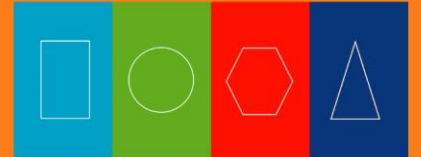


Vacancy Overview 2010

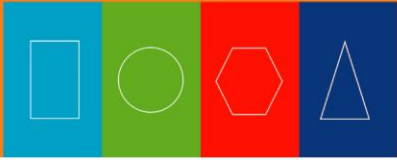
March 2011

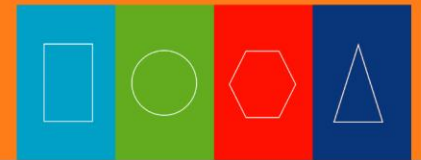


Vacancy Overview 2010

A report produced by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in FÁS for the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs

March 2011





Foreword

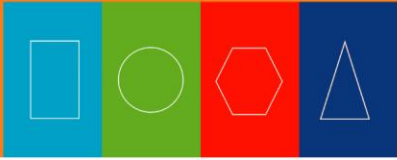
The Vacancy Overview 2010 is the first annual vacancy report produced by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit of FÁS on behalf of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. It draws on a number of data sources held in the National Skills Database to provide an overview of the demand for labour as measured by trends in advertised job vacancies. As such, the Vacancy Overview 2010 adds a further dimension to the EGFSN's on-going monitoring of the labour market.



The Overview highlights the fact that, despite the recession, job vacancies have continued to arise. And while the number of newly advertised vacancies is significantly lower than at the peak in 2007, the number of vacancies in 2010 was up on the previous year. Further analysis shows that the newly advertised vacancies exist for both professional occupations (ICT, engineering (e.g. energy systems), health and finance) and occupations at the lower end of the skills scale (e.g. security guards, catering staff and carers). Customer care related vacancies also feature prominently in the data and span a number of fields and skill levels including, among others, technical support (ranging up to associate professional level) and sales (e.g. IT, telecommunications). Language skills are also seen to be necessary for many of the newly advertised vacancies, particularly in customer care activities.

The findings of the Vacancy Overview 2010 provide some positive news for job seekers in that they highlight the areas where employment opportunities exist. However, the jobs on offer require candidates with specific profiles that include: experience, specific expertise (e.g. IT, financial), third level qualifications, and language skills. This indicates a need for job seekers to reskill/upskill and, where possible, to avail of work placement programmes and internships in order to gain experience. The publication of the Vacancy Overview 2010 therefore serves as a useful and timely tool for career guidance counsellors in assisting students and the unemployed 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.

Una Halligan
Chairperson
EGFSN



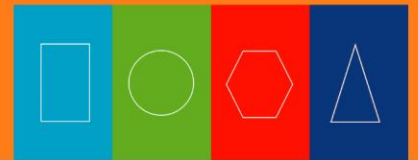
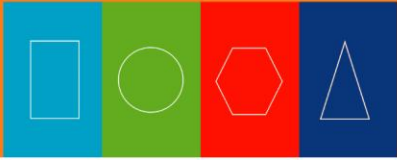
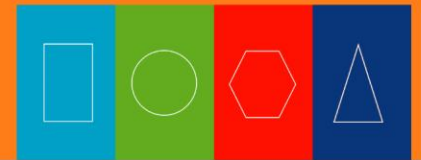


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1. Introduction

This document was prepared by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in FÁS for the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN). It draws on the various datasets held in the National Skills Database (NSD)¹ to provide an overview of the demand for labour as measured by trends in advertised job vacancies.

Although there are many limitations, as outlined later in this document, when interpreted with caution, vacancy data can provide a useful insight into the developments in the labour market.

In this paper, vacancy data refers to newly advertised vacant posts advertised through Jobs Ireland (FÁS), Irishjobs.ie and the Irish Times. The focus is on the analysis of occupations and job titles of vacancies advertised in 2010. The objective is to identify skills where demand exists in the Irish labour market.

The paper has nine sections, corresponding to the **nine broad occupational groups** as per the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 1990). For each occupational group we provide an analysis of trends and the composition of vacancies advertised in 2010 in terms of:

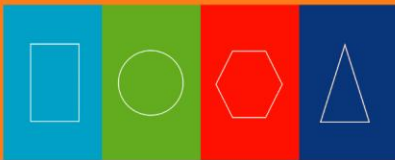
- sector
- occupation and job title
- skills
- education
- experience.

In addition, we present the findings of the October 2010 SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey and describe any identified difficult to fill vacancies for each occupational group.

To further complement information on recruitment difficulties, 2010 employment permit data is used to identify the job titles for which employers sourced skills from outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

Finally, in order to supplement vacancy data and assess the possible future demand in the short-term, job announcements that appeared in the media in 2010 are presented for each occupational group.

¹ The National Skills Database (NSD) is held and maintained by the SLMRU in FÁS. It collates all available information about the supply and demand for skills in Ireland.



2. Data

Vacancy data

The analysis presented in this paper is based on the vacancy data advertised through FÁS Jobs Ireland, the Irish Times and Irishjobs.ie. It focuses on newly advertised vacancies in any given month.

Jobs Ireland vacancy data is a collection of all vacancies advertised by employers through the National Contact Centre in FÁS. Vacancies may be advertised through FÁS offices and online. Irish Times job vacancy data is gathered from jobs advertised online and in the newspaper. Irishjobs.ie provides vacancy data from their online vacancy advertising service. The analysis includes only IrishJobs.ie vacancies advertised by an employer and excludes vacancies advertised by agencies.

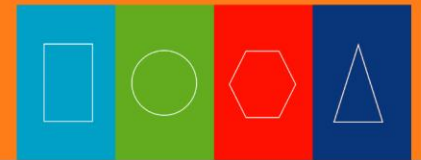
Several issues, general and source specific, arise with the interpretation and analysis of advertised job vacancy data.

General vacancy data limitations

- Vacancies may be advertised through channels not captured in the analysis leading to an underestimation of the true demand.
- Vacancies may be advertised simultaneously through several channels leading to an overestimation of the true demand.
- The extent to which vacancies are arising due to expansion demand (the creation of a new position by an employer), replacement (a person leaving an already existing position) or other reasons is unclear.
- There is a danger of an occupational bias in any given advertising channel. For instance, while there has been a gain in the market share for managerial and higher skilled job advertisements in recent years, the distribution of vacancies advertised through Jobs Ireland (FÁS) is skewed towards craft, services and sales occupations. On the other hand, job vacancies advertised through the Irish Times and Irish jobs.ie are skewed towards managerial, professional and associate professional occupations.
- The time periods for which new advertised vacancy data is available differs across data sources.

Source specific data limitations

- The vacancy refreshing facility available to employers on the Irishjobs.ie website makes it possible for a previously advertised vacancy to occur as a new vacancy in the following month, which may lead to an overestimation of the true number of new vacancies.
- While not an issue with FÁS vacancies (given the vacancy validation procedures in place), difficulties in distinguishing between true vacancies and non-substantiated advertisements in other sources can lead to an overestimation of the true demand.
- IrishJobs.ie and Irish Times vacancies have been assigned an occupational code using Cascot software which automatically assigns a code based on key words or word segments found in the



job description. In some cases the match may be erroneous (e.g. anti-money laundering mistaken for laundering services), and as such this has the potential to reduce the accuracy of the data.

- Despite having unique reference codes in the Irishjobs.ie and Irish Times data sets, the same job can appear in the data more than once, thus skewing the perceived demand for a job.
- For the Irish Times data, there were several breaks in the time series caused by a change in the data generation method and for this reason it was used to extract qualitative information only and excluded from the trend analyses.

Given the above data limitations, the analysis focuses on the qualitative aspects of the advertised vacancies. Quantitative information is limited to plotting a trend of the overall number of vacancies for Irishjobs.ie and FÁS Jobs Ireland only. The objective is not to quantify the number of vacancies but rather to show the movement of vacancies over time. In order to smooth the variability exhibited between individual months, the data is presented as a three month moving average.

