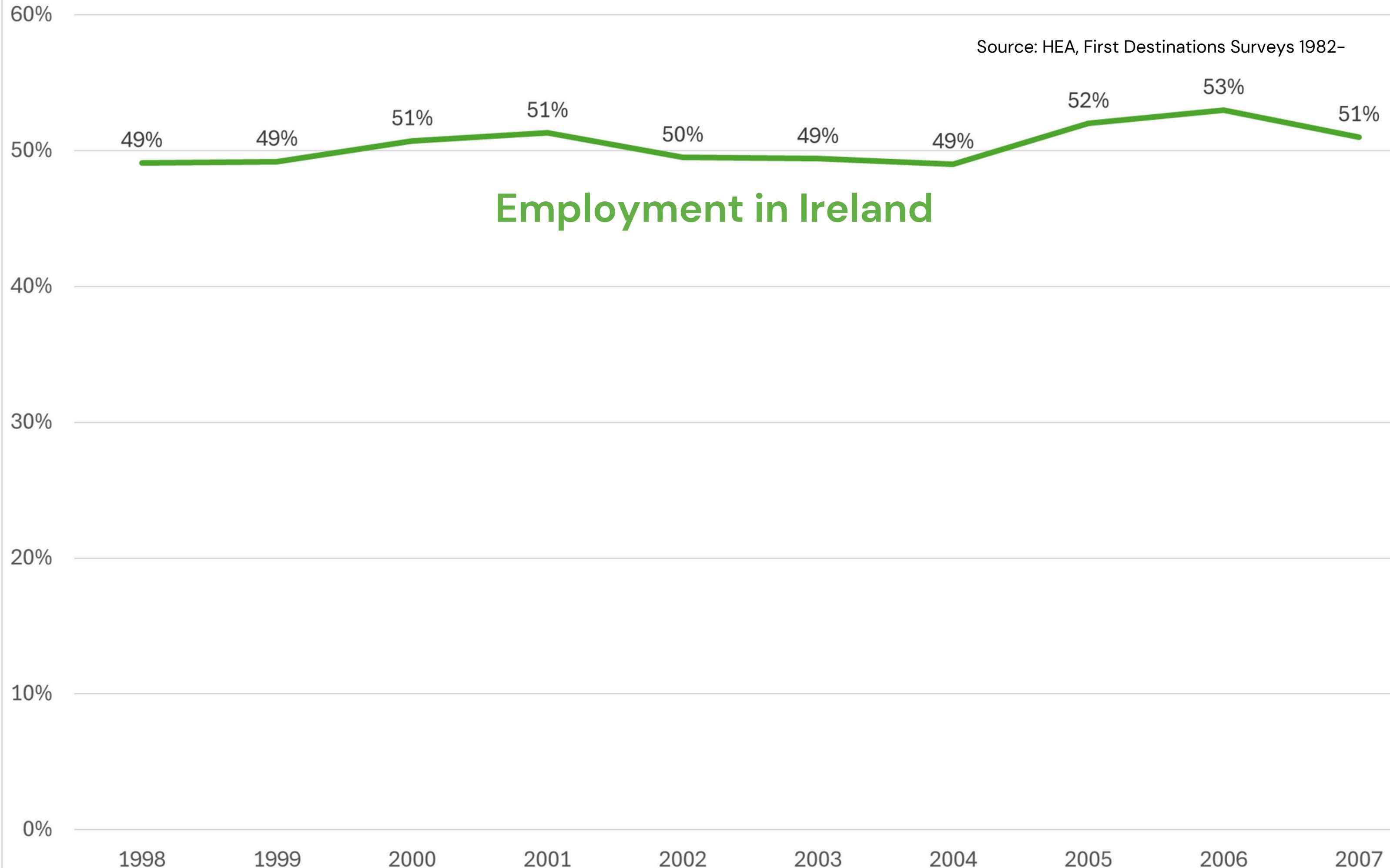
Rapid economic growth

Decline in national debt

Big increases in GDP

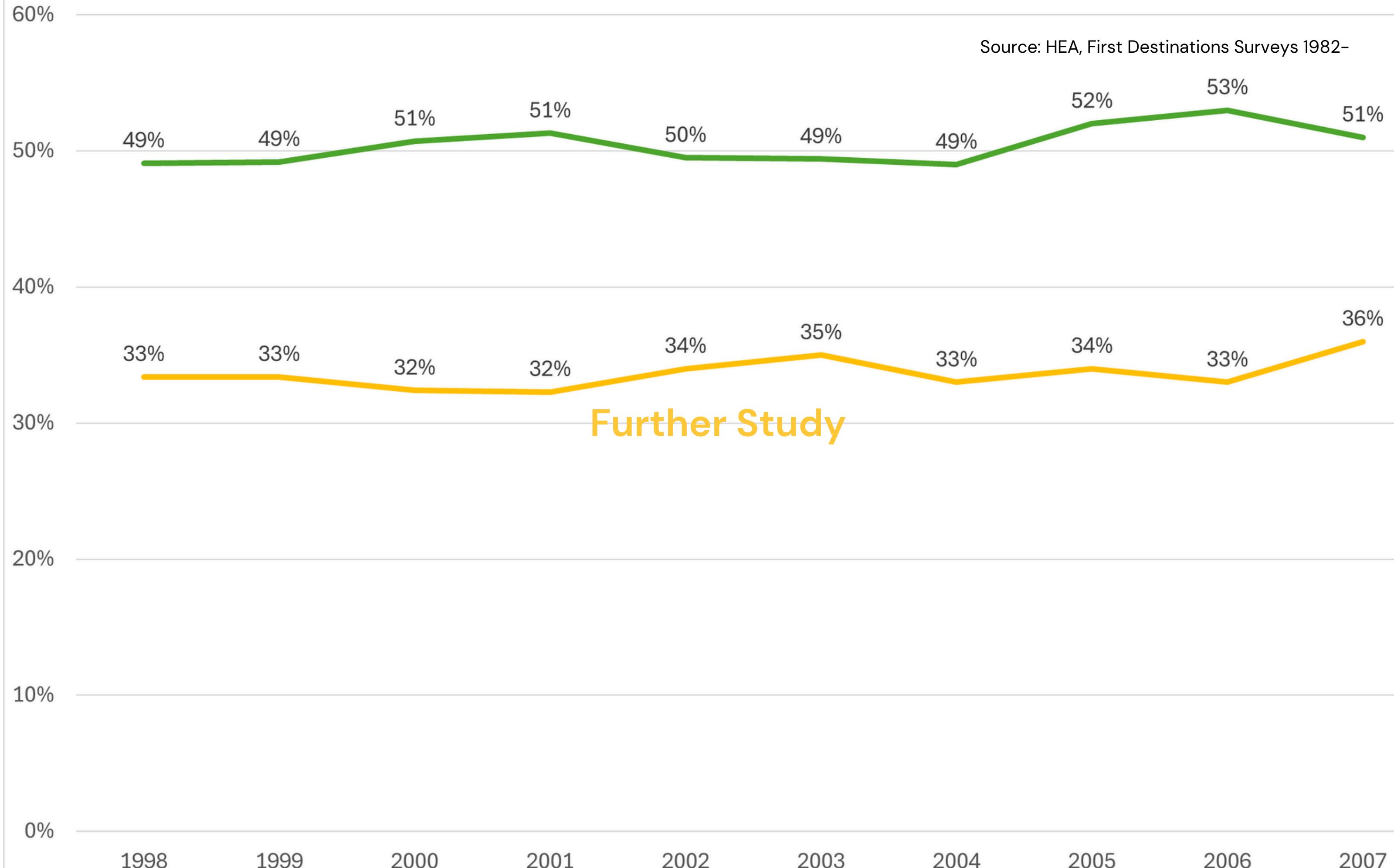
Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1998-2007

Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-



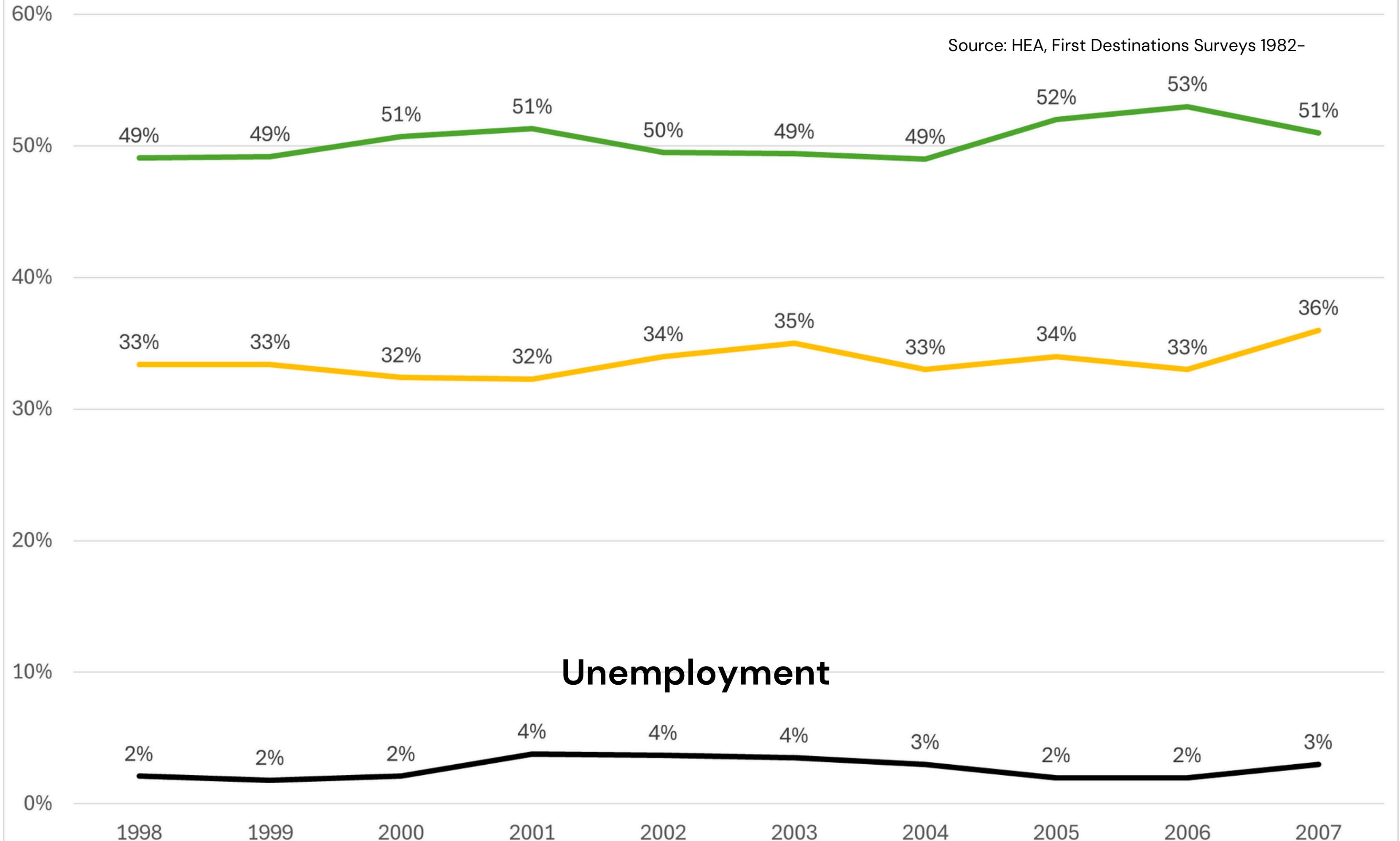
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Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-



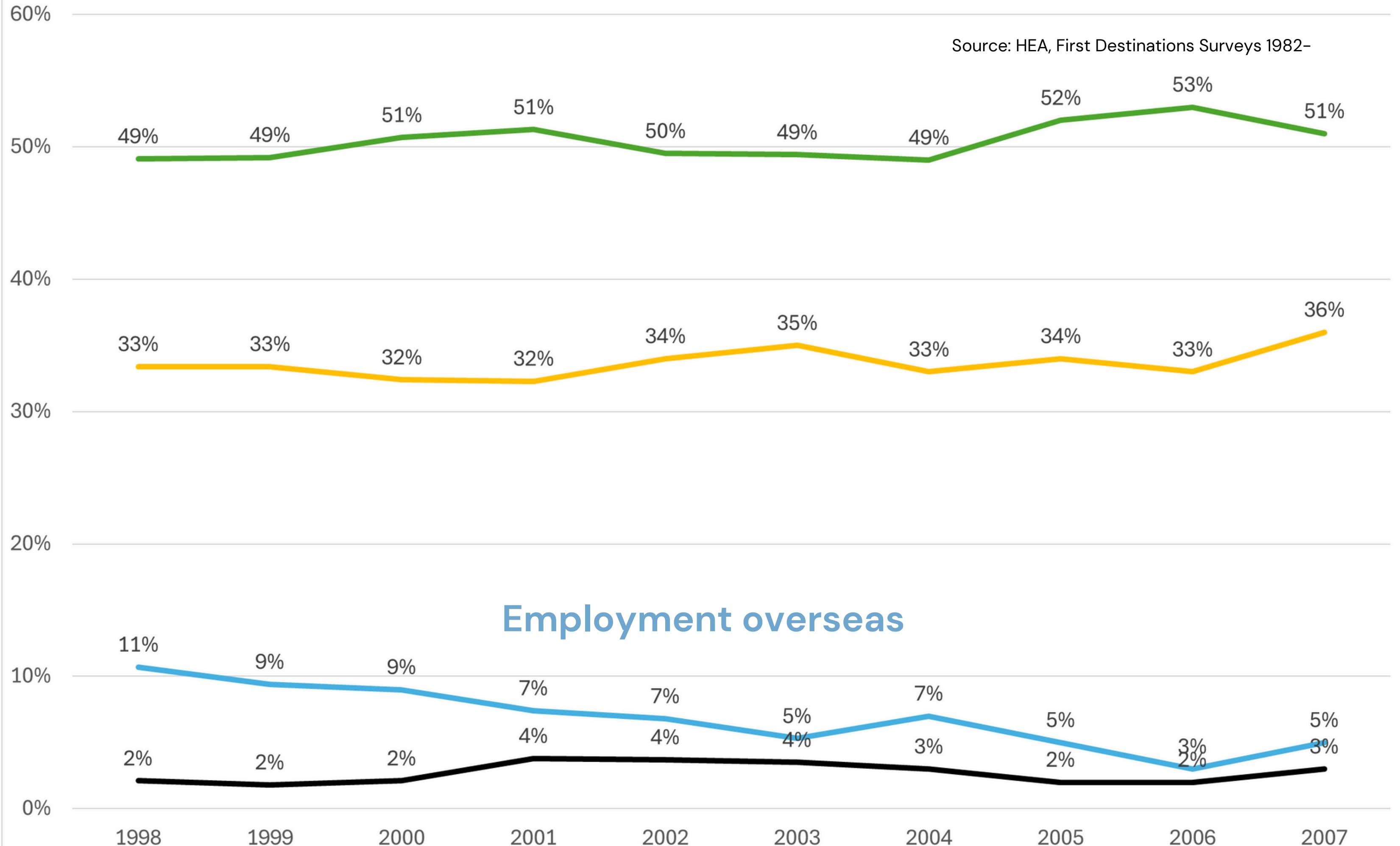
Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1998-2007

Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-



Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 1998-2007

Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-





2008-2016

2008–2016: Financial Crisis and Recovery

Banking collapse / guarantee

Recession and bailout by
EU/ECB/IMF and austerity
measures

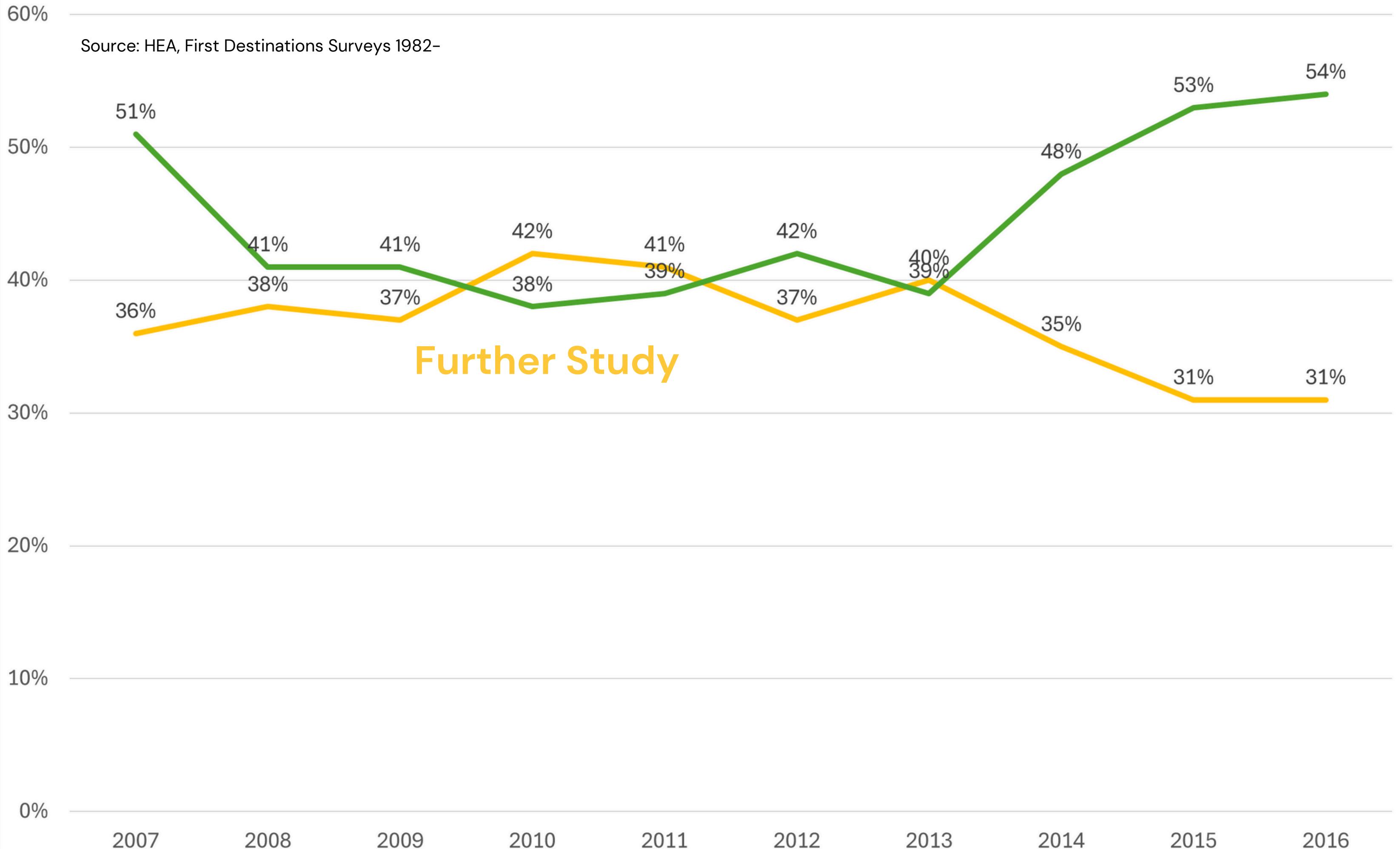
Rapid rise in unemployment



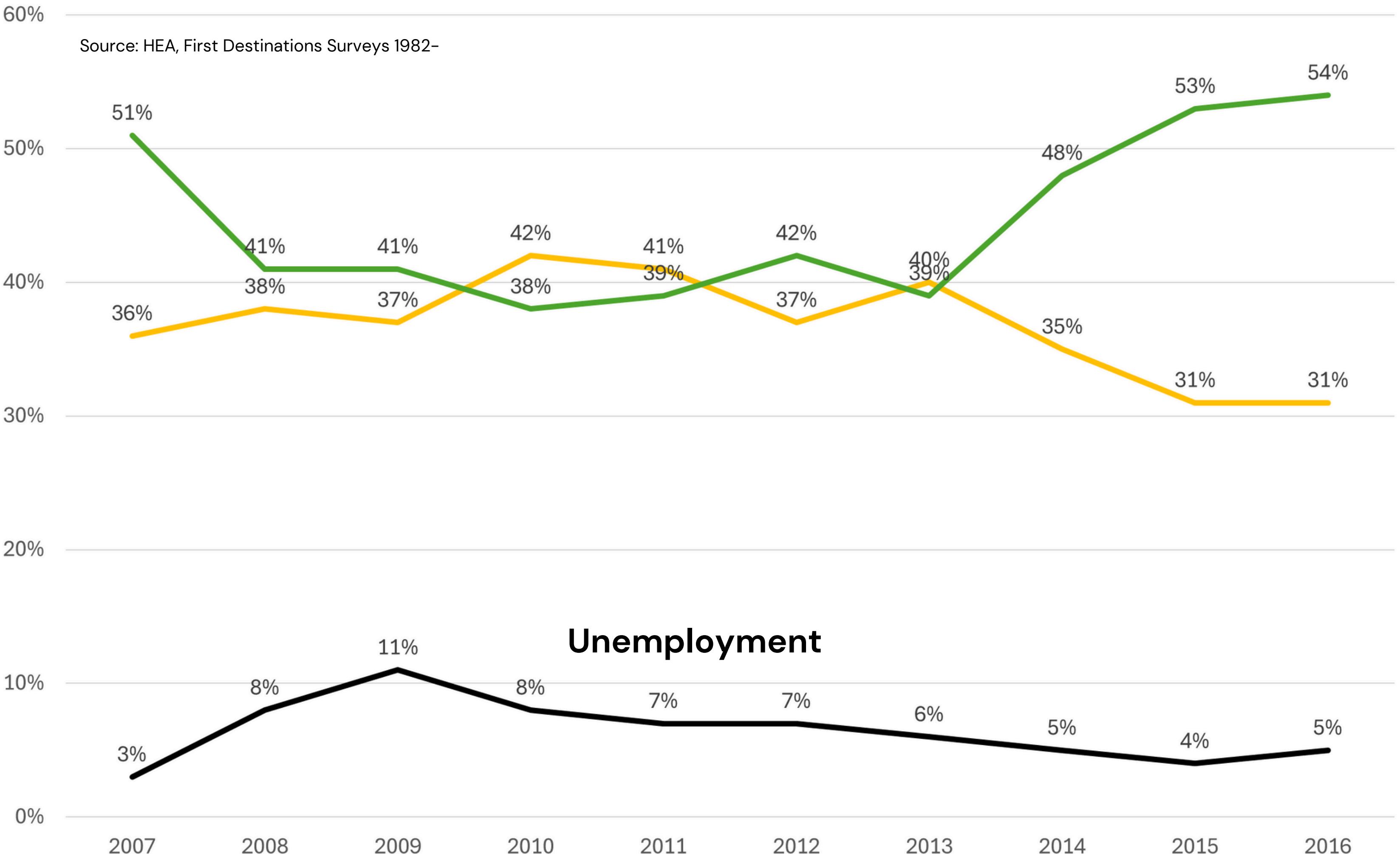
Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 2007-2016



Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 2007-2016



Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 2007-2016



Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 2007-2016

60%

Source: HEA, First Destinations Surveys 1982-

51%

50%

36%

40%

41%

38%

41%

37%

42%

38%

41%

39%

42%

37%

40%

39%

48%

53%

54%

30%

20%

Employment overseas

10%

5%

3%

8%

7%

11%

7%

8%

9%

7%

10%

7%

12%

6%

10%

5%

10%

4%

8%

5%

0%

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

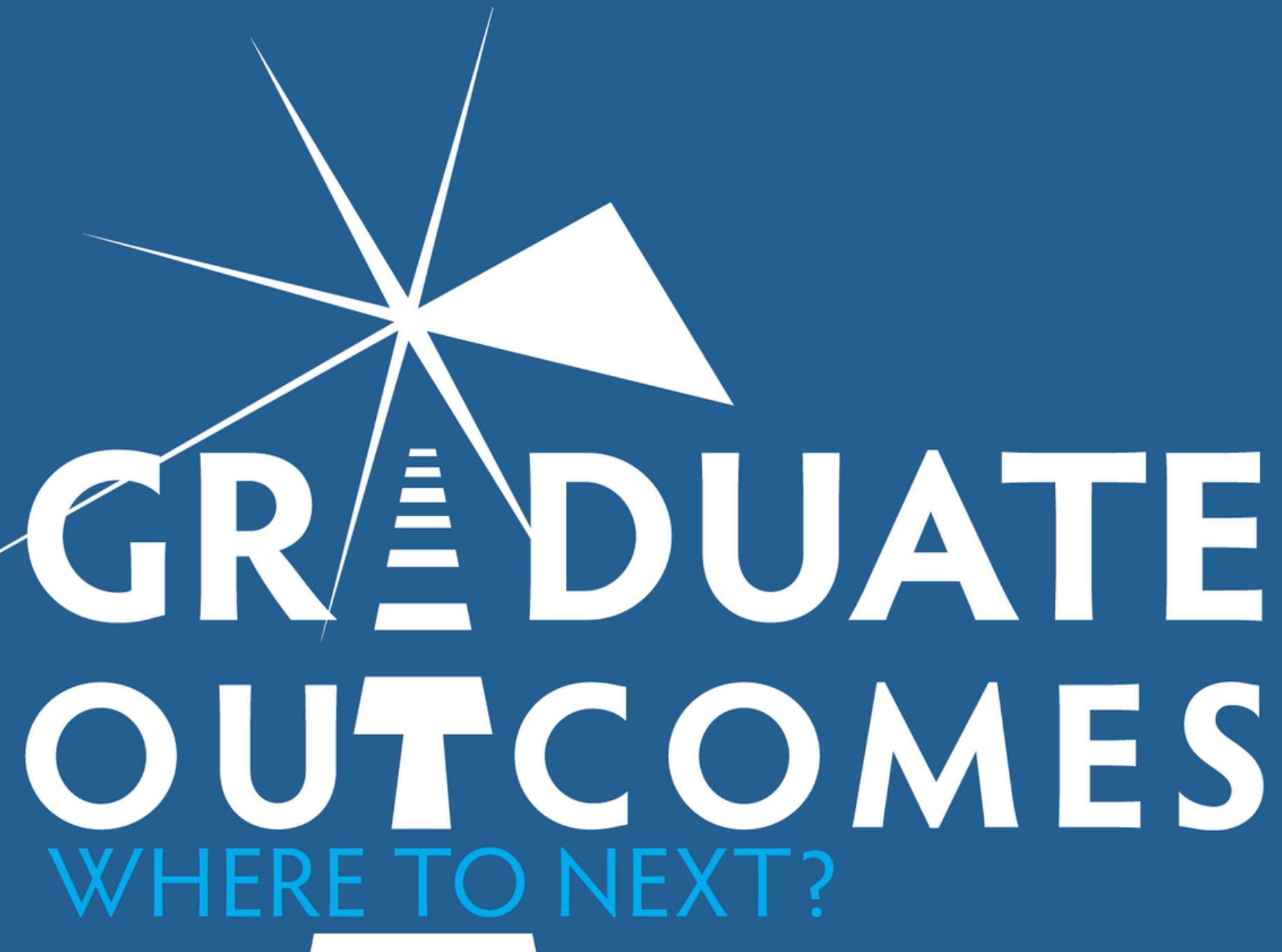
2016 onwards

Change in data collection

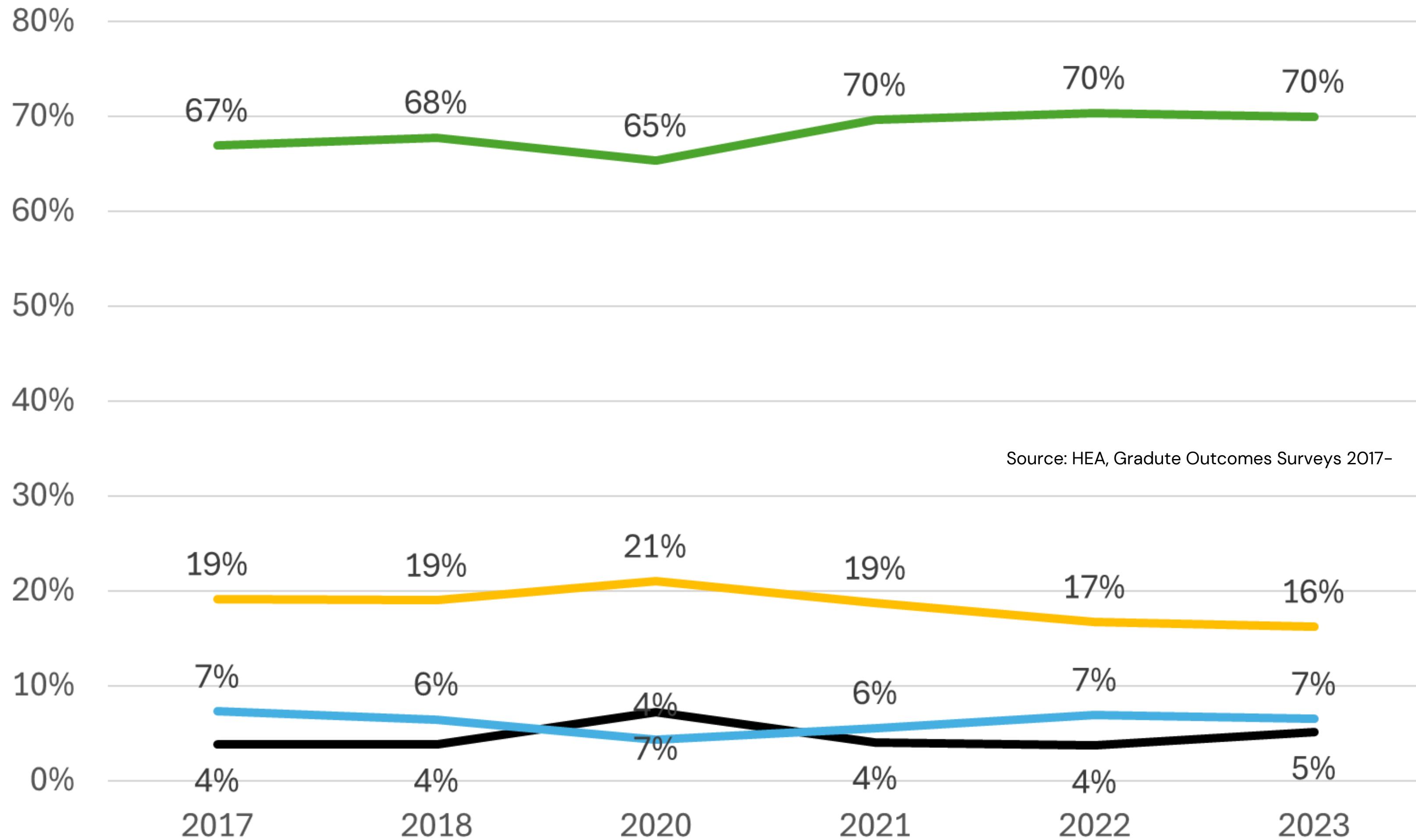
Graduate Outcomes Survey is introduced

Includes not just universities, but institutes of technology (later to become technological universities) too.

