

Description of the Institute of Technology Grade Database.

The database records the grades awarded in Bachelors Degrees, National Certificates, and National Diplomas in each Institute of Technology for each year between 1994-2008. It does not include information on candidates who failed to graduate in each of those years as that information was not available.

The grades are separately reported under the four discipline areas of Business, Engineering, Humanities and Science/Technology. Both the absolute number of graduates awarded each grade and the percentage of those graduating with that qualification are recorded in each case.

Because the SPSS programme which was used to conduct the statistical analysis of the data requires that variable names not exceed 8 digits in length, a slightly complex system was necessary to allocate distinct yet meaningful names to the large number of variables – 1,447 in all - required to record the data for this project. (Note: Excel spreadsheets only accommodate 256 columns. It was not possible, therefore, to convert this database to Excel format)

Apart from the variable 'Year' which designates the year between 1994 and 2008 to which that row of data refers, all other variable names are made up of a number of codes.

Each variable name is made up of four separate codes with an additional underscore in some variables serving as an effective fifth code.

Each variable begins with a single letter distinguishing the individual Institute of Technology (Crawford, a part of Cork Institute of Technology is included as a separate institute).

The Institute code is either followed by an underscore or by the code for discipline. Where the underscore immediately follows the Institute code, it means that the variable records absolute numbers; where the discipline code immediately follows the Institute code it means that the variable records percentages.

The discipline code, again a single letter, distinguishes which discipline area (Business, Engineering, Humanities, Science/Technology) the variable refers to.

The qualification code, a single letter attached to the discipline code, indicates whether the variable refers to Bachelors Degrees, National Certificates or National Diplomas.

The final code, divided from the qualification code in all cases by an underscore, designates the grade of award.

The codes used in each case are listed below:

Institute Codes

a = Athlone Institute of Technology
b = Blanchardstown Institute of Technology
k = Carlow Institute of Technology
c = Cork Institute of Technology
f = Crawford College
d = Dundalk Institute of Technology
x = Dun Laoghaire Institute of Technology

g = Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology
z = Institute of Technology Tallaght
t = Institute of Technology Tralee
y = Letterkenny Institute of Technology
l = Limerick Institute of Technology
s = Sligo Institute of Technology
w = Waterford institute of Technology

Discipline Codes:

b = Business
e = Engineering
h = Humanities
s = Science and Technology

Qualification Codes:

b = Bachelors Degree
c = National Certificate
d = National Diploma

Grade Codes:

1 = First Class
21 = Second Class Grade One/Upper Second
22 = Second Class Grade Two/Lower Second
p = Pass
d = Distinction
m = Merit
m1 = Merit Grade 1
m2 = Merit Grade 2

Examples:

a_bc_m2 is Athlone Institute of Technology_Business Certificate_Merit Grade 2 and since there is an underscore dividing the Institute code from the discipline code, the variable refers to the absolute number of graduates who obtained that grade in the qualification.

ssb_1 is Sligo Institute of Technology_Science Bachelors Degree_First Class and since there is no underscore dividing the Institute code from the discipline code, the variable refers to the percentage of graduates in that qualification who obtained that grade.

ERRATUM

In O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2007a) the rate of Firsts for Waterford for 2002-2004 was quoted in error as 18.39% in Table 8. The rate should have been 11.25%. The error resulted from a transcription mistake which caused the number of 2.2 awards for 2003 to be entered as Firsts and vice versa in the database. The database was corrected for this report and extensive checks made to identify if any similar errors had been made. None were identified. Apart from causing Waterford IOT to be misrepresented in O'Grady and Guilfoyle(2007a) as having a rate of increase in Firsts between 1994-1996 and 2002-2004 of 64.2% when the actual increase was only a negligible 0.45%, the error resulted in an overestimate of the national rate of increase in Firsts over the period. The national rate of Firsts for 2002-2004 quoted in Table 8 of O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2007a) was 15.07% with an increase of 51.9% over the 1994-1996 average. The corrected rate for 2002-2004 is

13.82%, an increase of 39.3% over the 2002-2004 figure. The updated SPSS database, including the 2005-2008 figures available on the Network for Irish Educational Standards website now includes the corrected 2003 figures for Waterford.