Seasonality

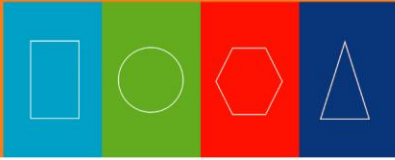
The issue of seasonality was examined for the overall vacancy time series as well as individual occupational groups. Only FÁS data was examined in this context given that it provides the longest time series without breaks. Seasonality was found to be present in the overall vacancy time series and in the vacancies data for craft, services and sales occupations. As the analyses are primarily qualitative, the presence of seasonality does not impact on the findings presented in this paper. Nonetheless, for occupations where seasonality was detected, the adjusted series are presented in the Appendix.

SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey

Every six months, since January 2008, the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in FÁS conducts a 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 survey is conducted electronically: an e-mail with a link to a web based questionnaire is sent to approximately 400 recruitment agencies nationwide. This is followed by a telephone reminder. The findings of the most recent survey (based on approximately 50 responses) which was conducted in October 2010 are presented for each occupational group.

Work permit data

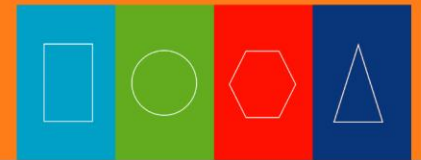
Despite the recession, employers continue to employ workers from non-EEA countries through employment permit schemes. While the data on newly issued employment permits, provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation (DETI), may be used to highlight occupations for which employers experience difficulty in sourcing staff domestically, it should be interpreted with caution:



- new employment permits may be issued to persons already residing in Ireland but who have changed employer
- new employment permits may be issued to spouses of existing employment permit holders
- new employment permits may be issued to EU citizens (i.e. Romanian and Bulgarian nationals).

Job Announcements

Since January 2010, the SLMRU has noted any media announcements on job creation and job losses. This information supplements the vacancy data by pointing to areas in which job opportunities are occurring as well as where expansion activities are likely to arise in the short-medium term.

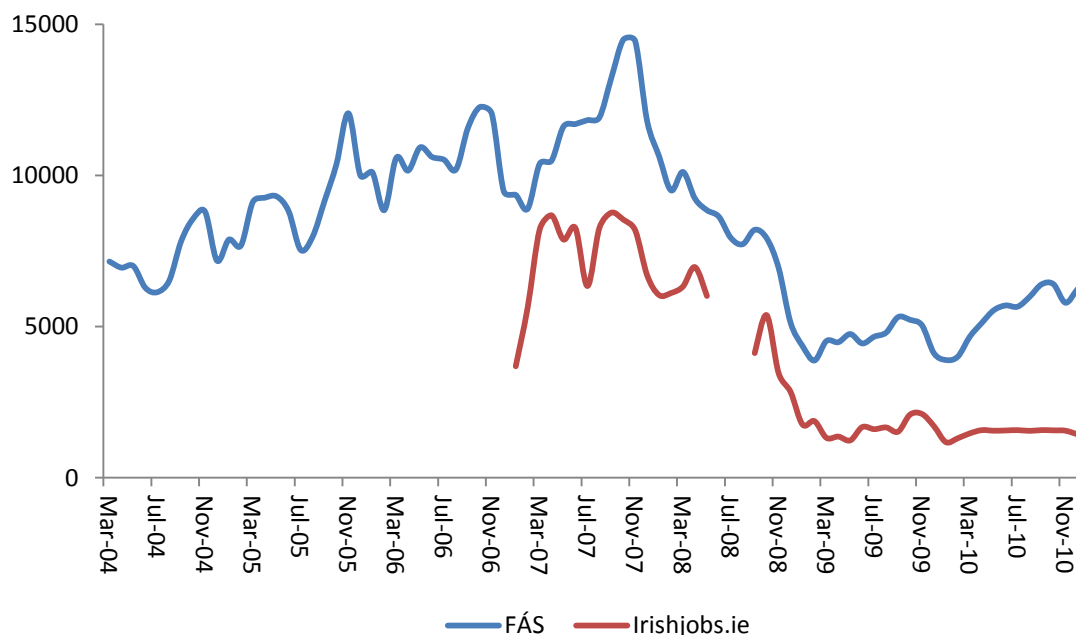


3. Overall vacancies

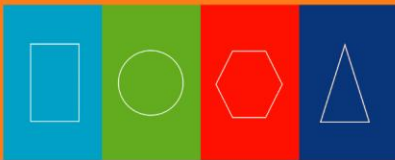
Despite the recession, job vacancies have continued to arise in the Irish labour market. The evolution over time of the number of newly advertised vacancies expressed as a three month moving average is presented in Figure 3.1. Statistical tests confirmed the presence of seasonality in the data, with greater recruitment activity exhibited between September and November and a slump in December each year. The seasonally adjusted series is presented in Table A1 in the Appendix.

The overall number of new vacancies was highest during 2007: new advertisements through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank exceeded 10,000 a month and there were approximately 8,000 new vacancies posted monthly on the Irishjobs.ie website. Although magnitudes differ between the two data sets, the direction and timing of the downturn coincide: the number of advertised vacancies started to decline in the first quarter of 2008 and stabilised during 2009 at a significantly lower level than at the peak. There were some signs of growth in the number of advertised vacancies from the start of 2010 in the case of FÁS notified vacancies.

Figure 3.1 New Notified Job Vacancies (three-month moving average)



Note: A break occurred in the IrishJobs.ie data between May 2008 and July 2008 and is, therefore, excluded from the trend analysis reported in this paper

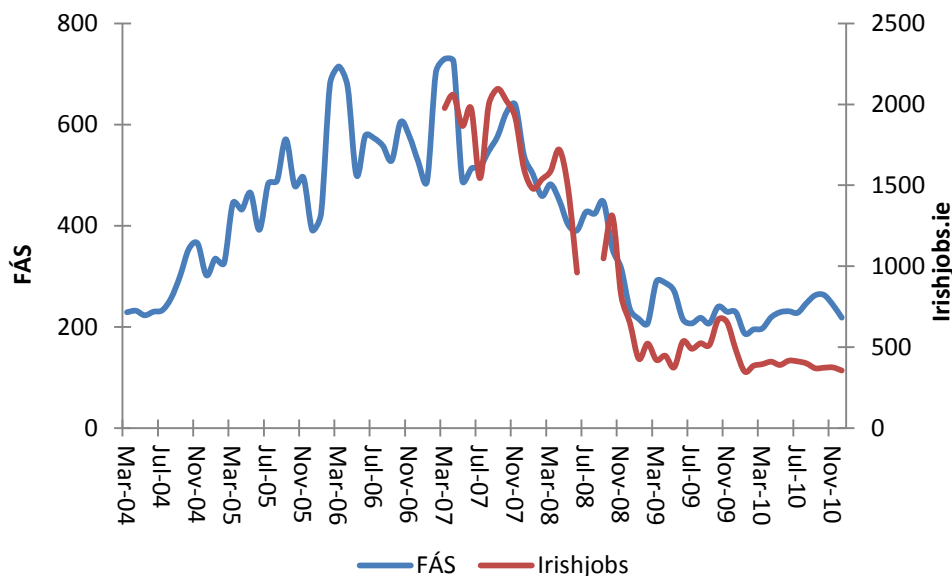


4. Managers

Trend analysis

The number of vacancies for managers was highest during 2007, when up to 2,000 vacancies a month were advertised on the Irishjobs.ie website and up to 700 through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank. The difference in scales as presented in Figure 4.1 for the two vacancy sources is most likely due to the advertisement channel bias which varies by occupational group. Although magnitudes of vacancies differ between the two data sets, the direction and timing of the downturn coincide: the number of advertised vacancies sharply declined during 2008 and stabilised at a significantly lower level during 2009 compared to the peak. There were some signs of the number of vacancies stabilising, and even increasing in the case of FÁS vacancies, since the start of 2010.