Higher employment outcomes for graduates of these institutions



Honours Degree Graduate Outcomes 2017-2023



Source: HEA, Graduate Outcomes Surveys 2017-



Graduates and the economy

What can we tell from 40 years of graduate tracking:

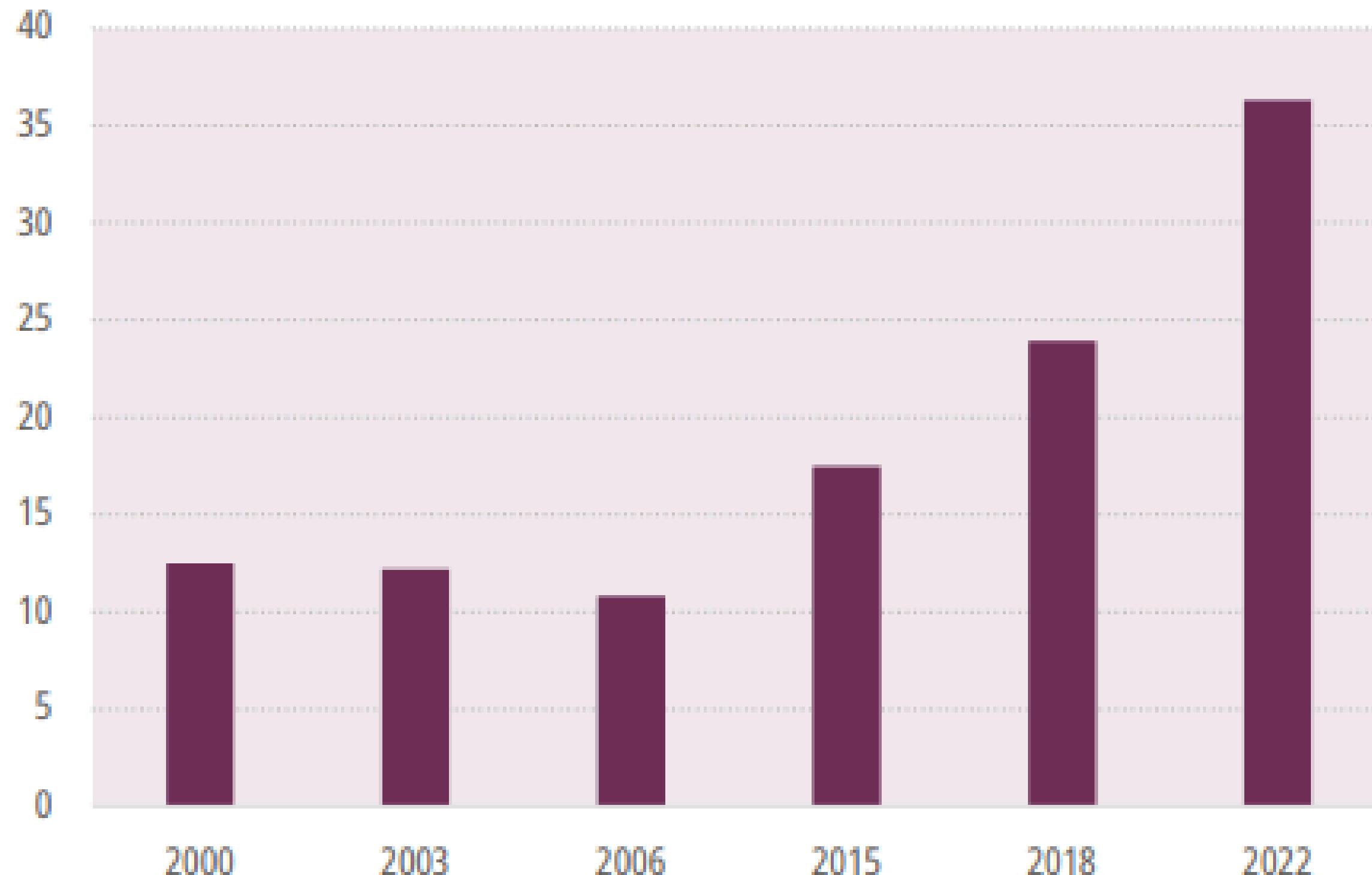
- Graduate tracking reflects overall national economic patterns.
- Graduates are to a large degree protected from unemployment.
- Graduates take the option of further study when the economy is less certain.
- If there is greater opportunity abroad, graduates will be mobile!

How do we equip graduates so they are prepared for what is to come?

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most adaptable to change."



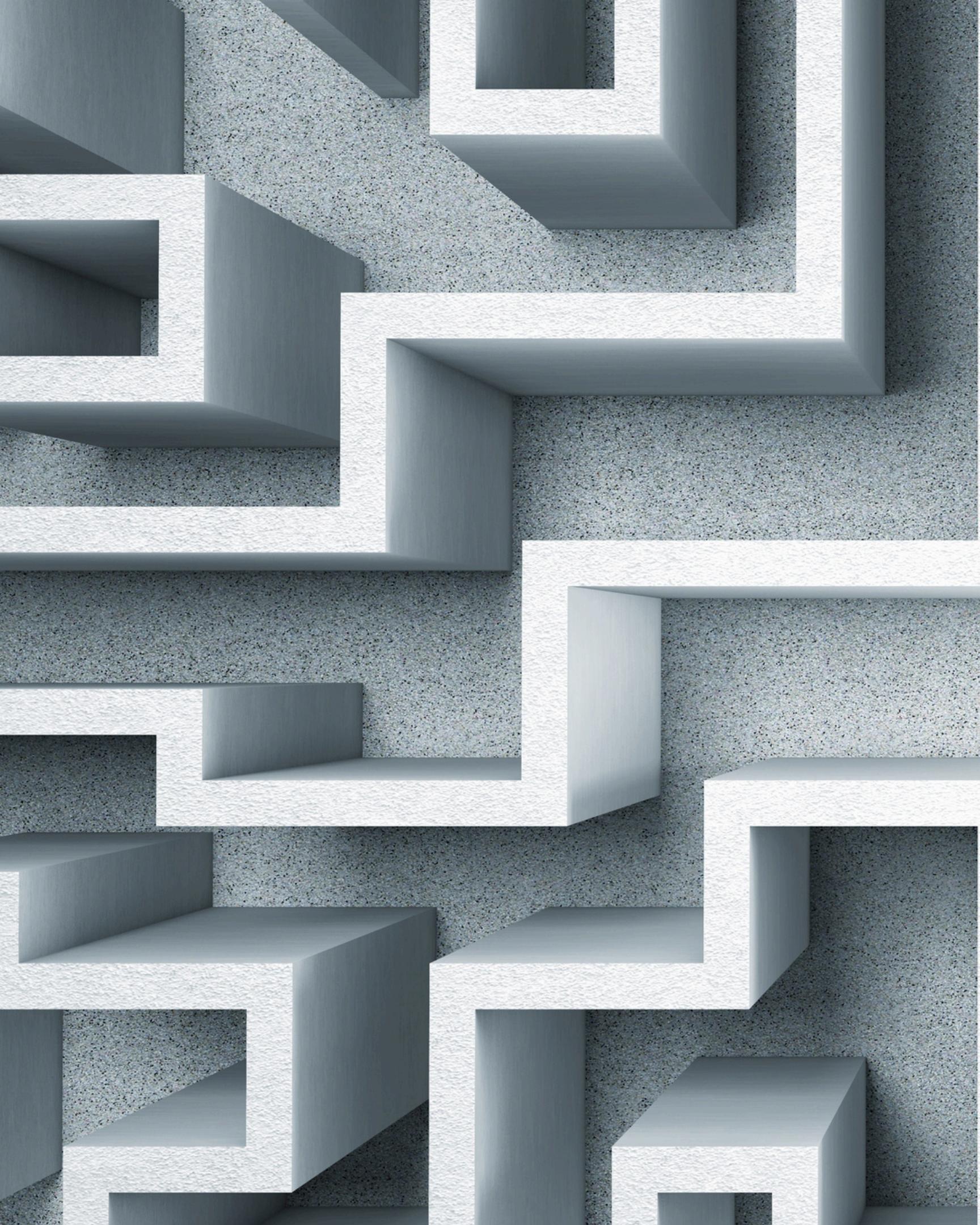
Figure 1.1. Average rate of teenage career uncertainty within OECD countries participating in all PISA surveys, 2000-2022



Source. OECD PISA databases 2000-2022.

Source: OECD, The State of Global Teenage Career Preparation,
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-state-of-global-teenage-career-preparation_d5f8e3f2-en.html

Note. The figure shows the average level of uncertainty among students from countries participating in all PISA surveys asking: 'What kind of job do you expect to have when you are about 30 years old?' This question was not asked in 2009 or 2012. The countries participating in all relevant surveys are: Australia, Austria, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

The background of the image features a complex arrangement of 3D geometric shapes, primarily cubes and rectangular prisms, rendered in a monochromatic grey scale. The shapes are positioned in the lower-left quadrant and are oriented at various angles, creating a sense of depth and perspective. Some shapes are fully visible, while others are partially obscured, contributing to a layered effect. The lighting is soft, with subtle highlights and shadows that emphasize the three-dimensional form of the objects.

Environment

Trade

Housing

Technology



Ireland faces bill of up to €26bn if EU climate targets missed, report warns

Updated / Tuesday, 4 Mar 2025 12:07



The Irish Fiscal Advisory Council and the Climate Change Advisory Council described the potential costs as 'staggering'



By **George Lee**
Environment Correspondent

Cutting national herd 'likely to be necessary' for climate - new report

Unprecedented levels of afforestation and a reduction in cattle numbers could be needed to reach net zero, according to the EPA-led climate change assessment report.



The report was led by the EPA and funded primarily by the Department of the Environment. \ Brendan Lynch

up to €26bn if EU ed, report warns



Change Advisory Council described the potential costs as 'staggering'

Cutting national herd 'necessary' for climate

Unprecedented levels of afforestation and a reduction in meat consumption will be needed to reach net zero, according to the EPA-Ireland report.



The report was led by the EPA and funded primarily by the Irish government. It was written by Dr. Michael Lynch.

Offshore wind: Promises of thousands of new jobs

Updated / Tuesday, 29 Apr 2025 17:05



The Government plans to build enough new wind farms offshore to generate five gigawatts of electricity by 2030



By [George Lee](#)
Environment Correspondent

More wind: Promises of thousands of jobs

29 Apr 2025 17:05



NEWS

Taoiseach backs data centres in bid to stay ahead in AI race



Sarah McGuinness

04/06/2025



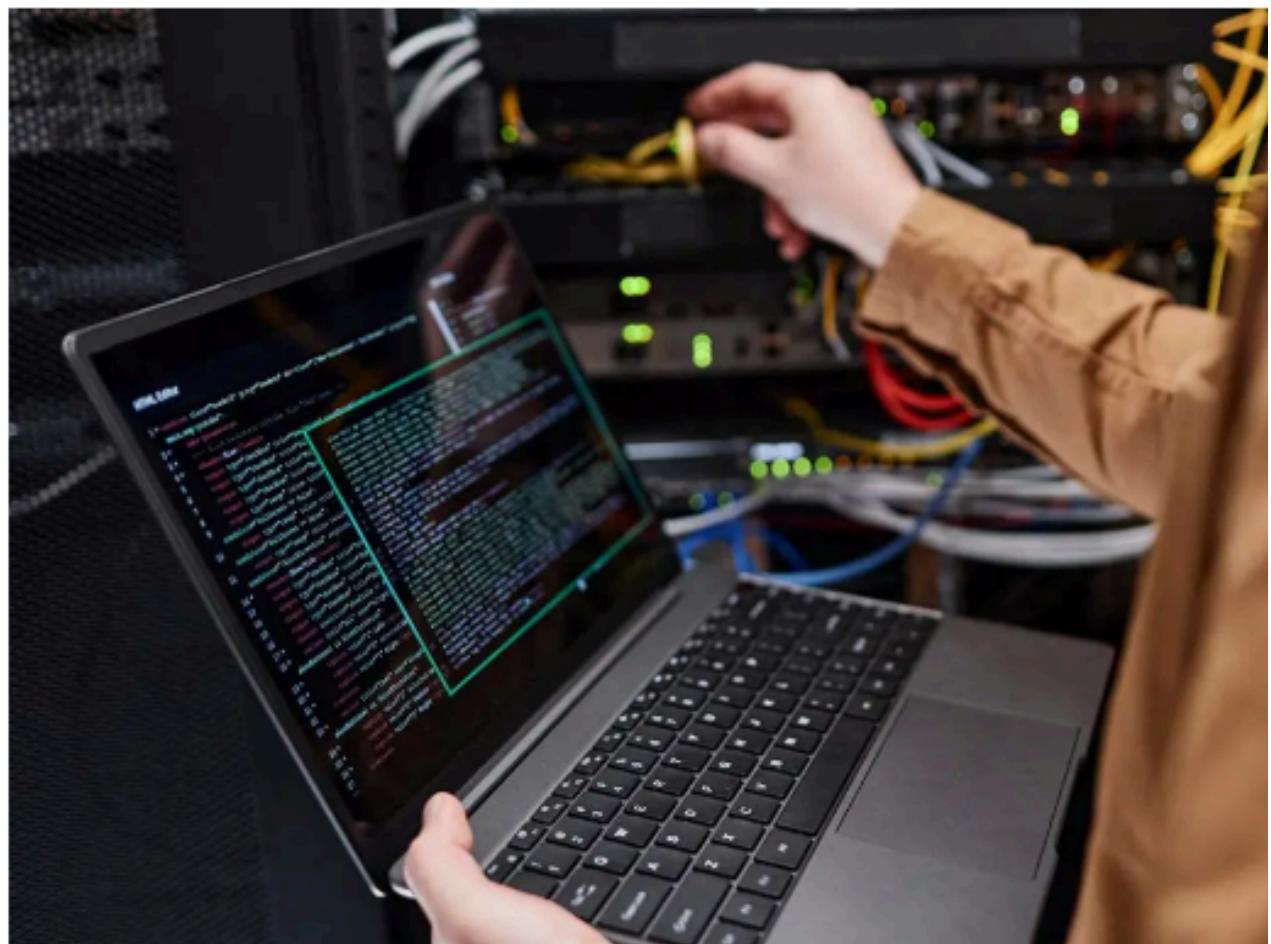
'Workarounds' to restrictions on data centres are being explored by the Government so Ireland can keep pace with the 'AI revolution'.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin criticised 'ill-informed' debate on data centres in the Dáil and called for more 'sensible' discussions about the matter.



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NEWS

Taoiseach backs data centres in bid ahead in AI race

**Sarah McGuinness**

04/06/2025

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Taoiseach Micheál Martin criticised 'ill-informed' debate on data centres in the Dáil and called for more 'sensible' discussions about the issue.

