



## Census 2016: Education Levels in the Western Region

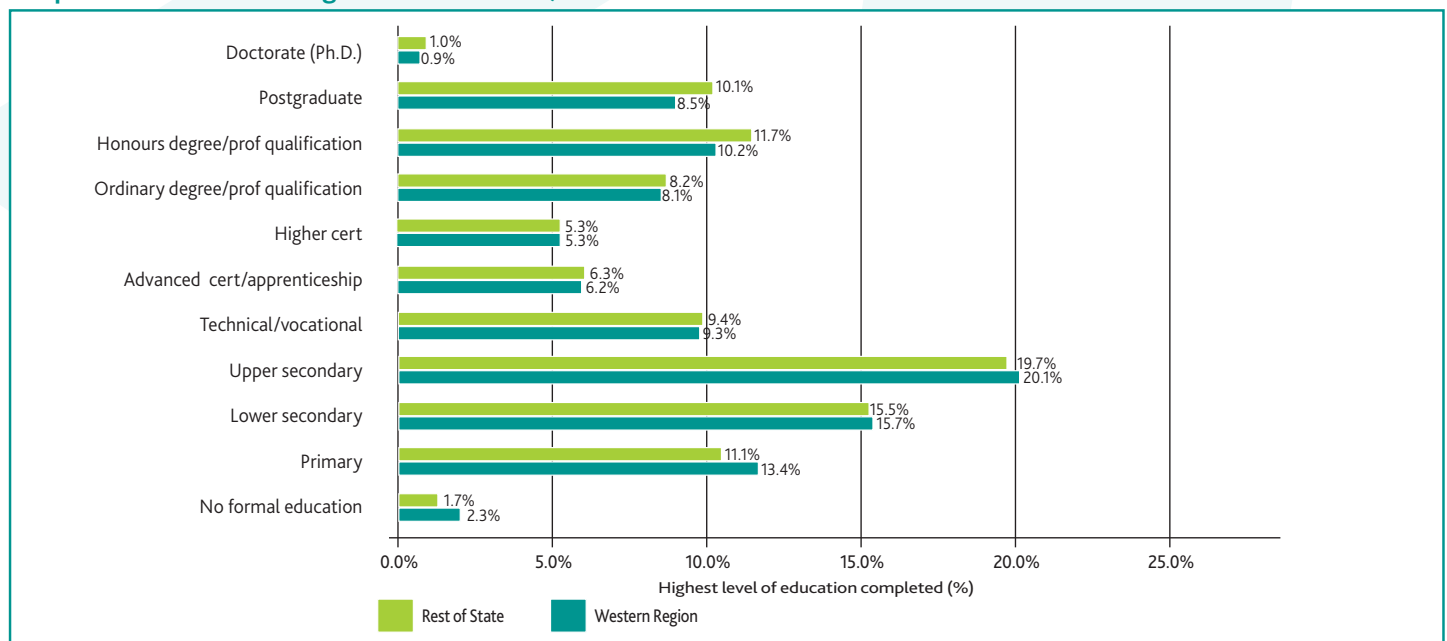
In this *WDC Insights* we examine the level of education of the adult population of the Western Region of Ireland<sup>1</sup> based on results from Census 2016.<sup>2</sup> The region is compared with the rest of the state,<sup>3</sup> while gender and county level differences are also considered.

### Greater share with lowest levels of education; smaller share at highest education levels

The Western Region has a greater share of its population<sup>4</sup> with no formal education or primary only as their highest level of education completed (Fig. 1). The difference is particularly large for those with only primary education (13.4% in the Western Region compared with 11.1% in rest of state). For qualification levels between lower secondary and ordinary bachelor degree/professional qualification, the share is quite similar in both areas, with the region having a slightly greater share with only secondary education.

At the highest levels of education however the difference between the Western Region and the rest of state is quite substantial; 10.2% have an honours bachelor degree/professional qualification in the Western Region compared with 11.7% in the rest of the state, while for postgraduate degree/diploma it is 8.5% compared with 10.1%. Overall the Western Region displays a lower educational profile.

**Fig. 1: Percentage of population (aged 15+ years and whose full-time education has ceased) by the highest level of education completed in the Western Region and rest of state, 2016**



Source: CSO, *Census 2016 Profile 10 – Education, Skills and the Irish Language*, Table EA003

### Higher educational profile among women

There are significant gender differences in education level. Well over a third (36.3%) of men<sup>5</sup> in the Western Region have either no formal education, or primary or lower secondary (Inter/Junior Cert) only. This is compared to about a quarter (26.6%) of women. In contrast,

1. Counties Donegal, Sligo, Roscommon, Leitrim, Mayo, Galway and Clare.
2. CSO, *Census 2016 Profile 10 – Education, Skills and the Irish Language*
3. Rest of state refers to all counties in the Republic of Ireland except for the seven counties of the Western Region.
4. Persons aged 15 years and over and whose full-time education has ceased.
5. Men aged 15 years and over and whose full-time education has ceased.