Figure 4.1 Vacancies for managers (three-month moving average)

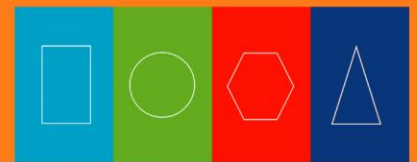


Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

During 2010, managerial vacancies were most frequently advertised in the following sectors:

- sales
- banking, insurance and financial services
- ICT
- marketing
- retail
- accountancy and finance.



Occupations and job titles

Managerial vacancies were most frequent for

- marketing/sales managers (over one third of all managerial vacancies)
 - marketing managers
 - sales executives/managers
 - client relationships managers
 - on-line sales and operations managers
- financial managers
 - accounts managers
 - financial managers
- operations managers in manufacturing and ICT.

During the boom, management posts in the personal and protective services sector accounted for a significantly greater share of managerial vacancies compared to all other managers, while their share in 2010 is significantly lower than for other managers. This suggests that the impact of the recession disproportionately affected managerial jobs in services compared to other managers, particularly marketing/sales managers.

Skills

Specific skills stated as a requirement in vacancies for managers included:

- foreign languages - particularly in vacancies for sales and marketing managers, with many specifying fluency in one or more foreign languages as a requirement; the languages most frequently mentioned as a requirement were French and German but also Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Dutch, Swedish and Norwegian
- project management
- compliance and regulation
- business/product development and innovation.

Education

The majority of managerial vacancies advertised in 2010 specified at least a third level qualification as a requirement. Vacancies for which there were no minimum education requirements were primarily for retail managers.

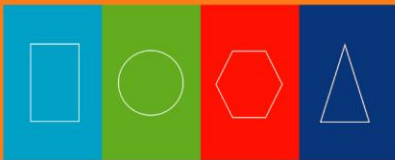
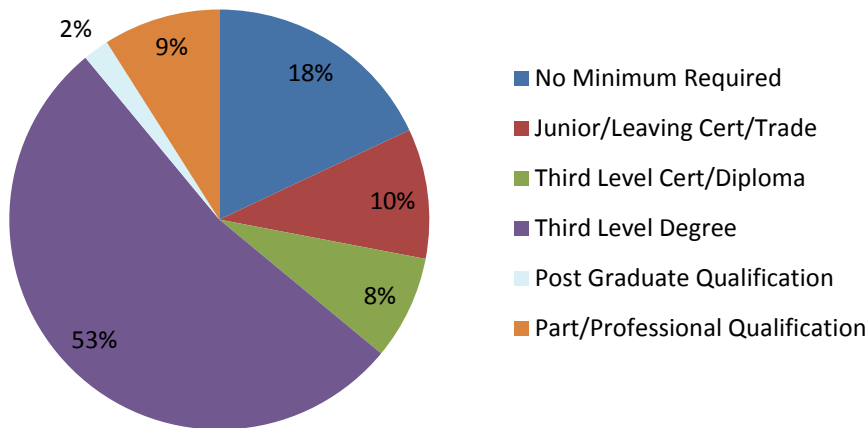


Figure 4.2 Vacancies for managers by education level required, 2010

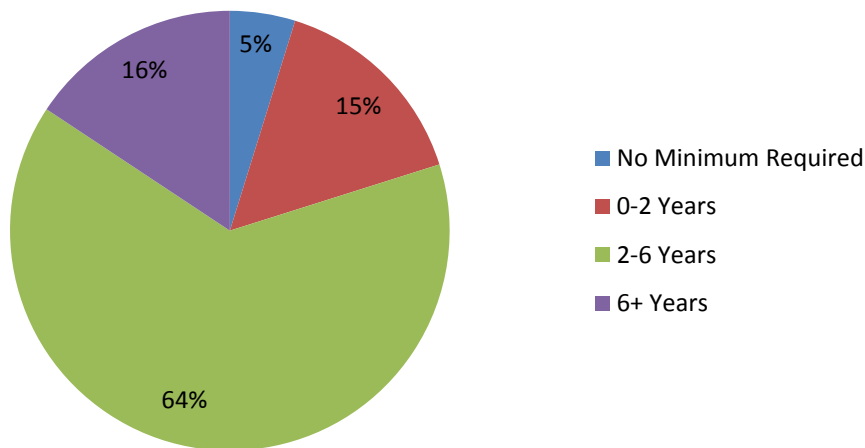


Source: Irishjobs.ie

Experience

As expected, the majority of managerial vacancies required significant experience, with 80% of vacancies specifying at least two years' experience.

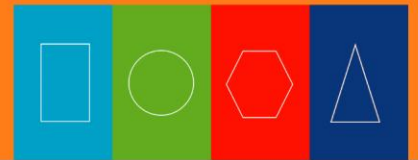
Figure 4.3 Vacancies for managers by experience required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Difficult to fill vacancies

There are a number of areas for which managerial vacancies were rated as either difficult or too difficult to fill as reported in the Recruitment Agency Survey conducted in October 2010. These include highly experienced (5+ years) specialist managers in:



- sales and marketing
- finance
- production
- ICT.

Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- Employers continue to source some managerial skills from outside the EU, with 453 new employment permits issued in 2010.
- Of all new permits issued to non-EEA workers, managers accounted for almost 11% of the total.
- One in four new permits issued to non-EEA managers was an intra-company transfer.
- The highest number of new permits was issued to financial managers (68), sales and marketing managers (52), production managers (49) and computer systems managers (37).

Job announcements

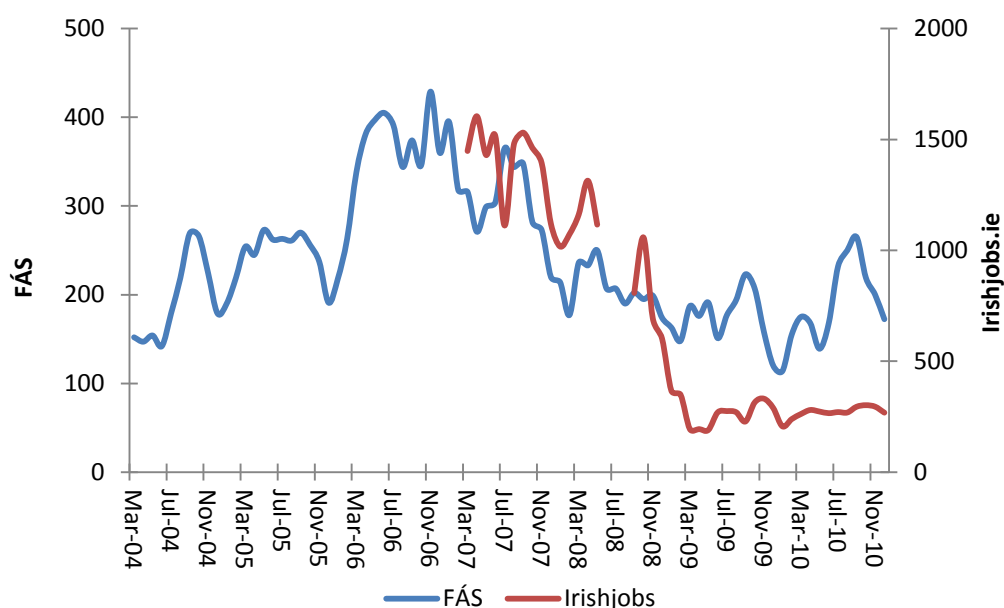
While there were few management specific job announcements during 2010, managerial posts were implicit in almost all expansion activities. Job announcements relevant for managers were in the IT and energy related sectors e.g. project managers for business software development and construction projects within the energy sector (associated with power plant upgrades and the switch to renewable energy generation).