Taoiseach rejects 'housing vs data centres' energy claim by senior civil servant



Taoiseach Micheál Martin speaking to media on the opening day of the annual Bord Bia Bloom festival at the Phoenix Park in Dublin. Picture: Liam McBurney/PA

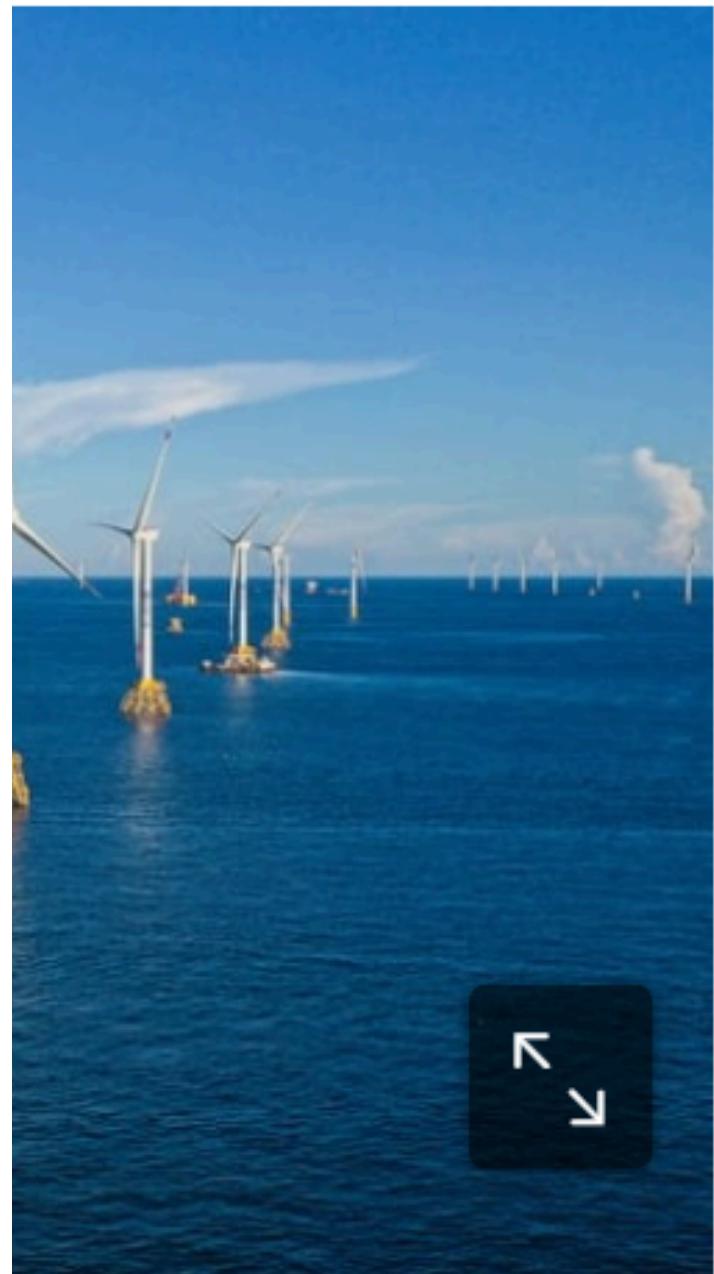
THU, 29 MAY, 2025 - 21:00

PAUL HOSFORD, TADGH McNALLY



The Taoiseach has rejected claims from a senior civil servant that Ireland faces a choice between providing energy for data centres or **housing**.

Oonagh Buckley, secretary general at the Department of Environment, Climate and Energy, told an event on Wednesday that data centres had used up the spare capacity in the energy grid, which would require policymakers



re gigawatts of electricity by 2030



In 2024,

75%

of employment was associated with some level of green skills intensity

Approximately

400,000

persons were in green employment

(i.e. roles with a green intensity score of at least 10%) in Quarter 4 2024

115,100 in agriculture roles

281,100 in non-agriculture roles

Online Job Adverts (OJAs) in 2024:



almost 1.2% of OJAs for roles in Ireland mentioned **at least one** green-related skill



for the most part, the higher the green intensity level of occupations, the greater the green pervasiveness observed in OJAs



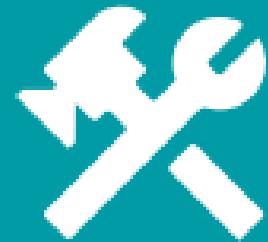
nearly three quarters of all green skills mentioned in OJAs were classified as **environmental engineering skills**

Source: Solas, Spring Skills Bulletin, 2025, "Is Ireland Truly Green?"

Those in non-agricultural green employment:



saw an **annual average growth rate of 6.4%** between 2019 and 2024, compared to 3.4% for total employment



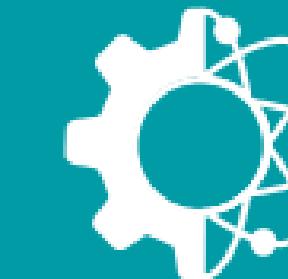
were primarily employed in **industry, professional activities and construction sectors**



most were employed in **professional or managerial occupations** (e.g. engineers, environmental professionals, organisational analysts, manufacturing managers, restaurant managers)



68% were male (compared to 53% for national employment)



science & engineering roles

accounted for the largest share of green employment, followed closely by **business & sales**-related roles

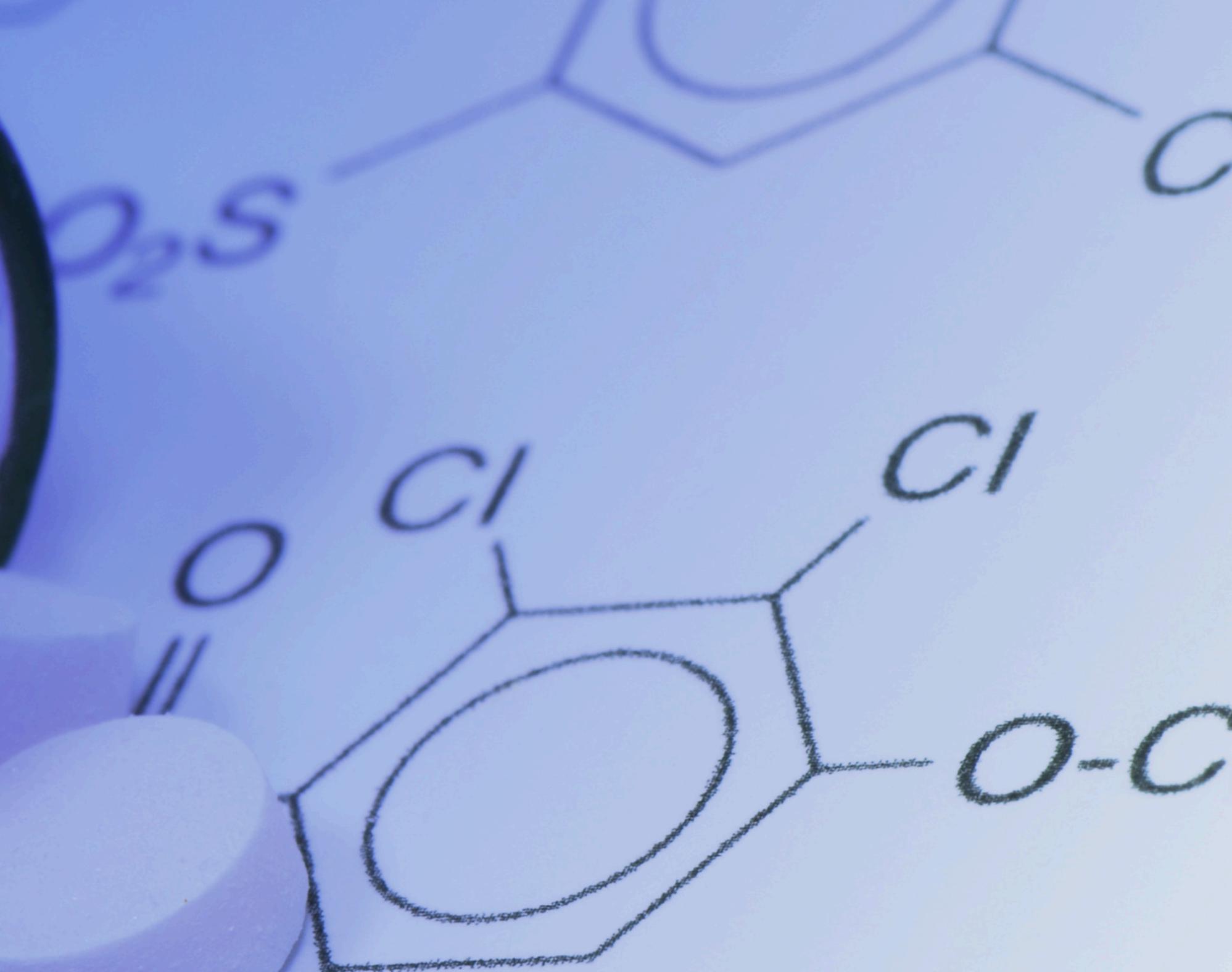


69% held third level qualifications (compared to 54% for national employment); a further quarter held higher secondary/FET qualifications

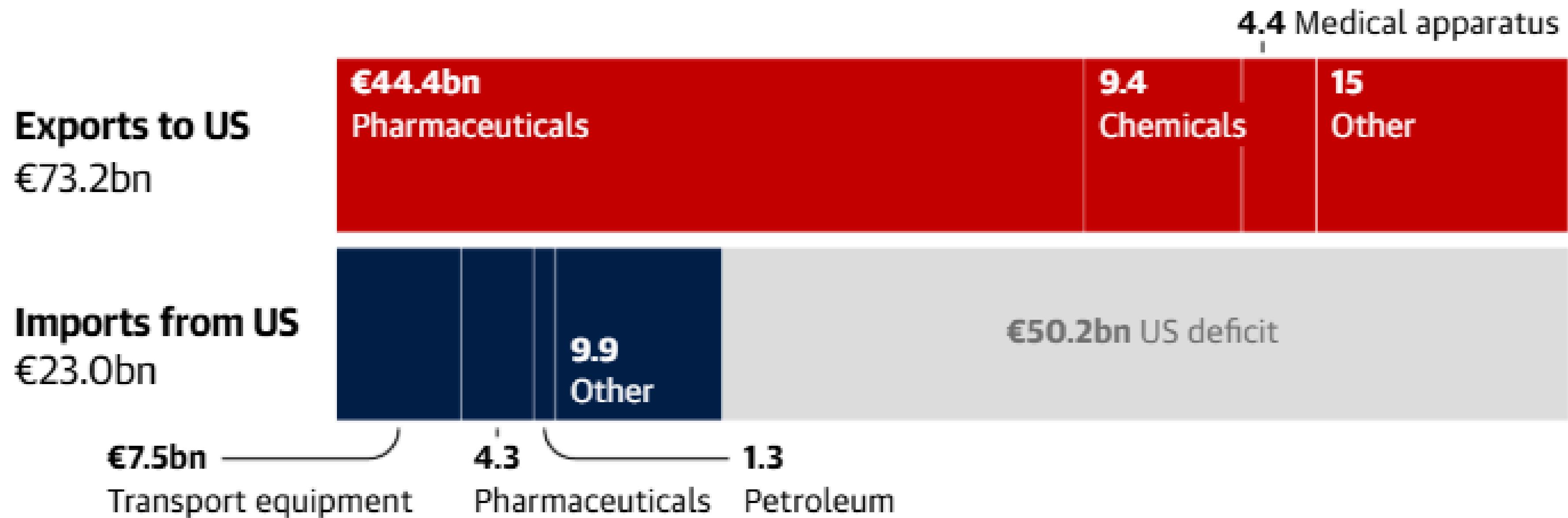


the geographical spread was broadly in line with national employment, with green employment concentrated in the **Mid-East, Dublin, and South-West** regions.





Trade between Ireland and the US in 2024



Source: Central Statistics Office Ireland. Note: categories include a broad range of products



Ireland 'not exactly celebrating' Trump's deal with EU

28 July 2025

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Hayley Halpin
BBC News NI



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By [Doloresz Katanich](#)

Published on 11/07/2025 - 7:30 GMT+2

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One-fifth of the EU's exports are heading to the US. Tariffs on the carmaking sector hit the German economy the most, but potential tariffs on the pharmaceutical one could cost substantially to the Irish economy.

US pharma firms will be 'damaged' by tariffs - Taoiseach

Updated / Wednesday, 6 Aug 2025 19:11



Mr Trump said the 15% baseline agreed in the EU-US tariff deal would only apply to the pharmaceuticals for 'one year, one-and-a-half years maximum'

Ireland 'not exactly celebrating' Trump's deal with EU

28 July 2025

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NEWS

US court rules many of Trump's global tariffs are illegal

The tariffs can remain in place until mid-October to allow the Trump administration time to request the Supreme Court take up the case.

10 hrs ago | US & Canada



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By Doloresz Katanich

Published on 11/07/2025 - 7:30 GMT+2

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 Comments

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The Eldon Accommodation

Brenmar Jon

O'DONOCHUE

THE
KENMARE
FOOD
COMPANY
No. 22 Henry St.
064 79800

BRONN'S

NANS
DIGITAL
PHOTO
SERVICES

es
IQUE *Estimate
Woman*

THE
ASHMERE
SHOP

CASH
SHE

St. 1

No. 22 Henry St.
064 79800

100

A small, colorful boat with a green and white striped pattern is visible on the water in the background.

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100

18

11

HAWAII

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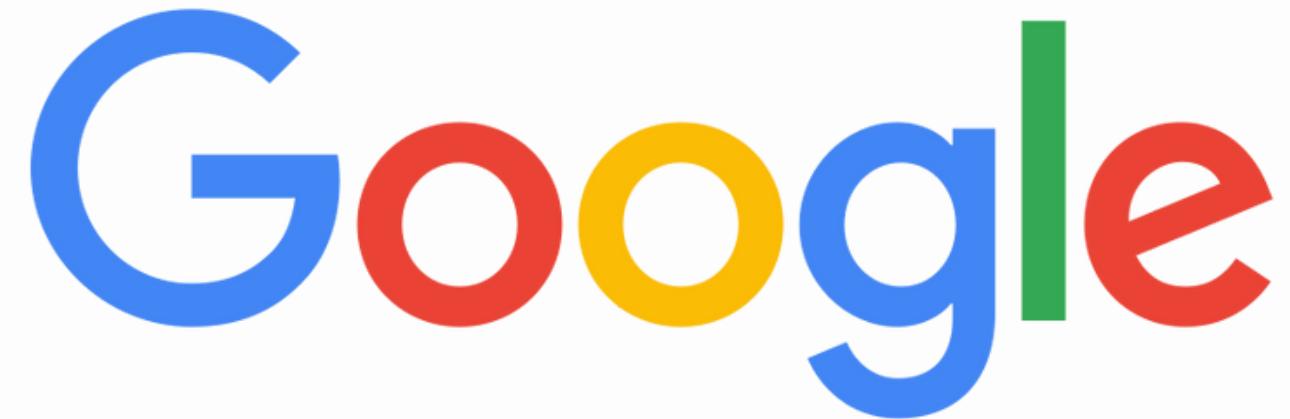
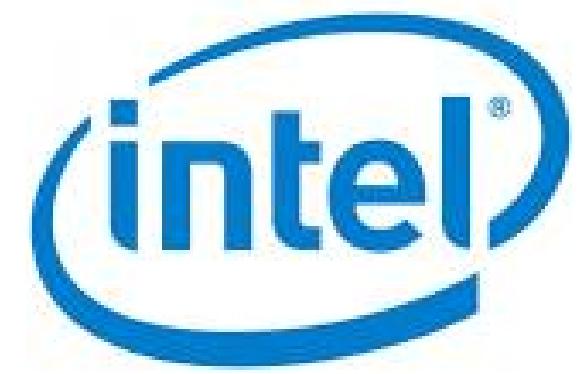
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Bremi







Will big tech be caught in the crossfire of EU-US trade war?

