

PRESS RELEASE

Third level qualifications coupled with work experience and foreign language skills in demand by employers

New EGFSN report finds some job vacancies continue to arise despite recession

(Wednesday, 30 March 2011) Amid a challenging labour market and continuing high unemployment, the first annual *Vacancy Overview Report* from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) has found that despite the recession and high unemployment levels, some job vacancies continued to arise in 2010, providing positive news for job seekers in Ireland. Although the number of newly advertised vacancies is significantly lower than at the peak in 2007, vacancies continue to arise. Demand is mostly limited to experienced candidates. Where job vacancies arise, jobseekers with third level qualifications coupled with work experience and foreign language skills were more likely to be in demand by employers. This underlines the need for jobseekers to engage in upskilling and for the education and training system to continually align with the skills needs of enterprise.

The report provides a synopsis of the demand for labour in Ireland, highlights where employment opportunities exist and identifies specific skills gaps within the labour market. Although labour market demand has fallen across a number of sectors, some employment opportunities continue to exist for experienced personnel in:

- Professional level jobs in information and communications technology (ICT), engineering (e.g. energy systems), health and finance;
- Customer care related positions that span different sectors and levels of skill;
- Technical support, mostly in ICT ranging up to associate professional level;
- Sales across various sectors such as IT and telecommunications; and
- Security guards, catering staff and carers.

The report also includes the results of the October 2010 Recruitment Agency Survey which indicates that employers have vacancies that are proving difficult to fill with suitable candidates. These include roles for ICT professionals, financial experts, engineering experts and healthcare professionals.

Welcoming the report the Minister of State for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon, TD, said "The first annual Vacancy Overview Report from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs is an important report, which I warmly welcome as it provides clear evidence that vacancies still exist in Ireland's labour market. We know that despite the present difficult economic circumstances significant numbers of people are continuing to leave the Live Register because they have secured employment. The findings of this report highlight where vacancies currently exist in our economy and it offers hope to those individuals who continue to seek employment."

Continuing Minister Cannon stated "Improving your skills levels by participating in education and training programmes is an important element in securing employment. I would therefore encourage

those seeking employment to actively consider availing of the wide range of training and education programmes that are available.”

Commenting on the report, Una Halligan, Chairperson of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs said “ *Vacancy Overview 2010* serves as a useful and timely tool for jobseekers, career guidance counsellors and second and third level students in making the most appropriate education and training choices. It also provides valuable insights for education and training providers which should assist them in aligning their programmes with labour market needs. This new report adds a further dimension to the EGFSN’s ongoing monitoring of the labour market in Ireland with a view to getting people back to work.”

The analysis of the vacancy data also points to the effects of globalisation on the Irish labour market and the importance of foreign languages as an integral part of the skills portfolio of candidates across a range of occupational groups. It also underlines the importance of incorporating work experience of a significant duration into the education and training process to improve employment prospects for new graduates and first time entrants to the labour market. By highlighting areas where employment opportunities exist, the analysis of the vacancy data can be used to align labour market activation measures, such as work placement programmes, with labour market needs, thereby adding relevant work experience to the skills portfolio of the unemployed to increase their employability.

Produced by the FÁS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit on behalf of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, the report’s findings draw on a number of data sources held in the National Skills Database¹ to provide an overview and analysis of the demand for labour as measured by trends in advertised job vacancies from three sources: FÁS Jobs Ireland, www.irishjobs.ie and the Irish Times.

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Notes to Editors:

1. 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. As such, it provides a platform for the timely analysis and forecasting of the labour market at occupational level.