5. Professionals

Trend analysis

The number of vacancies for professionals was highest during the last two quarters of 2006 and first three quarters of 2007, when up to 1,500 vacancies a month were advertised on the Irishjobs.ie website and up to 400 through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank. The difference in scales as presented in Figure 5.1 for the two vacancy sources is most likely due to the advertisement channel bias which varies by occupational group. Although magnitudes differ between the two data sets, the direction and timing of the downturn coincide: the number of advertised vacancies started to decline in the first quarter of 2008 and stabilised at a lower level during 2009 compared to the peak. There were signs of growth in the number of FÁS advertised vacancies for professionals in the first half of 2010 although this reversed in the last quarter of the year.

Figure 5.1 Vacancies for professionals (three-month moving average)

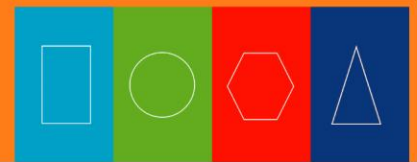


Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

During 2010, professional vacancies were most frequently advertised for the following sectors:

- ICT
- engineering and utilities
- banking, insurance and financial services
- accountancy and finance
- healthcare
- science
- education.



Occupations and job titles

Professional vacancies were most frequent for

- software engineers specialising in:
 - web development (e.g. ASP.net, PHP, Sharepoint)
 - networking (e.g. Server Message Block (SMB), wireless sensor testing)
 - quality assurance (e.g. software tester)
 - IT security
 - applications development (e.g. Java, J2EE Java, Oracle, C++, UNIX, Linux, SQL server, SAS, SAP, VB, embedded software)
 - gaming
- business analysts
- engineers:
 - electrical engineers (e.g. wind power engineers, high voltage engineers, wind turbine, power generation specialist)
 - R&D and product development engineers (e.g. biomedical)
 - design engineer (e.g. electrical, mechanical, packaging etc.)
 - new product introduction engineers
 - process engineer (e.g. medical devices, biomedical (purification))
 - quality assurance engineers (e.g. SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition), reliability, validation etc.)
 - project management engineers (e.g. energy sector)
- qualified accountants specialising in:
 - financial control and reporting (e.g. SAP financial control consultant)
 - compliance (e.g. Solvency II insurance regulation)
 - treasury
- actuaries
- risk experts (insurance e.g. asset liability management (ALM), finance)
- financial modellers.

Skills

German and French language skills featured in some vacancies for professionals in ICT, engineering and finance.

Education

A degree or above was a requirement in 85% of professional vacancies.

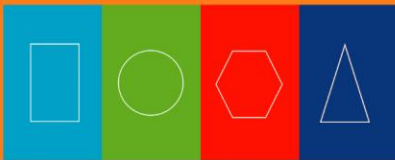
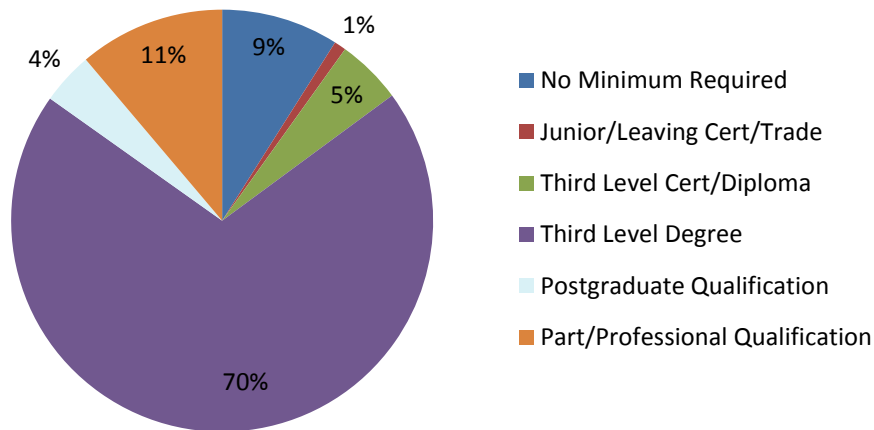


Figure 5.2 Vacancies for professionals by education level required, 2010

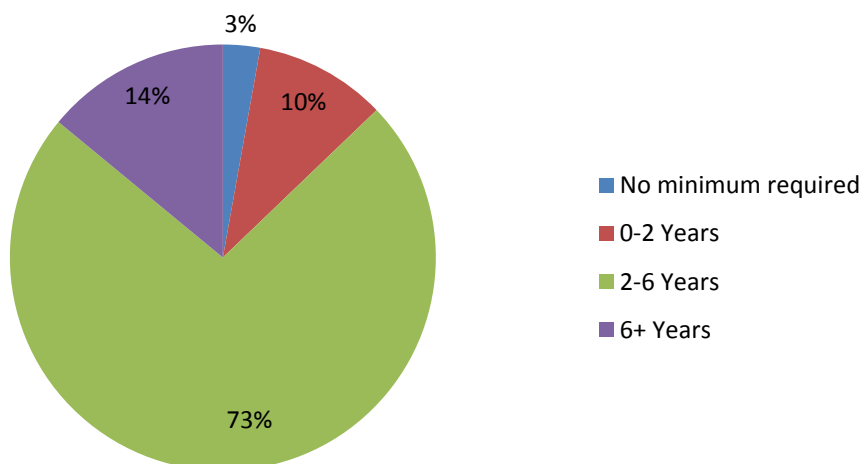


Source: Irishjobs.ie

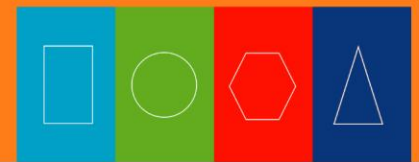
Experience

The majority of vacancies for professional occupations had significant experience specified as a requirement. Two to six years' experience was required in almost three quarters of the vacancies with a further 14% requiring 6+ years' experience.

Figure 5.3 Vacancies for professionals by experience required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie



Difficult to fill vacancies

Highly experienced (5+ years) professionals in specialised niche areas continue to be difficult to source. Professional occupations accounted for 44% of all total difficult to fill mentions in the October 2010 Recruitment Agency Survey. The following professionals were mentioned as difficult to source:

- **software engineers/developers:** with expertise C++, .net, MS SharePoint, C Sharp, Visual Basic, Java, and specific operating systems (e.g. Linux)
- **engineers:** production/process (e.g. with SixSigma and Lean Manufacturing expertise); electrical engineers (renewable energy/electrical grid development); quality control/validation; safety (chemical process safety); industry regulatory compliance specialists
- **senior technologists:** R&D and cross-discipline expertise (e.g. engineering and science for production processes in pharmaceuticals)
- **specialist accountants:** especially in financial, auditing and regulatory compliance
- **actuaries and business analysts:** risk analysts, quantitative analysts/modellers
- **medical doctors/practitioners:** Senior House Officers, locums, Interns
- **legal professionals:** with financial litigation expertise.

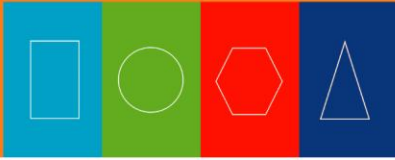
Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- In 2010, 945 new employment permits were issued to non-EEA professionals.
- Professionals accounted for almost one in four of all new permits issued.
- Software engineers/developers were the largest subgroup of professionals sourced from outside the EEA, with 333 in total; of these, two thirds originated from India
- Medical professionals accounted for almost one third of all professionals sourced from the outside the EEA, the majority was employed as either Interns or Senior House Officers (SHOs).
- The third largest subgroup was qualified accountants, followed by management consultants and business analysts.