Updated / Wednesday, 2 Apr 2025 09:23



Donald Trump said Apple was treated badly by Europe



By **Brian O'Donovan**

Work & Technology Correspondent

LATEST | Ireland back in Trump's crosshairs as he promises 'substantial tariffs' on countries who 'attack' American tech companies



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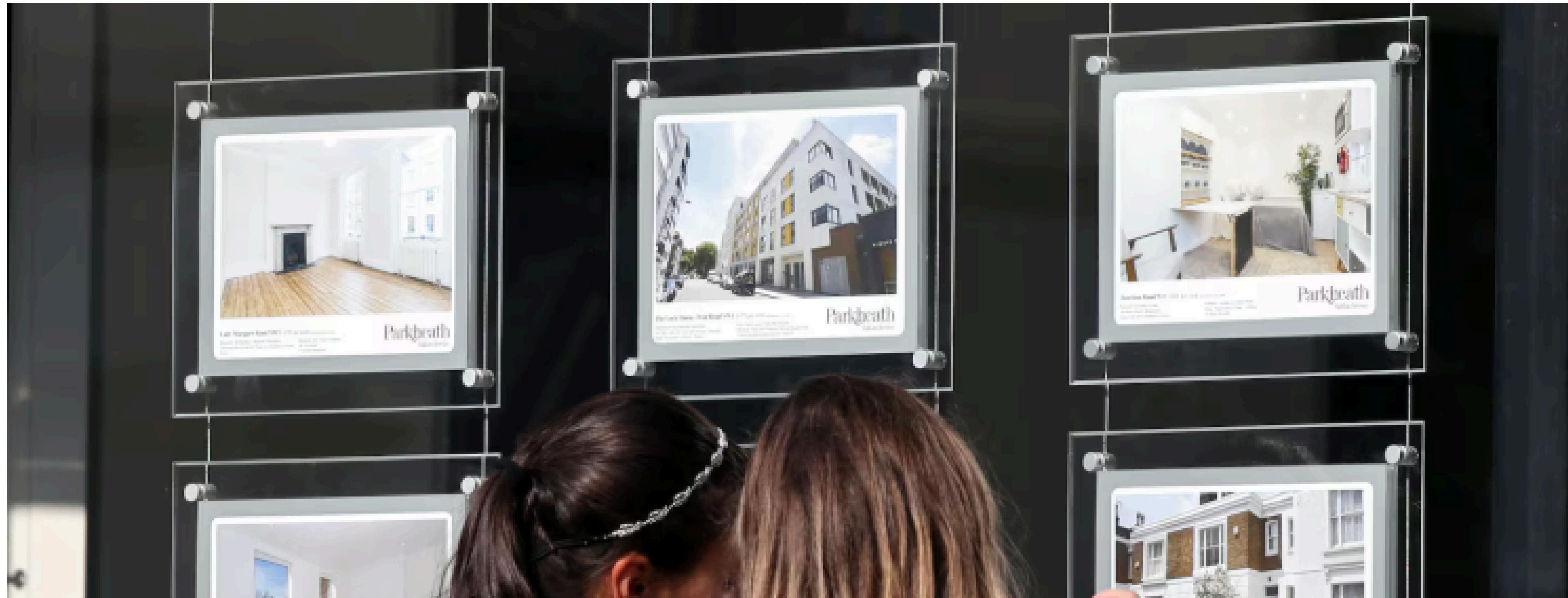




Ireland's housing crisis 'on a different level' with population growing at nearly four people for every new home built

Affordability is declining faster than in the US, UK, Australia, Germany or Spain, says Savills

 Expand



ADDRESSING IRELAND'S HOUSING CRISIS: URGENT POLICY REFORMS NEEDED

Posted on Wednesday, 29 May 2024

Ireland has been in the midst of a housing and homelessness crisis for almost a decade, with recent developments escalating at an alarming rate. The recently published report by the Housing Commission has brought to light the profound challenges facing Ireland's housing sector. The Housing Commission rightly emphasises the need to fully



ADDRESS HOUSING POLICY R

Posted on Wednesday, 29 May 202

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Planning permission figures suggest housing crisis will 'continue to worsen', says property investor

IRELAND



In Quarter 4 2024, the total number of dwelling units approved planning permission was down by 38 per cent to

The Irish Independent's View: Unrelenting housing crisis is an indictment of collective failure



figures suggest housing 'worsen', says property



oved planning permission was down by 38 per cent to

The Irish Independent's View Unrelenting housing crisis is an indictment of collective failu

3,500 teachers are on a career break amid staffing shortage as union puts the blame on house prices

Staff taking up work overseas as shortage worsens

st housing
property



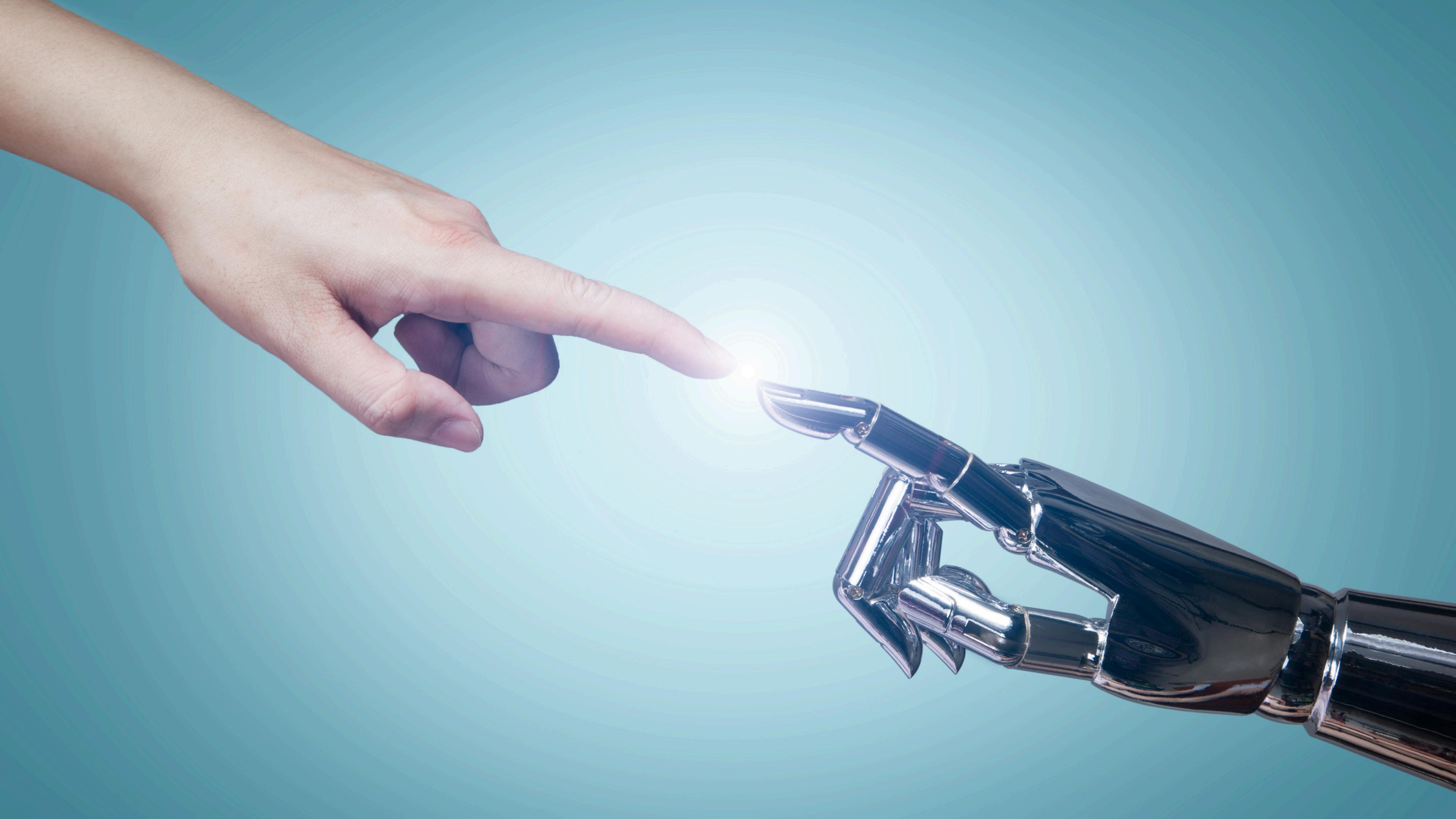
Lynne Kelleher and Gabija Gataveckaite

May 18 2025 02:30 AM

More than 3,500 teachers are currently on a career break while thousands of teaching posts remain unfilled, but unions are blaming the housing crisis



down by 38 per cent to





Lorenzo Matteucci

THE SHIFT

For Some Recent Graduates, the A.I. Job Apocalypse May Already Be Here

The unemployment rate for recent college graduates has jumped as companies try to replace entry-level workers with artificial intelligence.

The New York Times



Illustration by Stephan Dybus

A.I. Might Take Your Job. Here Are 22 New Ones It Could Give You.

In a few key areas, humans will be more essential than ever.



*Recent
es, the A.I.
ocalypse May
Be Here*

nent rate for recent college
umped as companies try to
vel workers with artificial

The New York Times



Graduate careers

'I've £90k in student debt - for what?' Graduates share their job-hunting woes amid the AI fallout

AI isn't just taking aw

Graduates losing out in Ireland as era of AI replacing jobs begins

Boom in the UK has seen a third of new roles vanish – will we suffer the same fate?

Is the big AI job displacement already under way?

Updated / Monday, 14 Jul 2025 08:20

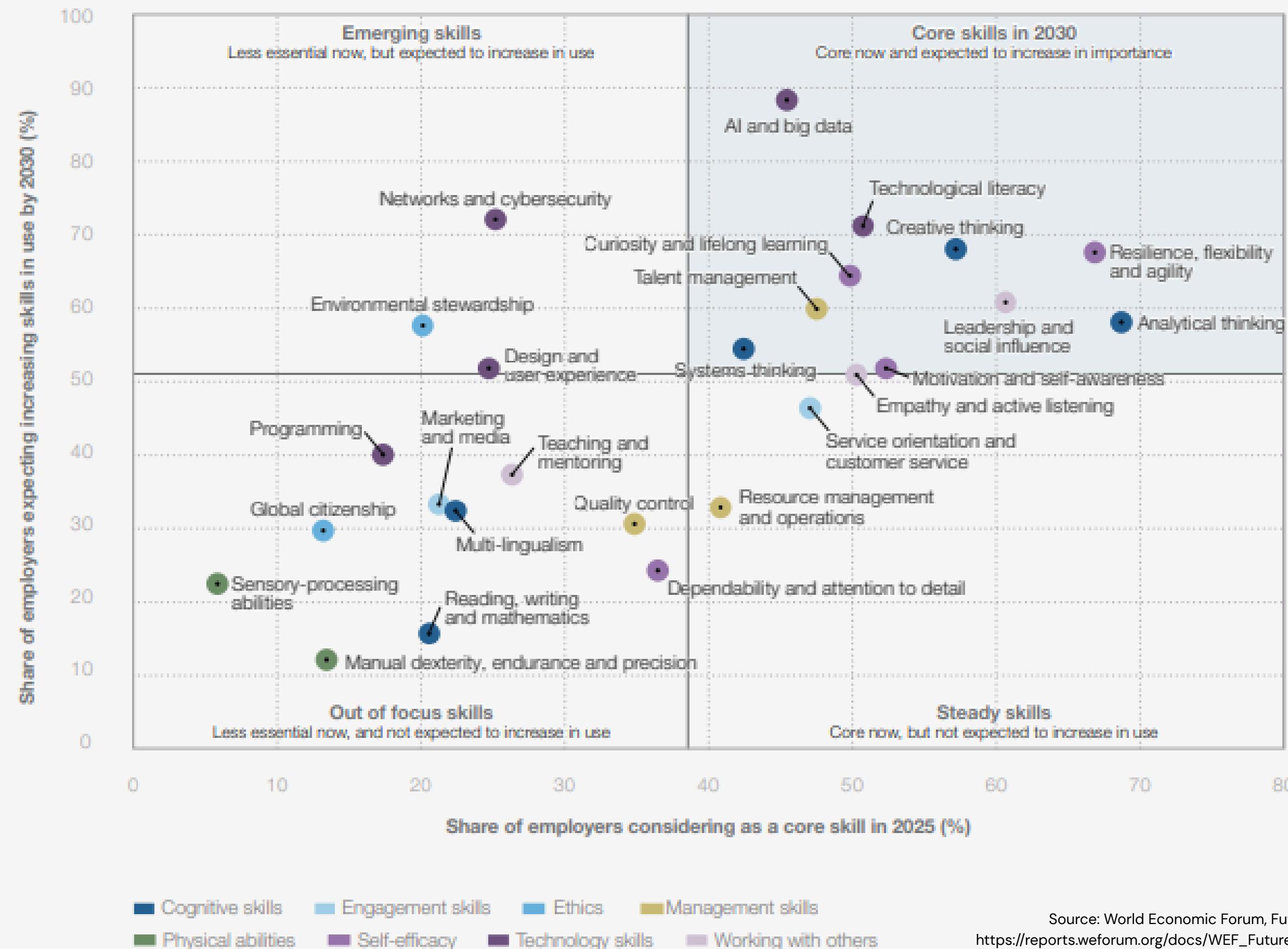


The impact of AI on employment came into sharp focus this week with as Government acknowledged it would cause come job losses

FIGURE 3.6

Core skills in 2030

Share of employers considering skills to be a core skill in 2025 and share of employers expecting skills to increase in importance by 2030.



Source: World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs, 2025

https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf

use

curity

Curiosity and lifelong learning

and
perience

Core skills in 2030

Core now and expected to increase in importance



AI and big data



Technological literacy



Creative thinking



Resilience, flexibility
and agility



Talent management



Systems thinking



Leadership and
social influence



Analytical thinking



Motivation and self-awareness



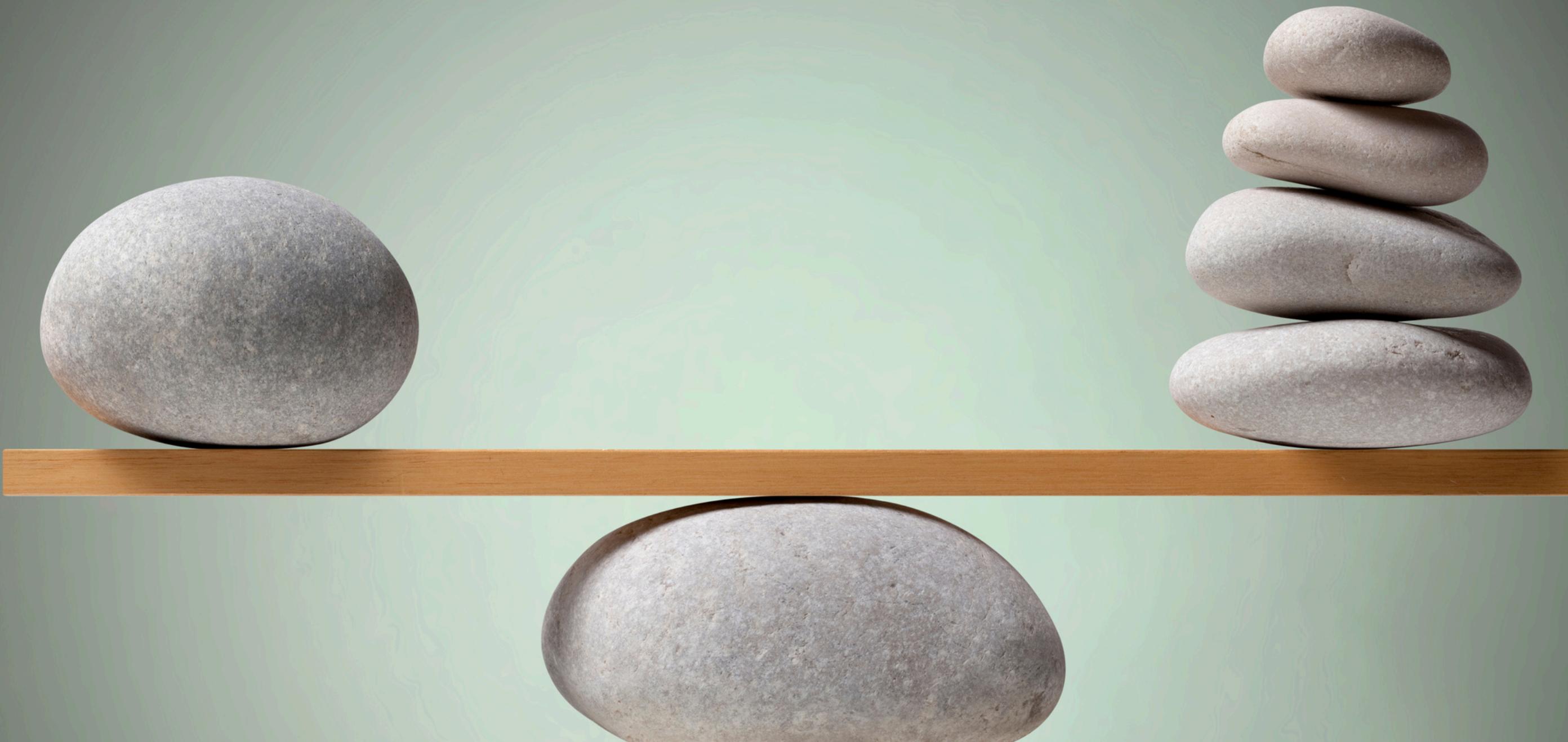
Empathy and active listening

What does the future of work look like?

