

Expert Group Highlights Jobs Market Opportunities

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs today (Tuesday 28 February) published its second *Vacancy Overview* report, which outlines the areas where job vacancies arose during 2011.

The Expert Group also welcomes the emphasis on education and training and aligning skills with the needs of enterprise in the Government's recently published *2012 Action Plan for Jobs*.

The *Vacancy Overview* report shows that the trend in demand continues to be for those with work experience, third level qualifications and/or foreign language skills. The report also highlights vacancies in occupations that are proving difficult to fill with suitably qualified and/or experienced staff, which includes ICT professionals, financial experts, engineering experts and healthcare professionals.

The report outlined that, compared with 2010 there was an increase in the overall number of jobs advertised in 2011, with tentative signs of recovery in the number of jobs advertised for managerial, professional and associate professional occupations. The most advertised positions were in sales and ICT and third level qualifications were a prerequisite. Foreign languages, particularly German and Nordic languages, continued to be in demand. The report also highlights the importance of ongoing training in the workplace to develop specialised skills sets, particularly in the area of IT.

Welcoming the report, Ciarán Cannon, T.D., Minister for Training and Skills said, "This report gives those who are looking at education and training options or making career choices a view of what employers are looking for. It also provides insights for career guidance professionals, education and training providers and policy makers and facilitates providers in tailoring training and education to the needs of enterprise. With the magnitude of the problem of unemployment in Ireland, we must ensure that every opportunity is taken to align skills with labour market needs."

Una Halligan, Chairman, Expert Group on Future Skills Needs commented, "The *Vacancy Overview 2011* report reconfirms that high level ICT skills are in significant demand. I would like to encourage people to avail of the opportunities for upskilling and skills conversion that are available. The *ICT Action Plan: Meeting the high-level skills needs of enterprise in Ireland* recently announced by Government provides for a doubling of third level education places to 2018, Springboard provides of education and training places in 2012 at third level for job seekers and more immediately there are upskilling and reskilling opportunities for job seekers through the ICT skills conversion programme."

Key Report Findings

The Report shows that, despite the recession, some job vacancies continued to arise throughout 2011. While at a lower level than in 2007, the overall number of newly advertised vacancies was higher than in 2010.

The number of vacancies was most frequent for the following areas:

- Sales, marketing and customer service (e.g. retail sales, multilingual telesales, multilingual customer service, and sales accounts and business development managers)

- ICT (e.g. programmers/software developers, web designers, IT operations/user support technicians)
- Science and engineering (design and development engineers, process engineers, engineering and laboratory technicians)
- Accountancy and financial services/insurance (e.g. accountants, regulatory professionals, administration roles)
- Production, manufacturing and materials (e.g. quality control, production managers, admin roles)

The analysis of the vacancy data highlights the importance of foreign languages and relevant work experience as an integral part of the skills portfolio of candidates across a range of occupational groups. Also the data points to the need to incorporate relevant work experience into the education and training process to improve employment prospects for new graduates and first time entrants into the labour market.

Notes to Editors

Vacancy Overview

Produced by FÁS SLMRU on behalf of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), the Vacancy Overview 2011 findings draw on a number of data sources held in the National Skills Database to provide an overview and analysis of the demand for labour as measured by trends in newly advertised job vacancies from three sources: FÁS Jobs Ireland, www.irishjobs.ie and the Irish Times.

National Skills Database

The National Skills Database (NSD) was developed in 2003 by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in FÁS on behalf of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. It has been designed to collate all available information about the supply and demand of skills in Ireland. It provides a platform for the timely analysis and forecasting of the labour market at occupational level.

Recruitment Agency Survey

Since January 2008, the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in FÁS has conducted a biannual recruitment agency survey designed to gather the views of recruitment agencies in respect of the occupations for which vacancies, in their experience, are proving difficult to fill. The findings of the most recent survey which was conducted in October 2011 are presented for each occupational group.

About the EGFSN

The work of the EGFSN is managed by Forfás. The research and analysis conducted for the EGFSN is undertaken by Forfás and the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit of FÁS.

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) advises the Irish Government on current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland's enterprise and employment growth. It has a central role in ensuring that labour market needs for skilled workers are anticipated and met.

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