Job announcements

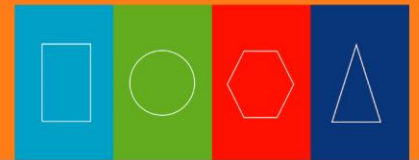
A significant share of job announcements made in 2010 was for professional positions. They were mostly confined to the pharmaceutical, renewable energy and ICT sectors where the demand was for high-level skills (often at PhD level). There were also announcements for doctors and teachers. Specifically, the job titles in demand were:

- research scientists: drug development and sustainable energy
- software developers/engineers: cloud computing, internet security, network security, gaming, software development for specific business (e.g. banking applications, property portfolio management solutions), energy efficiency in ICT (e.g. Bell Labs announcement); research software engineers
- Teachers: due to the surge in the number of full time students the Government announced a significant number of teaching jobs (May 2010)



- medical staff (doctors): jobs were announced as part of overall job creation in the private healthcare sector (e.g. Cork Medical Centre).

The numbers of jobs announced ranged from small (10-50 jobs) to significant (300+ jobs announced for research positions at Pharmadel in Co. Kerry).

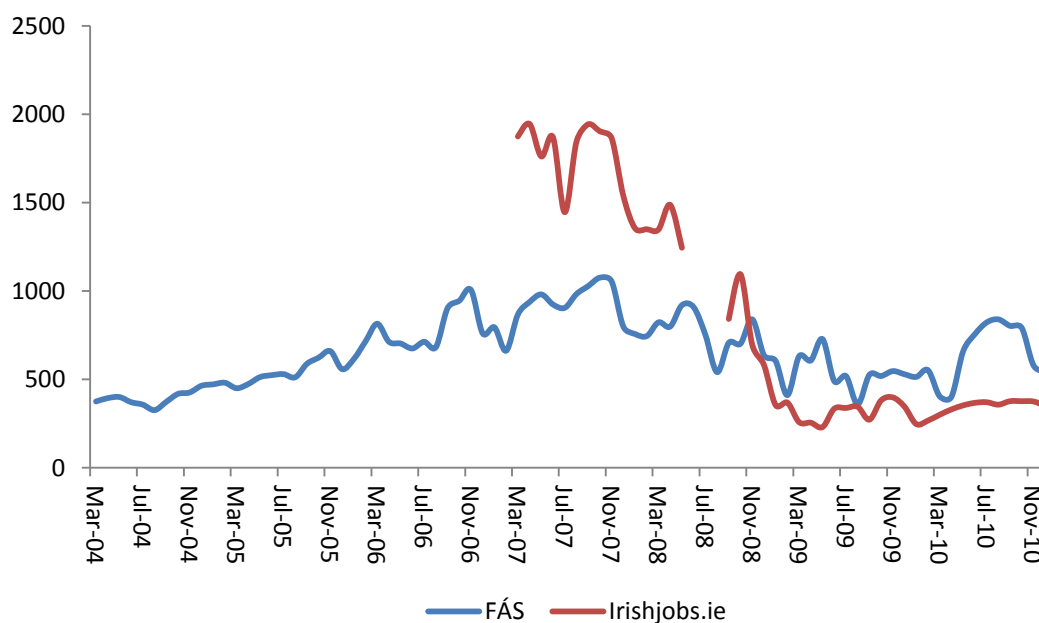


6. Associate Professionals

Trend analysis

The number of vacancies for associate professionals was the highest during 2007, when up to 2,000 vacancies a month were advertised on the Irishjobs.ie website, and up to 1,000 through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank. Although magnitudes differ between the two data sets, the direction and timing of the downturn coincide: the number of advertised vacancies started to decline in the first quarter of 2008 and stabilised at a significantly lower level during 2009 compared to the peak. While there were signs of growth in the number of advertised vacancies for associate professionals in the first half of 2010, this reversed in the latter quarter of the year.

Figure 6.1 Vacancies for associate professionals (three-month moving average)

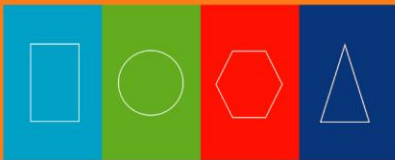


Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

During 2010, vacancies for associate professionals were most frequently advertised in the following sectors:

- IT
- banking, insurance and financial services
- accountancy and finance
- healthcare.



Occupations and job titles

Vacancies for associate professionals were most frequent for

- multilingual IT technical support (e.g. UNIX, Oracle, server, cloud computing (e.g. CITRIX, Tivoli), etc.)
- underwriters, claims assessors and analysts
 - multilingual credit and collections analyst
 - multilingual e-commerce fraud analyst
 - multilingual claims officer
 - pricing analyst
 - financial operations analyst (e.g. derivatives, securities, settlements)
- laboratory technicians (microbiology, chemistry, stability, sterilisation and plant hygiene, quality assurance)
- nurses (e.g. intensive care, oncology, anaesthetics, neonatal, palliative care).

There has been a considerable increase in the number of vacancies for performing artists (actors)/directors and writers/journalists, which is due to the increasing activity in the film industry (domestic and foreign).

Skills

Foreign language skills were required for roles in IT technical support, claims and collections with French and German the languages most in demand, but also Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Dutch and Italian.

Education

The majority of vacancies for associate professionals required a third level qualification, with two thirds requiring a degree or higher education attainment.

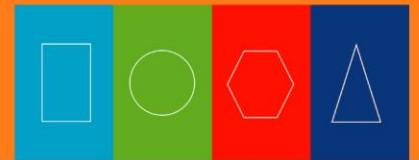
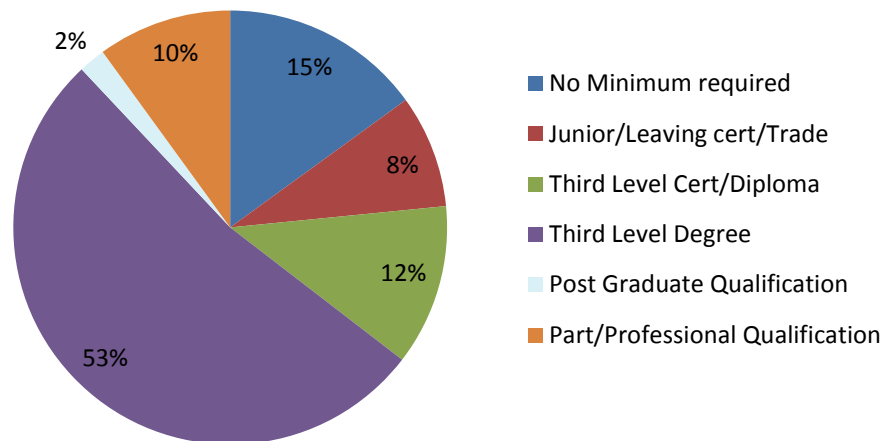


Figure 6.2 Vacancies for associate professionals by education level required, 2010

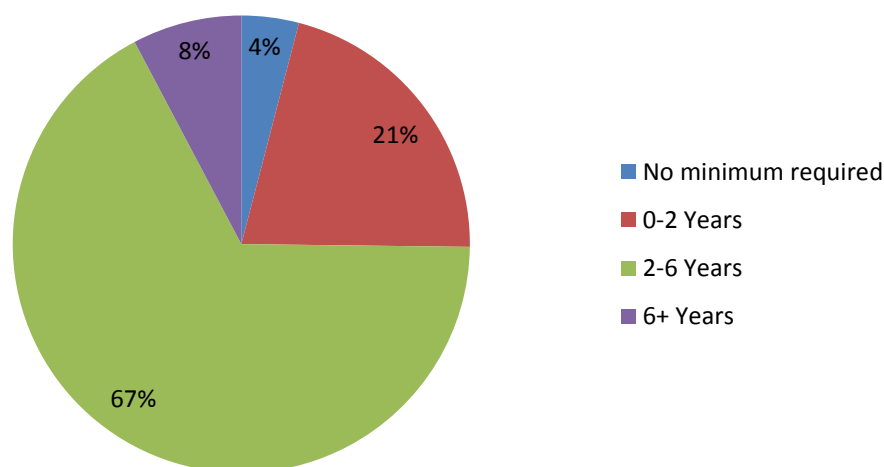


Source: Irishjobs.ie

Experience

The majority of vacancies for associate professionals had significant experience as a requirement. Three quarters of vacancies had over 2 years of experience specified as a requirement.