Huge change and uncertainty across many sectors of the economy.

Need for adaptability and flexibility for today's graduates.





THE WORLD'S MOST EDUCATED COUNTRIES

Number of People

age 25-64 with a Bachelor's degree or higher



1.8m	Ireland
2.7m	Switzerland
1.9m	Singapore
3.3m	Belgium
19.1m	UK
4.8m	Netherlands
78.2m	U.S.

6.9m	Australia
2.2m	Israel
2.6m	Sweden
14.4m	South Korea
2.0m	Taiwan
9.0m	Poland
1.4m	Denmark
14.8m	Canada
1.3m	Norway

Share of People

age 25-64 with a Bachelor's degree or higher

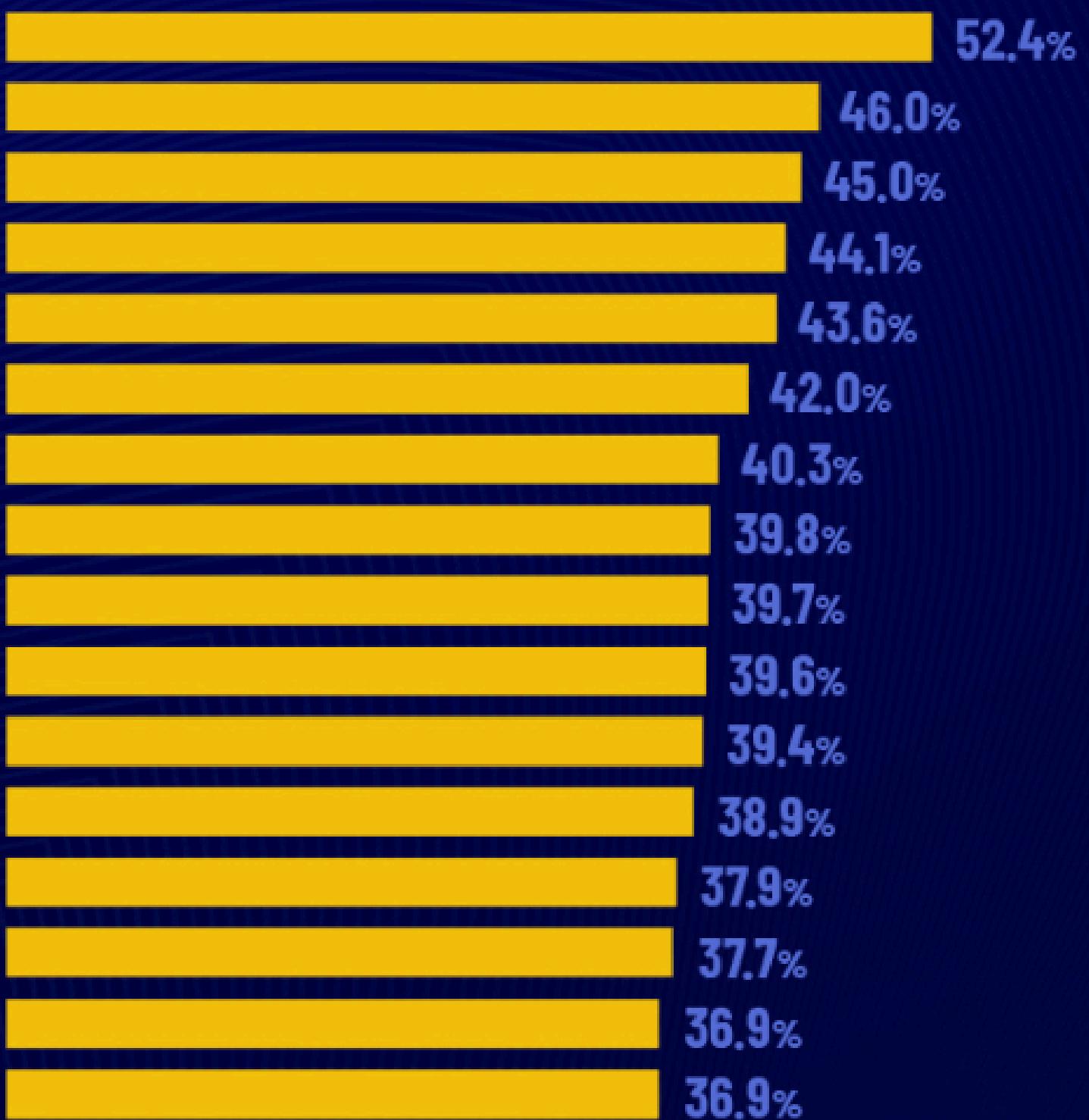


Figure 1.3 Highest education level of respondents aged 25 years



Fás Aníos in Éirinn
Growing Up in Ireland

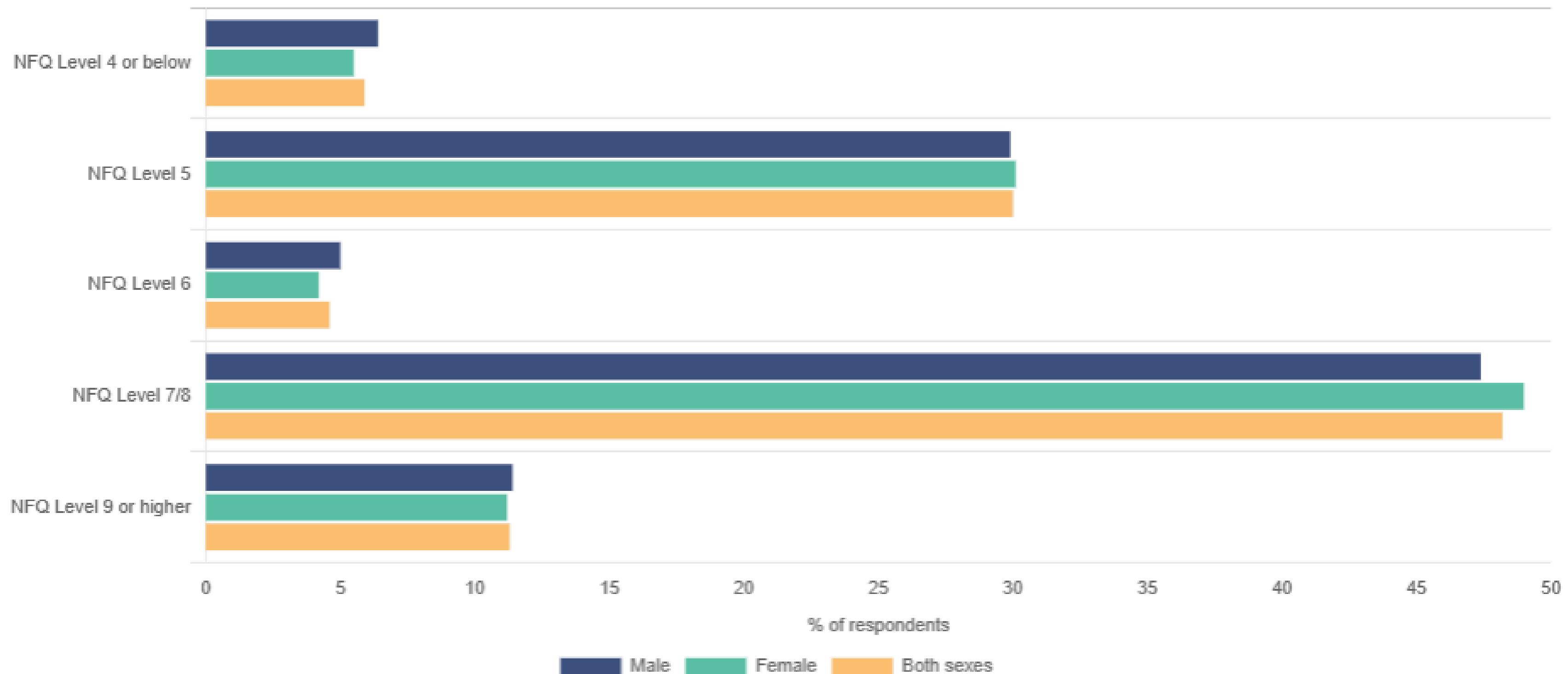


Figure 1.3 Highest education level of respondents aged 25 years



Fás Aníos in Éirinn
Growing Up in Ireland

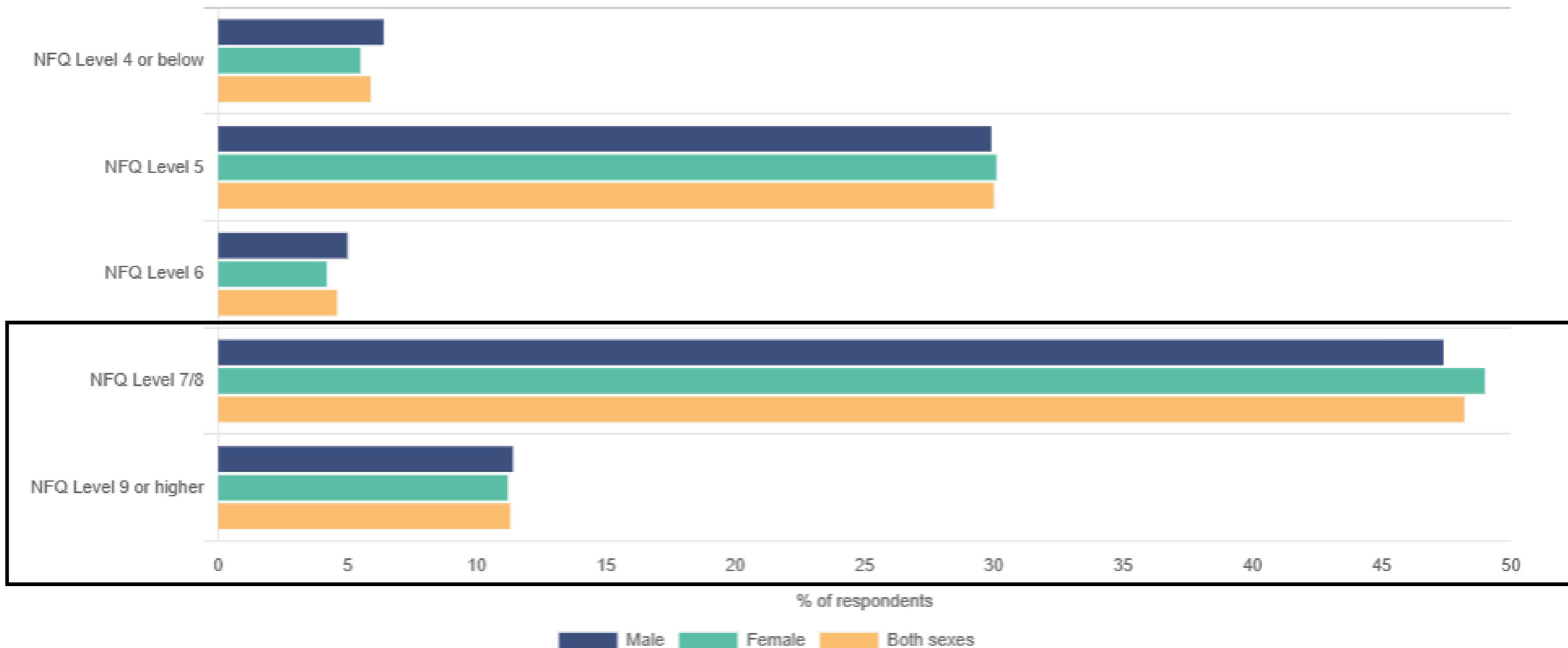
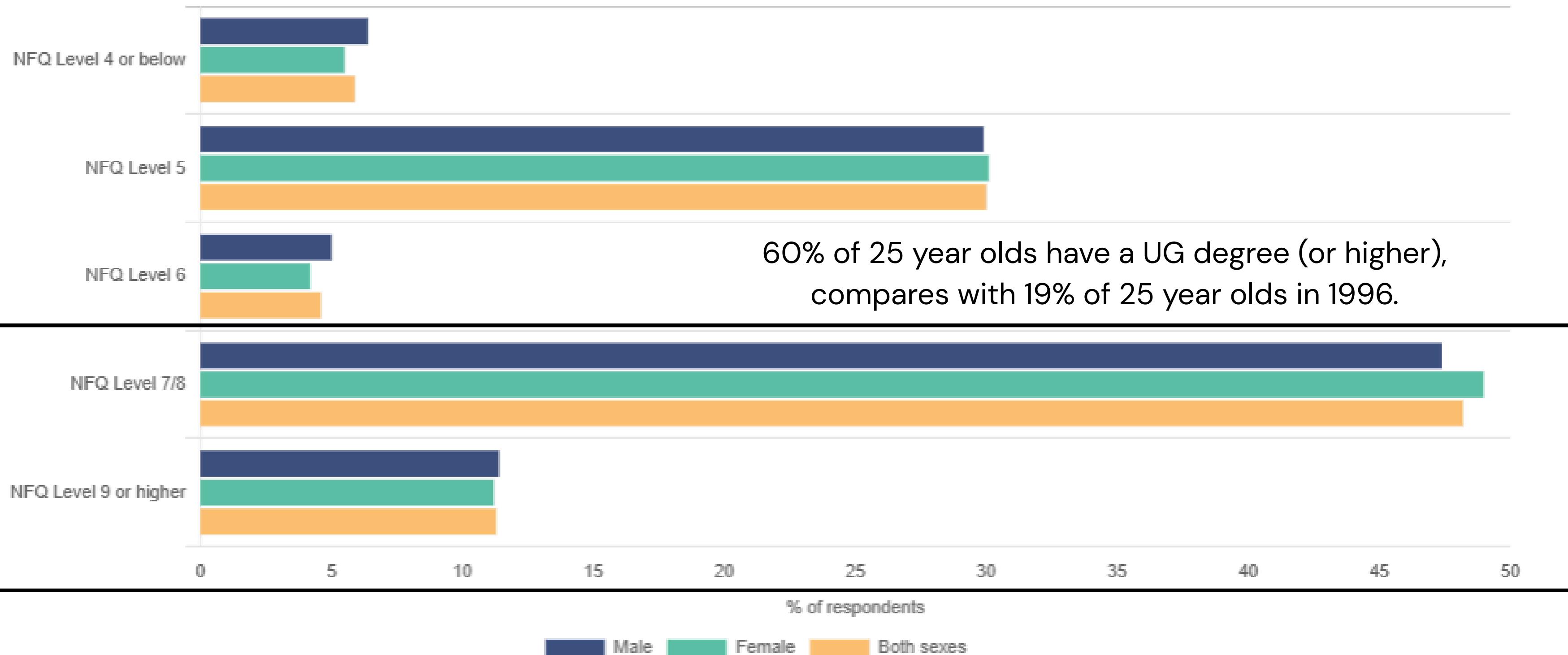


Figure 1.3 Highest education level of respondents aged 25 years



Fás Aníos in Éirinn
Growing Up in Ireland





Micheál Martin • 2nd

Taoiseach and Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil. TD for Cork South Central.

