

Expert Group Publishes Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply Report

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) today published its annual report on the supply of skills to the Irish labour market. The report, 'Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply: Trends in Education and Training Outputs', examines the numbers of students entering and leaving the education/training system in Ireland and reports on:

- The demographic profile of the school age population
- Junior and leaving cert trends
- Further education and training awards
- Higher education trends
- Where graduates go
- Adult lifelong learning participants

The main findings were:

- Inflows to the education and training system continued to grow across almost all sectors of the education and training system (except junior infants); new entrants to higher education rose by 5% between 2008 and 2009
- There were just over 200,000 awards made in 2009/2010 across all levels on the National Framework of Qualifications- a 1.5% rise on the preceding year.
- 86,200 people received awards in further education & training (major awards) and higher education
 - 30% at level 8 (honours bachelor degree) which is almost the same as the previous year
 - 19% were for postgraduate awards - a 5% increase on the previous year
 - The largest increase was at level 5 where the number of FETAC (major) awards increased by 18%.
- Students are more likely than ever before to sit the Leaving Certificate examinations with a retention rate of 87.7%
- Promising signs for technology subjects at higher education:
 - With the exception of construction, CAO level 8 acceptances increased for science and technology subjects which will impact positively on graduate output in the medium term
 - The number of PhD graduates in science increased by 26% between 2008 and 2009

Where do Graduates Go?

The share of young (aged 25-34) third level graduates (NFQ 8 and above) in Ireland who were at work remained unchanged at 85% between quarter 4 2009 and quarter 4 2010. Those with Education qualifications (NFQ 8 and above) were most likely to be in

employment (92% were at work); graduates from the services and engineering disciplines had the highest rate of unemployment (both at 11%).

The participation of the adult population in lifelong learning was examined for the first time in this year's report. The main findings were:

- Approximately 111,000 persons aged 25+ participated in lifelong learning (LLL) in quarter 4 2010, representing 4.5% of the adult population. Of these:
 - 47% were in the economically inactive category
 - 30% were in full-time employment
 - 15% were in part-time employment
 - 8% were unemployed
- Over the period quarter 4 2005 to quarter 4 2010, the number of LLL participants increased by 40% (or 32,000 learners)

In monitoring the skills supply that emerges from the education and training system in Ireland on an annual basis, the report serves as a valuable tool in the EGFSN's role in advising the Irish Government on the current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland's enterprise and employment growth. This is of particular importance as, in the coming years, the education and training system in Ireland is expected to experience considerable growth as a result of recent increases in the number of school-going age children and greater participation by older learners, particularly in further and higher education/training.