Figure 6.3 Vacancies for associate professionals by experience required, 2010

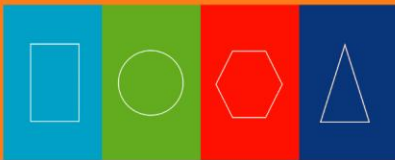


Source: Irishjobs.ie

Difficult to fill vacancies

Associate professional occupations accounted for more than one in five difficult to fill mentions. The jobs available were confined to specialist areas requiring at least one to five years' experience:

- debt collectors: with languages and experience



- **healthcare staff:** specialist nurse (theatre, renal and diabetes; senior nursing managers), occupational and speech therapist
- **technicians:** electrical/electronic; engineering (pharmaceuticals); scientific (medical device experience); laboratory
- **financial specialists:** credit controller; insurance test analyst (e.g. Life 400); fund specialist; risk analyst; regulatory analyst.

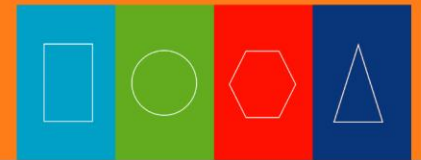
Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- There were 672 permits granted to associate professionals, amounting to 16% of the total.
- The most frequent occupations sourced from non-EEA countries were ICT associate professionals and nurses, accounting for 28% and 24% of the total permits issued to associate professionals respectively.
- Amongst the remaining associate professionals, professional athletes/sports officials were the largest subgroup, with 47 permits issued, followed by scientific technicians and financial associate professionals especially underwriters/claim assessors & analysts.

Job announcements

The announcements for associate professional occupations were few in number and were confined to positions in

- maintenance and development of financial services software
- some posts for nurses and healthcare workers, mostly in connection with job announcements in the private healthcare sector (nurses).

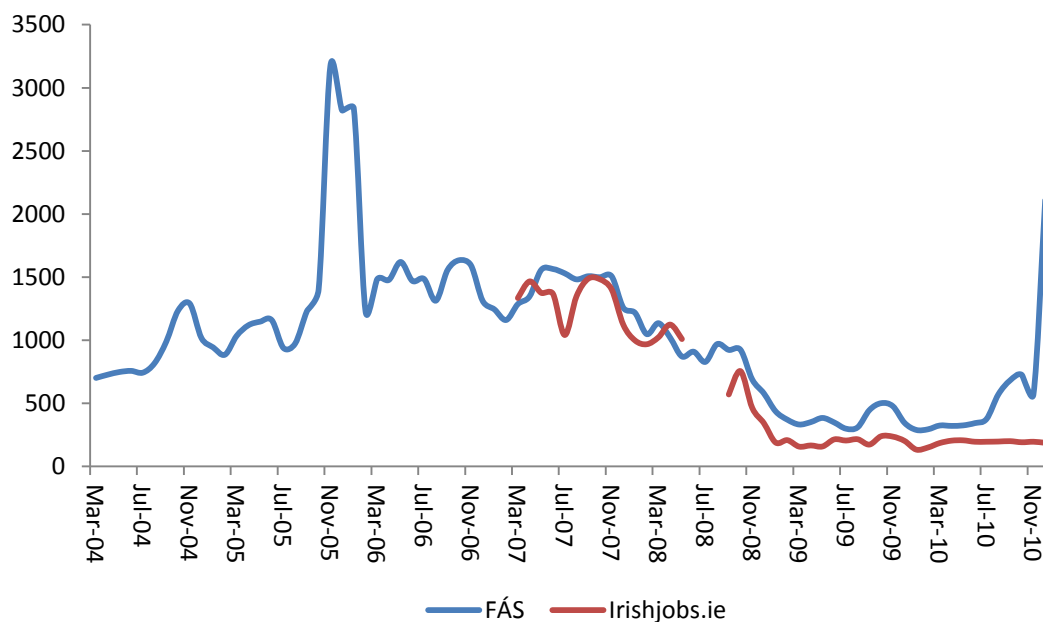


7. Clerical and Secretarial Occupations

Trend analysis

The number of vacancies for clerks was at its highest during 2007, when the Irishjobs.ie website and the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank each advertised up to 1,500 vacancies a month. The movement and the magnitude of the number of monthly advertised vacancies is similar in both data sets: the number of advertised vacancies started to decline in the first quarter of 2008 and stabilised at a significantly lower level during 2009 compared to the peak. The significant peak that occurred at both the end of 2005 and 2010 in the FÁS data is due to the advertisement of positions for Census 2006 and 2011 enumerators respectively.

Figure 7.1 Vacancies for clerks (three-month moving average)



Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

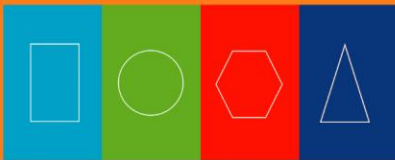
Sectors

In 2010, clerical vacancies were most frequently advertised in the following sectors:

- accountancy and finance
- banking, insurance and financial services
- customer service
- secretarial and administration.

Occupations

Clerical vacancies were most frequent for



- accounts and wages clerks, other financial clerks
 - accounts/financial administrator
 - fund accountant
 - claims administrator
 - shareholder services administrator
 - accounts payable/receivable.
- customer service
 - multilingual customer service agent
 - multilingual client service officer.

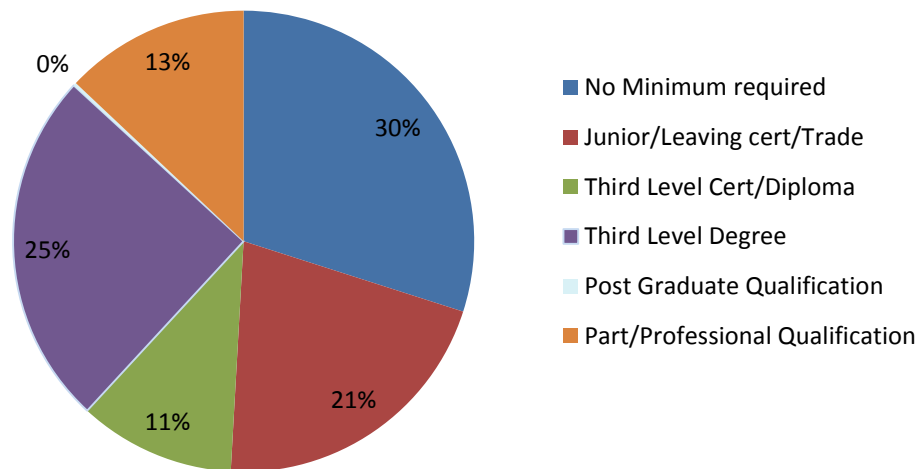
Skills

Language skills including German, French, Italian, Dutch were frequently mentioned as a requirement for customer service positions.

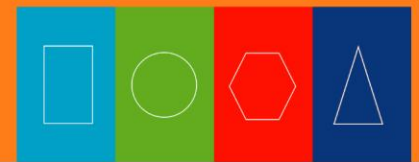
Education

The majority of clerical and secretarial positions required less than a third level degree. This occupational group had by far the highest proportion of vacancies with no minimum level of education required at 30%.