3d •

+ Follow ...

Delighted to see Ireland leading the way on education, with over 52% of adults aged 25–64 having a bachelor's degree or higher.

Investment in education has been the key foundation stone for societal and economic development in Ireland.

Source: <https://lnkd.in/eXbw6UAR>

THE WORLD'S MOST EDUCATED COUNTRIES

Number of People

age 25-64 with a Bachelor's degree or higher

Share of People

age 25-64 with a Bachelor's degree or higher

Is graduate output balanced?

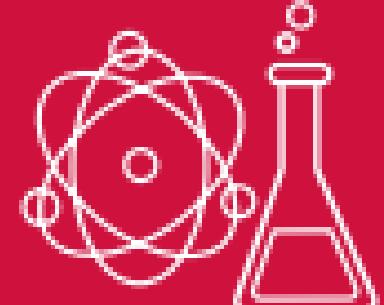
Using Labour Force Survey data, considers those with third level education in the work force not in occupations deemed to require third level qualifications.

Overqualified third level graduate employees at work as a share of employment is highest in Spain (13.2%), in Ireland (11.6%) and the UK (9.1%).



Source: NERI, Overqualification in high-income EU members, 2024

Science, engineering & technology



41%

of reported
difficult to fill
vacancies in:

ICT — Software developers, engineers (including networking, dev ops, security, AI, machine learning), data analysts/scientists/engineers, solutions architects, technical support staff.

Life sciences

Engineers — Quality control/assurance, environmental health & safety (EHS), validation, process, automation, R&D, manufacturing, mechanical, electrical, design.

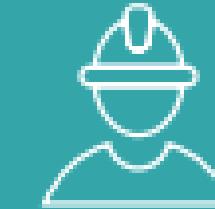
Other — Regulatory and compliance, operatives (packaging, general, food), pharmacovigilance specialists, technicians (maintenance, electrical, mechanical), scientists (process, analytical, microbiologist, clinical research), managers (production, quality, EHS).

The survey gathered the views of selected Irish recruitment agencies in respect of vacancies for occupations that require skills which are in short supply, and in their view, are proving difficult to fill.

Construction

28%

of reported
difficult to fill
vacancies in:



Project/site managers, engineers (civil/site, structural, electrical, mechanical, EHS), quantity surveyors, safety officers, BIM, technicians (maintenance, quality), site administration, planners, procurement staff.

Construction drivers, ground workers/banksman, carpenters (including shuttering), electricians, steel erectors/fixers, scaffolders, welders, pipe layers, foremen/supervisors, curtain wallers, bricklayers, glaziers/fitters.

Source: Solas SLMRU, Difficult to fill Vacancies, 2023

Financial

10%

of reported
difficult to fill
vacancies in:



Various accountants (financial, insurance, tax, practice) including those newly or part qualified, financial and insurance advisers, credit controllers, payroll/accounts administrators, regulatory and compliance roles, data analysts, company secretaries.

Health

5%

of reported
difficult to fill
vacancies in:



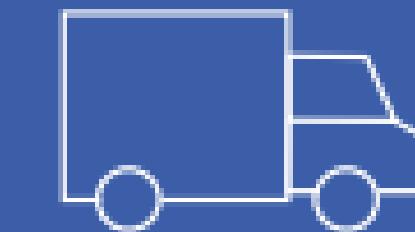
Nurses and nurse managers, healthcare assistants, consultants/registrars (including psychiatric), GPs, radiographers.

Transport & Logistics

11%

of reported
difficult to fill
vacancies in:

Drivers (rigid/artic, reach truck, forklift), warehouse/general operatives, supply chain analysts, freight forwarders, planners, mechanics/EV technicians, managers (logistics, warehouse, procurement).



Source: Solas SLMRU, Difficult to fill Vacancies, 2023



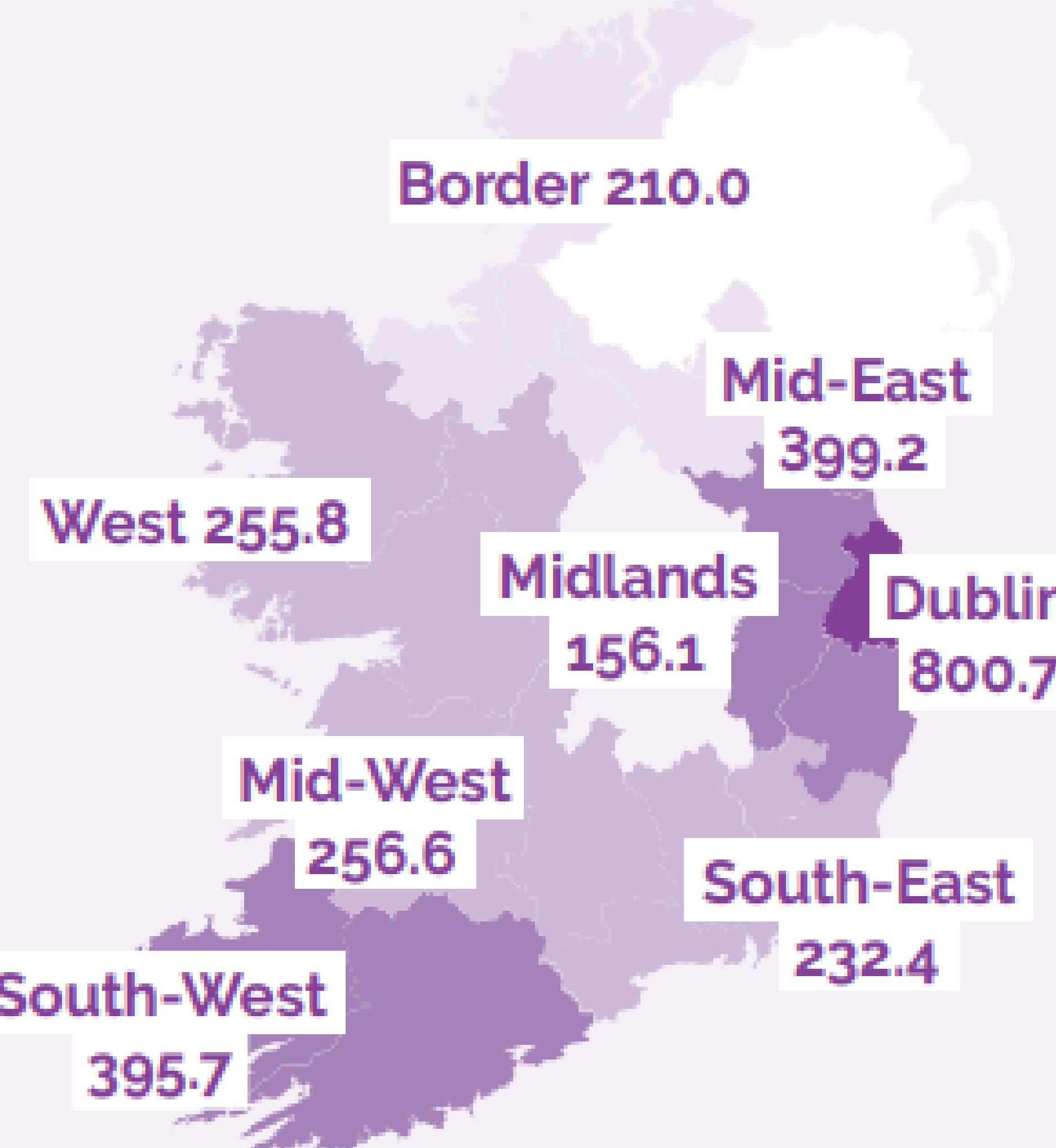
Female-dominated

Male-dominated

Mixed gender

“Addressing occupational gender segregation will not only unlock a larger potential supply of skills to meet demand but may also assist in reducing gender pay gaps and increasing work-life balance for both genders.”

Source: Solas SLMRU, Summer Skills Bulletin, 2024



Regional (im)balance

800k of 2.6m (31%) of employment is centred in Dublin, with another 399k in Dublin's surrounding counties (15%).

Weekly earnings in Dublin are 13.5% higher than the State, and 40.0% higher than Donegal which has the lowest median weekly earnings of all counties.

**"Education is not the filling
of a pail, but the lighting of
a fire"**



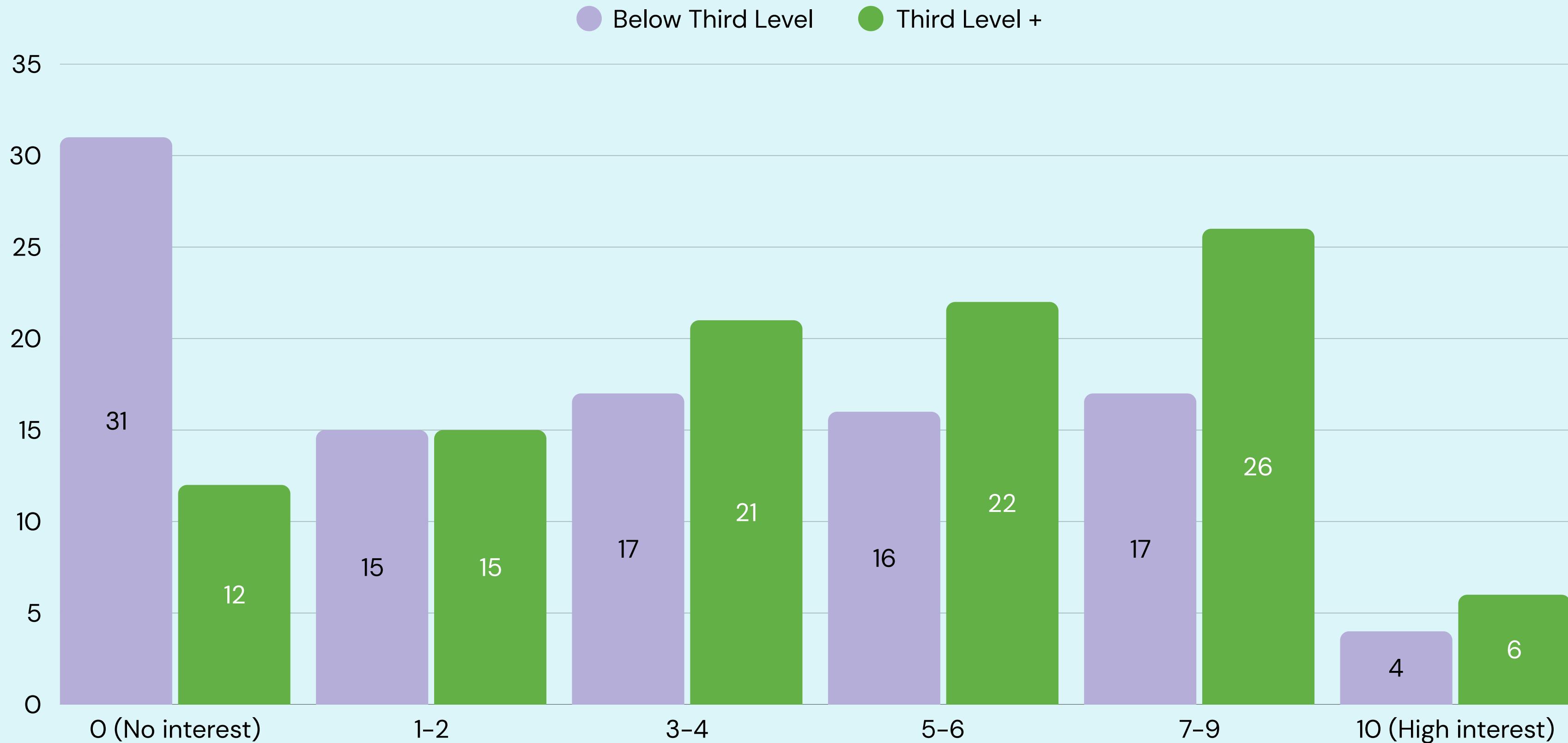


student survey.ie

The extent to which students 'often'/'very often':

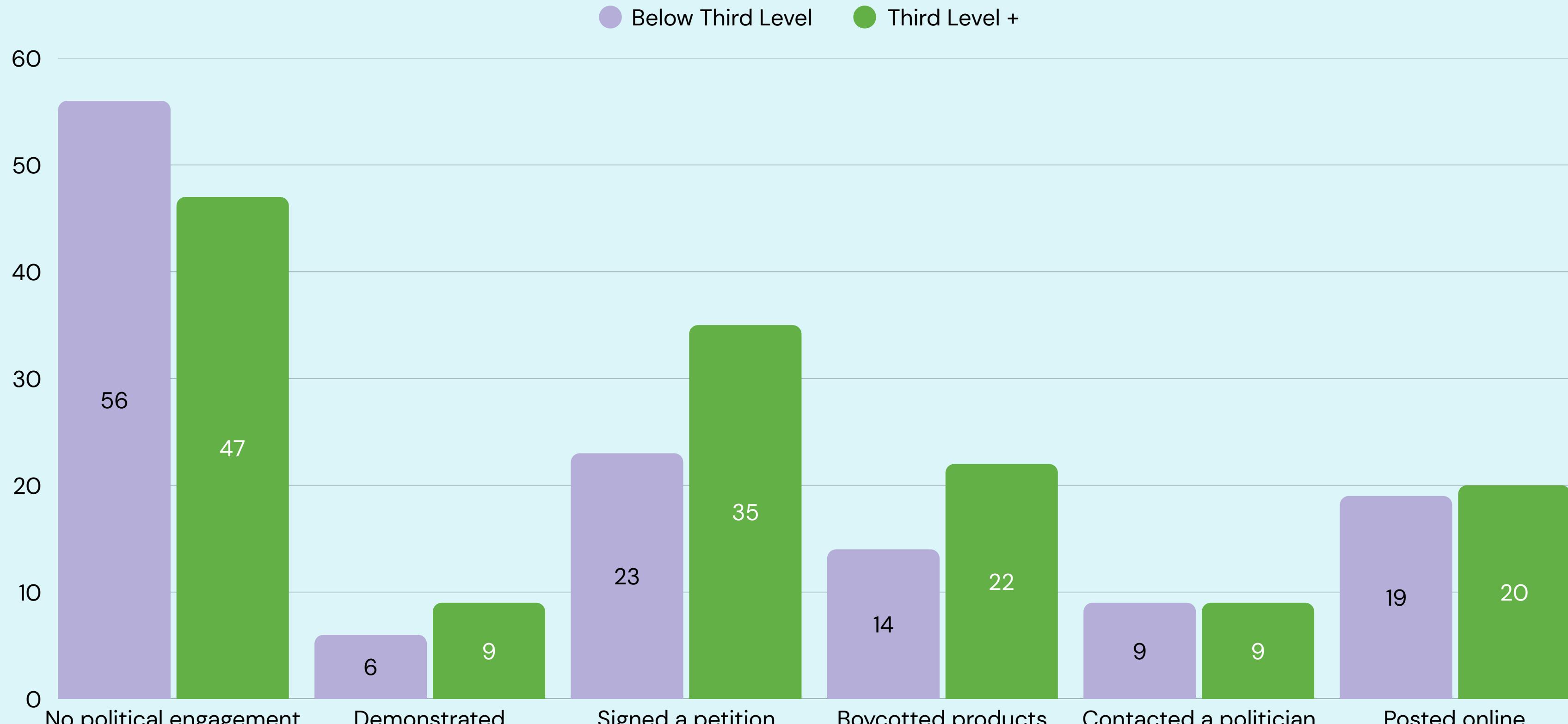
- connected their learning to problems or issues in society **46%**
- examined the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue **52%**
- tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective **58%**
- learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept **63%**