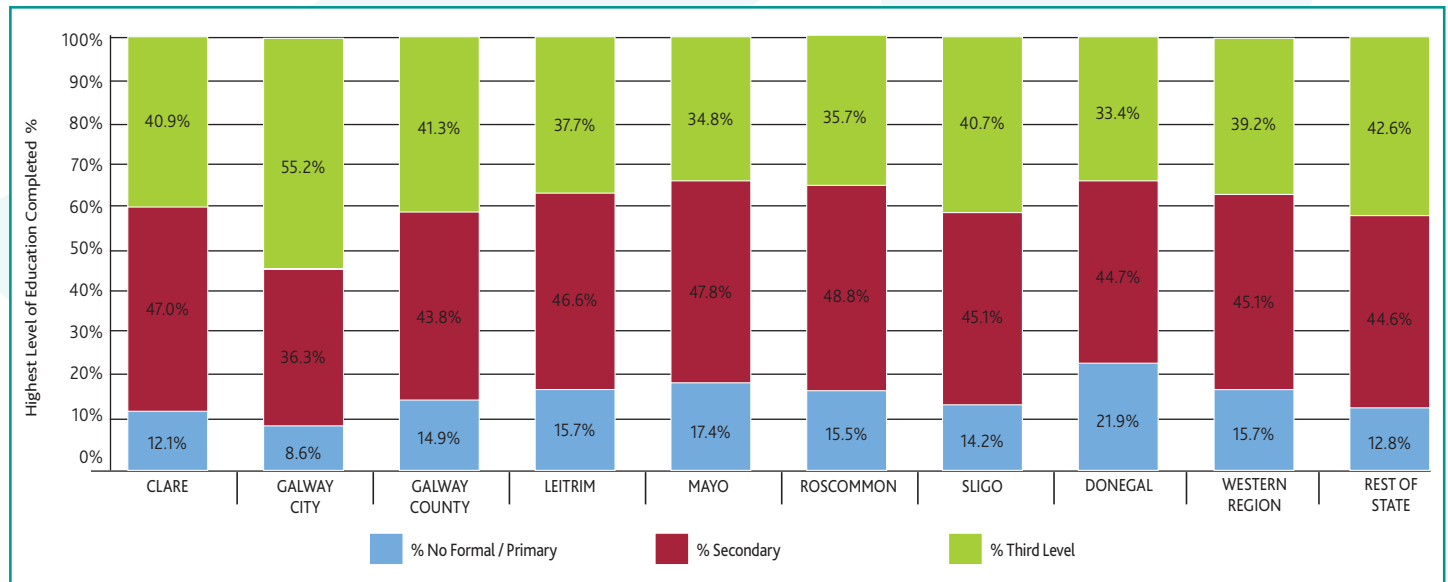
while 23% of men have a third level degree (ordinary bachelor degree/professional qualification or higher), 32.1% of women hold such a qualification. Significant male out-migration, especially among younger age groups who are more likely to hold higher qualifications, has influenced this.

## Galway city has 2<sup>nd</sup> highest share with third level in State; Donegal has highest share with lowest level of education

There are also significant differences across western counties (Fig. 2). At 55.2 %, Galway City has the second highest share of residents with a third level<sup>6</sup> qualification in Ireland, behind Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown but ahead of Fingal, Dublin City and Kildare. Within the region, Galway County, Clare and Sligo have the next highest shares of third level graduates, illustrating a strong concentration around Galway / Limerick and also in Sligo. Donegal has the lowest share with third level in the region (33.4%) and is fifth lowest nationally. In general the counties offering fewer graduate employment opportunities tend to have weaker educational profiles, with many of those with higher qualifications having left these areas.

Donegal has the highest share of its population with no formal education or primary only (21.9%) in the State. Mayo has the next greatest share in the Western Region (17.4%), followed by Leitrim (15.7%) and Roscommon (15.5%). The older age profile and economic profile of these counties, with high employment in more traditional sectors, contributes to this. At just 8.6% Galway City has the smallest share with the lowest level of education.

**Fig. 2: Percentage of population (aged 15+ years and whose full-time education has ceased) in western counties by highest level of education completed, 2016**



Source: CSO, *Census 2016 Profile 10 – Education, Skills and the Irish Language*, Table EA003

## Conclusion

Overall the Western Region continues to display a lower educational profile than the rest of the state. A number of factors influence this including the region's older age profile and the sectoral pattern of employment with smaller shares working in those sectors which demand higher qualifications (e.g. professional services, ICT, finance) and more working in sectors traditionally characterised by lower qualifications (e.g. hospitality, agriculture). Within the region the predominantly public sectors of health and education are key employers of those with third level education. Galway City shows a very different pattern with the second highest share of third level graduates in Ireland.

Download this *WDC Insights* <http://www.wdc.ie/publications/reports-and-papers/>

6. Advanced Certificate/Completed Apprenticeship and higher.