Figure 7.2 Vacancies for clerks by education level required, 2010



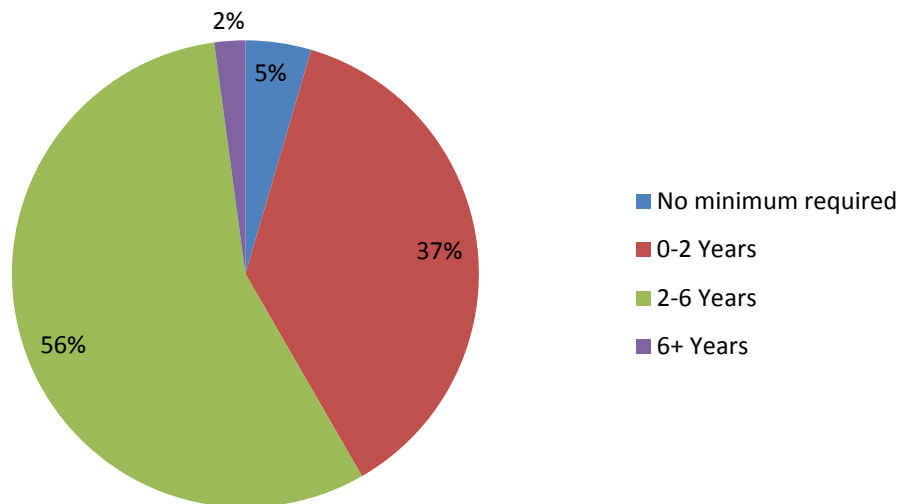
Source: Irishjobs.ie



Experience

A significant minority of vacancies for clerks have none or up to 2 years of experience specified as a requirement.

Figure 7.3 Vacancies for clerks by experience required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Difficult to fill vacancies

Difficult to fill mentions for clerical and administrative positions were confined to experienced candidates in specific occupations e.g. store and dispatch clerks with international supply chain system experience, IT and language skills.

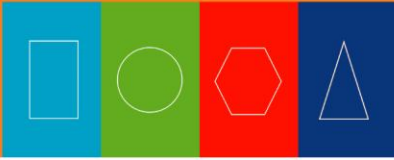
Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- There were 156 new employment permits granted to clerks.
- They were mostly employed in general administrative supporting roles across the range of sectors.
- The relatively more specialised clerks included accounts clerks and stores despatch clerks (transport/supply chain).

Job announcements

Some clerical posts were announced as part of overall job creation in other sectors including:

- financial sector (e.g. insurance/claims positions at Axa, Zurich)
- healthcare (e.g. the recent announcement of 525 jobs for the new private hospital in Cork includes medical administration and support staff positions)
- business services (data entry positions; business services processing).



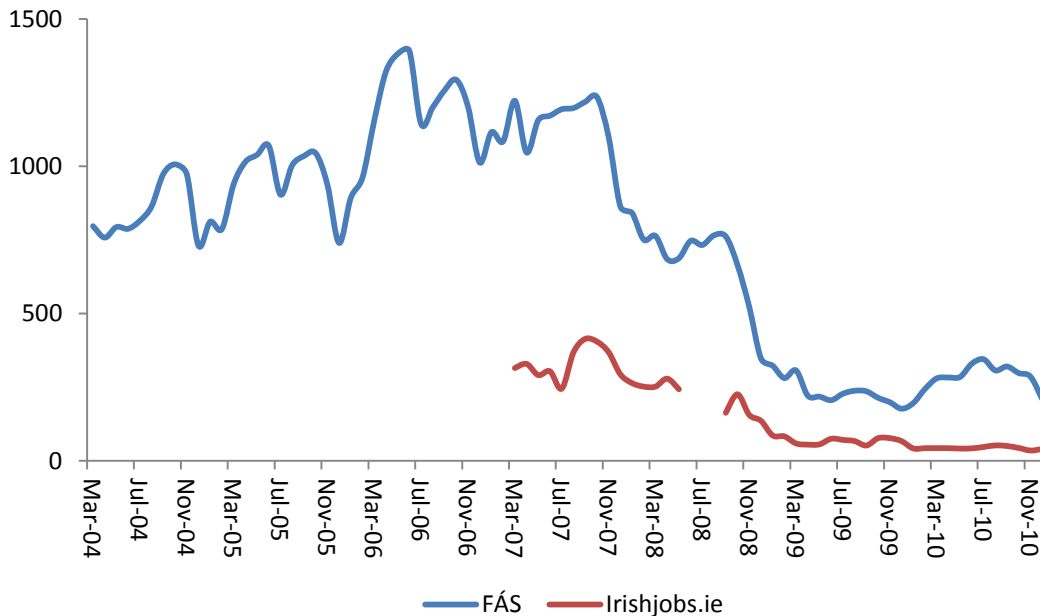
8. Craft and Related Occupations

Trend analysis

The number of vacancies for craftspersons was the highest during 2007, when over 1,000 vacancies a month were advertised through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank and up to 400 on the Irishjobs.ie website. Although magnitudes of vacancies differ between the two data sets, the direction and timing of the downturn coincide: the number of advertised vacancies started to decline in the last quarter of 2007 and stabilised at a significantly lower level during 2009 compared to the peak. There were signs of growth in the number of FÁS advertised vacancies for craftspersons in the first half of 2010.

Seasonality was detected in the vacancy data for craftspersons, with lower levels of recruitment activity exhibited in the winter months (particularly December) of each year. The seasonally adjusted time series is presented in Figure A2 in the Appendix.

Figure 8.1 Vacancies for craftspersons (three-month moving average)

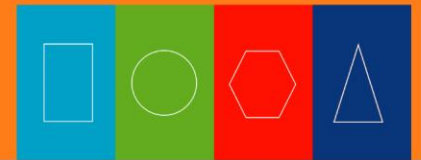


Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

Unlike during the boom years, when the greatest share was in the construction sector, in 2010, vacancies for craftspersons were concentrated in the following sectors:

- engineering and utilities



- ICT.

Occupations

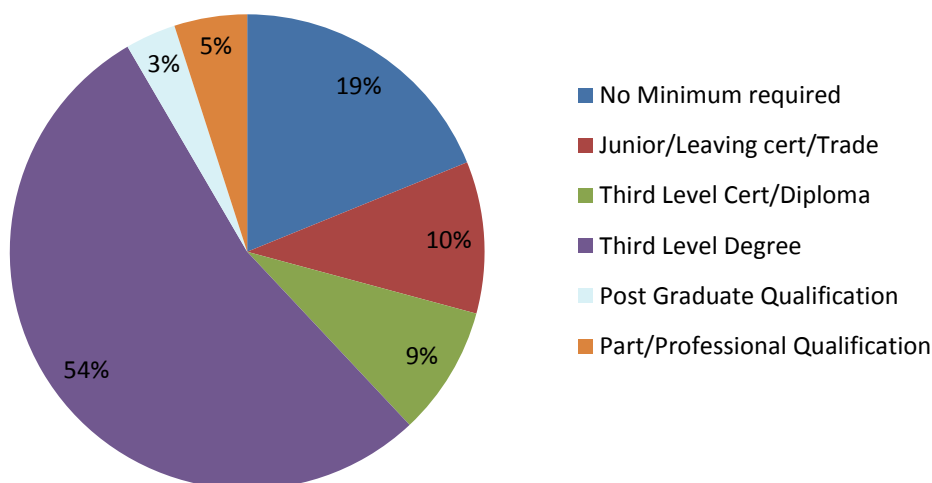
Vacancies for craftpersons were concentrated in the following occupations:

- metal working, production and maintenance fitter (field service, maintenance, etc.)
- motor mechanic (e.g. automation control, automation validation, automation testing etc.)
- precision instrument maker (e.g. calibration)
- electrical engineer
- telephone fitter
- computer installation and maintenance.

Education

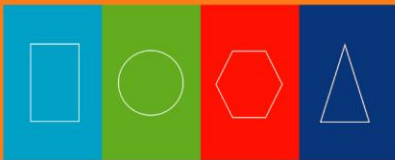
Craft workers typically hold the National Craft Certificate. Vacancies for craftpersons are typically advertised through FÁS Jobs Ireland as shown in Figure 8.1. Therefore, although Irishjobs.ie is the best available source of data on education attainment requirements in advertised vacancies, it is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group. Nonetheless, tentative analysis on vacancies for craftpersons advertised through Irishjobs.ie presented in Figure 8.2 suggests that the demand for craft skills is increasingly encroaching on what has traditionally been regarded as technician level work.