25 year olds: Level of Political Interest on a 10 point scale



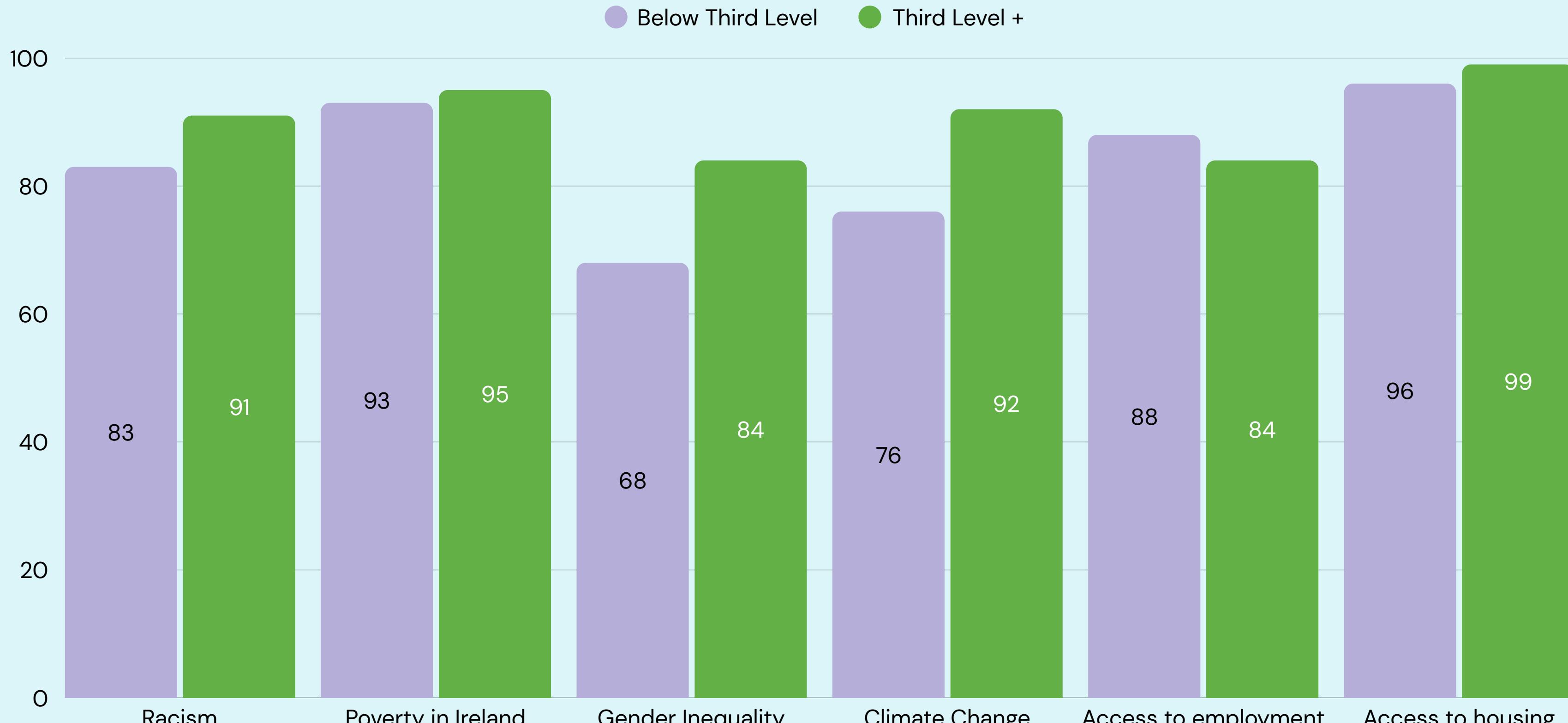
Source: CSO Growing up in Ireland, GUI65

25 year olds: Types of Political Engagement (%)



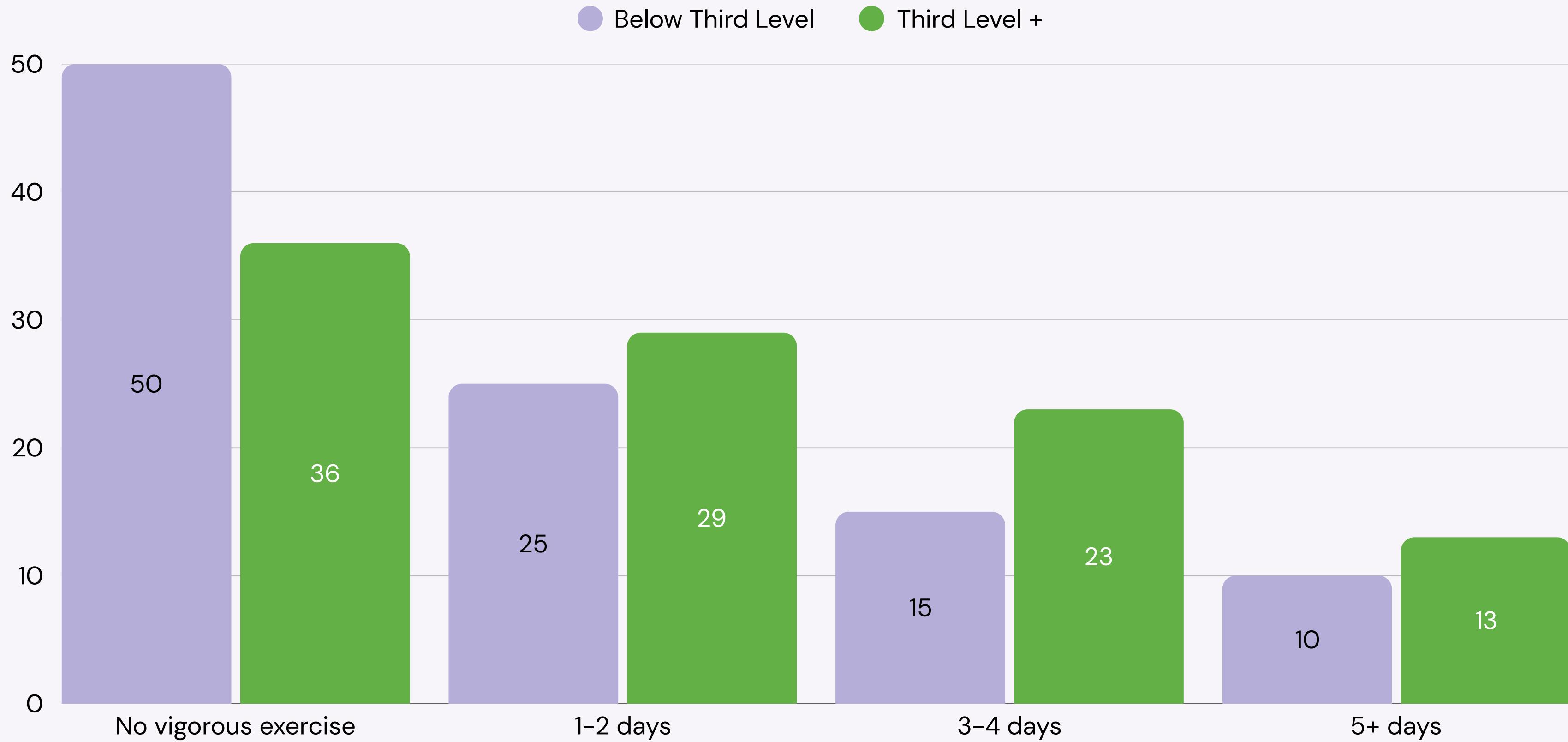
Source: CSO Growing up in Ireland, GUI63

25 year olds: Major Social Concerns (%)



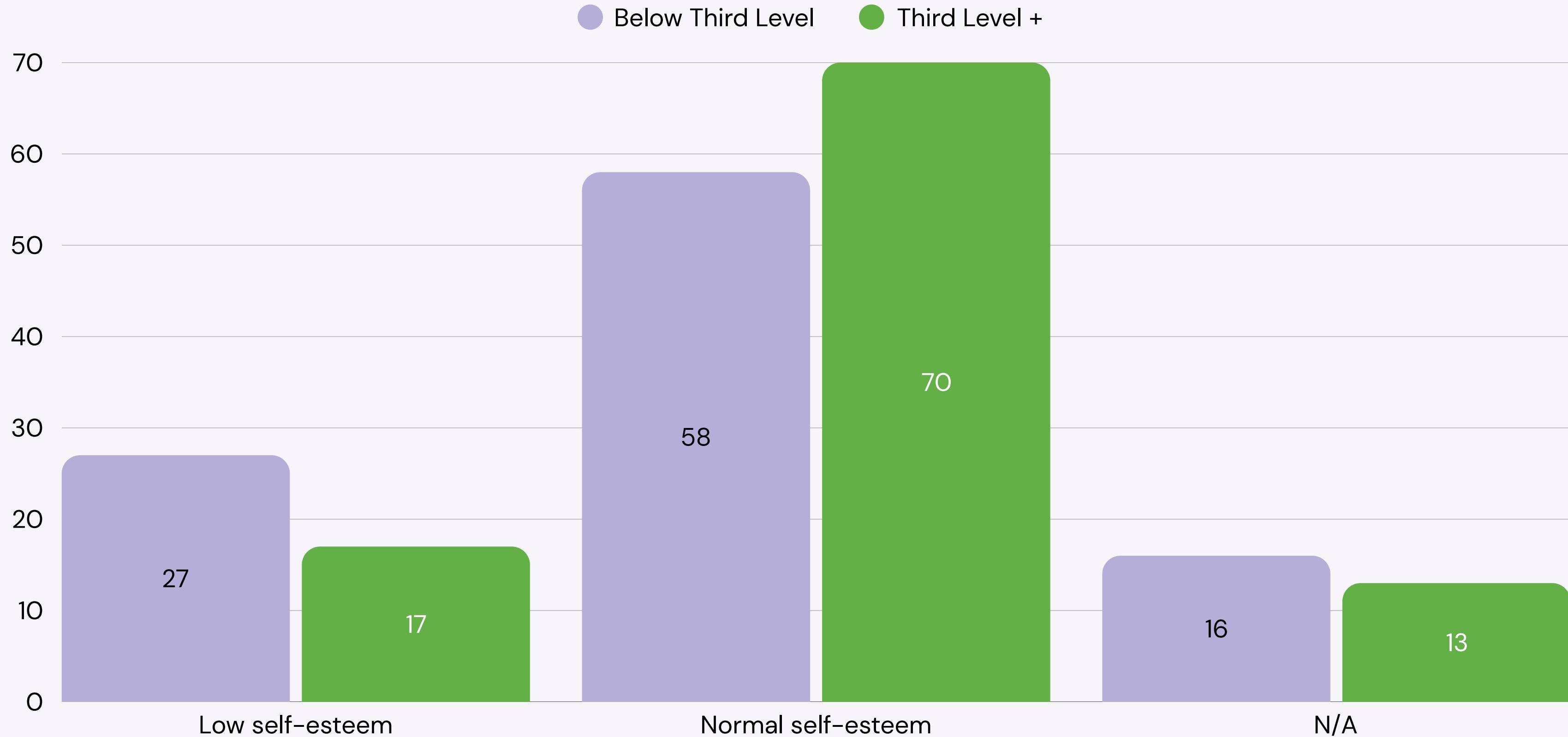
Source: CSO Growing up in Ireland, GUI63

25 year olds: No. days taking vigorous exercise per week (%)



Source: CSO Growing up in Ireland, GUI48

25 year olds: Self-esteem (%)



Source: CSO Growing Up in Ireland (GUI), GUI50

25 year olds: Depression/Anxiety Diagnosis (%)



Source: CSO Growing Up in Ireland (GUI), GUI49

Parental Education

The most important indicator of a child's reading level is maternal education level (PISA).

Of respondents (aged 25–59) whose parents had a third level education, 79.7% have a third level education themselves. In comparison 33.7% whose parents had a low level of education have a third level education. (CSO SILC, 2023)



Broader Outcomes

Given that most graduates move directly into employment, understandable focus on employment outcomes.

There should also be regard to the other benefits of third level education for society, community and future generations. Hard to capture data on this though!

When pursuing high levels of tertiary attainment, we need to have regard to balance:

- Skills shortages
- Imbalance in gender
- Imbalance regionally



The Evidence Base







Student Records System
(Address Data)



Graduate Outcomes Survey

Equal Access Survey
(Disability, Ethnicity, Lone
Parent Data)

Student Records System
(Address Data)



Equal Access Survey
(Disability, Ethnicity, Lone
Parent Data)

Graduate Outcomes Survey



All linked through PPSN (unique
individual identifier)

Student Records System
(Address Data)



Equal Access Survey
(Disability, Ethnicity, Lone
Parent Data)

Graduate Outcomes Survey

Student Grant Authority
(Grant Awardees)

Department of Education
(Primary and Post-Primary)

SOLAS
(Further Education)

Student Records System
(Address Data)



Equal Access Survey
(Disability, Ethnicity, Lone
Parent Data)

Graduate Outcomes Survey

Student Grant Authority
(Grant Awardees)

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Graduate Outcomes Survey



Student Grant Authority
(Grant Awardees)

Department of Education
(Primary and Post-Primary)

SOLAS
(Further Education)

Central Statistics Office – National Data Infrastructure

The evidence base is made up of many different sources!

HEA data

- Administrative and survey
- Survey data – response rates, representativeness

Anonymised data (e.g. StudentSurvey.ie)

- Can't link with other sources

Administrative Data in Central Statistics Office

- Based on PPSN so Irish domiciled only
- Can't ask questions
- Not collected for the purpose of HE necessarily

Other non-HE studies

- Not collected/produced for the purpose of HE

International data

- Consistency with national data
- Time lags
- Methodology not set locally





Summary points

Uncertain time for graduates

National and global economic trends will be reflected in Graduate Outcomes data.

- this is particularly true for a small open economy like Ireland's.

Irish Graduate Outcomes survey data for 2025 will be available later this year – interesting to see which way (if any) that employment is changing.

Focus needs to be on equipping graduates with the overall skills required to adapt and thrive in uncertain times.



Summary points

Broader outcomes from higher education need to be part of the conversations of what makes a “successful outcome”.

Any discussion of overeducation should also take into account skills shortages and regional economies.



Summary points

Focus is on linking data sources to inform policy and solve national policy problems – both immediate and long-term outcomes need to be leveraged.

Let perfect not be the enemy of good when it comes to the data that is available.

Information collected from students/graduates in a higher education institution feed the national data infrastructure and help answer policy questions.

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