Figure 8.2 Vacancies for craftpersons by education level required



Source: Irishjobs.ie

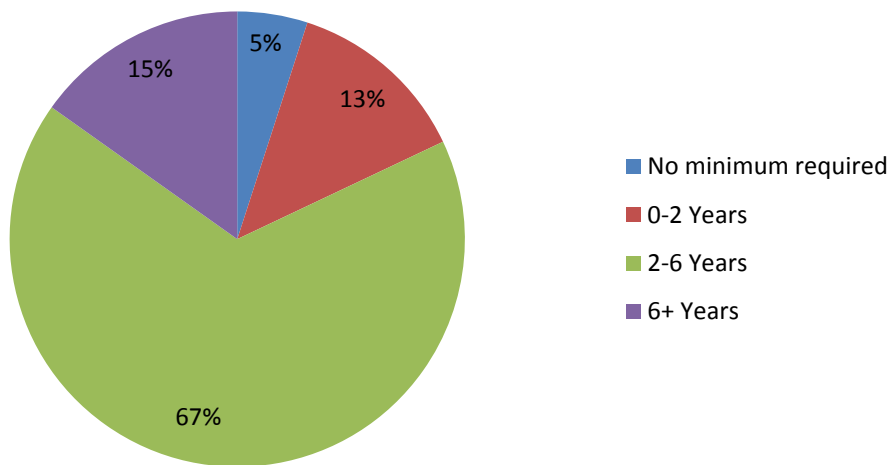
Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group



Experience

Over 80% of all vacancies for craftpersons have over 2 years of experience specified as a requirement.

Figure 8.3 Vacancies for craftpersons by experience required



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group

Difficult to fill vacancies

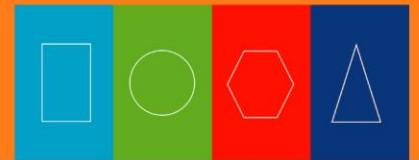
Recruiters stated difficulty in filling meat cutter and de-boner positions in the food processing industry. The insufficiently attractive nature of work was cited as a primary reason for the difficulty in filling these posts.

Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- There were 186 permit issued to those sourced outside the EEA falling under this broad occupational grouping in 2010.
- Butchers/meat cutters were the most numerous subgroup, followed by metal working production and maintenance fitters.

Job announcements

Job opportunities for craftpersons may potentially arise in connection with the Government's announcement for the installation of water meters, the construction and upgrading of power plants (e.g. building of a gas-fired power plant), the expansion in the renewable energy sector (e.g. technical services skills for wind turbines) and retail outlet developments (i.e. Junction One in Waterford).

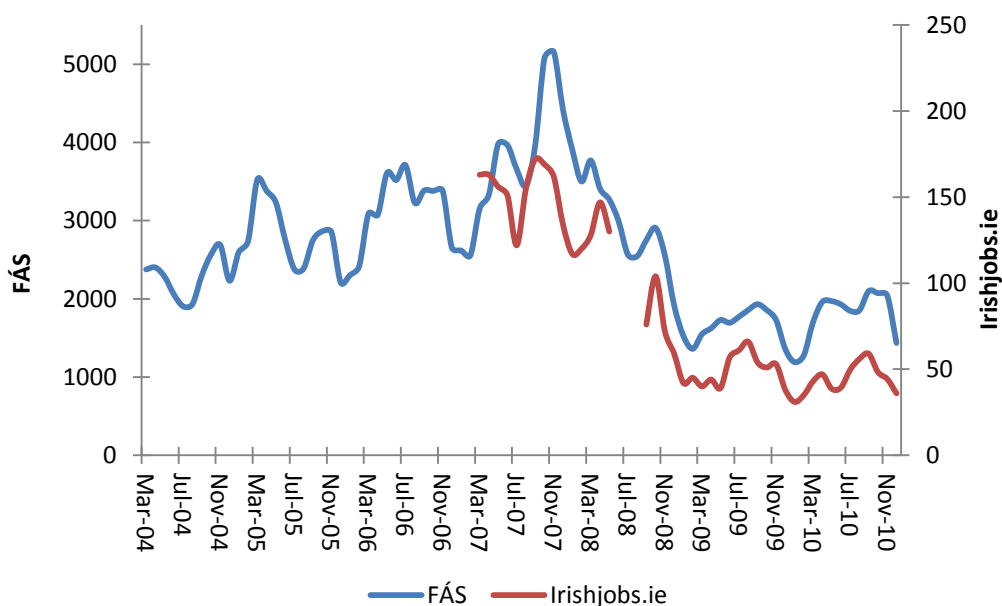


9. Personal and Protective Service Occupations

The number of vacancies for personal and protective services providers was the highest towards the second half of 2007, when up to 5,000 vacancies a month were advertised through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank and up to 150 on the Irishjobs.ie website. The difference in scales as presented in Figure 9.1 for the two vacancy sources is most likely due to the advertisement channel bias which varies by occupational group. Although magnitudes of vacancies differ between the two data sets, the direction and timing of the downturn coincide: the number of advertised vacancies started to decline in the first quarter of 2008 and stabilised at a significantly lower level during 2009 compared to the peak.

Seasonality was detected in the vacancy data for personal and protective services workers, with low levels of recruitment activity exhibited in December of each year. The seasonally adjusted time series is presented in Figure A3 in the Appendix.

Figure 9.1 Vacancies for personal and protective service providers (three-month moving average)

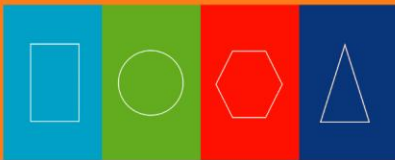


Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

Vacancies for personal and protective services providers are concentrated in the following sectors:

- banking, financial services and insurance
- hotel and catering
- healthcare.



Occupations

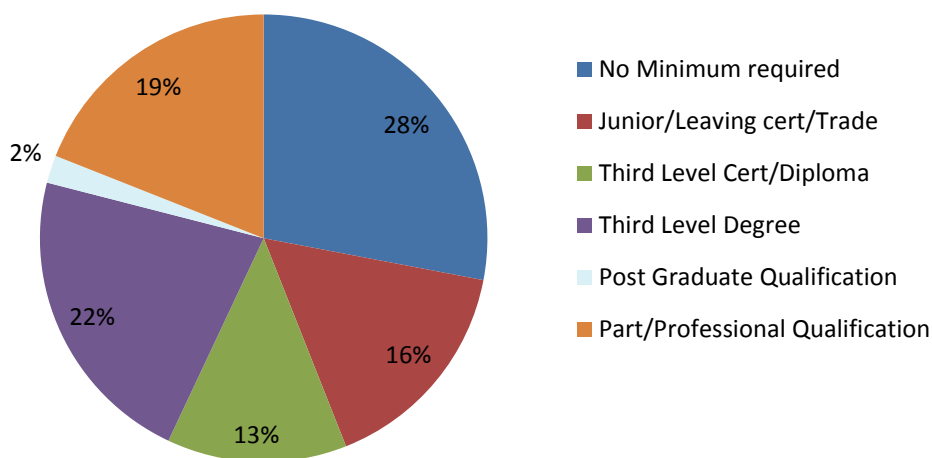
Vacancies for personal and protective services providers are concentrated in the following occupations:

- security guards
- chefs and cooks
- care assistants.

Education

Education attainment below third level degree is specified as a requirement in almost two thirds of the vacancies advertised for personal and protective services workers.

Figure 9.2 Vacancies for personal and protective services providers by education level required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group

Experience

Up to one half of advertised vacancies for personal and protective services providers specify none or up to 2 years of experience as a requirement.

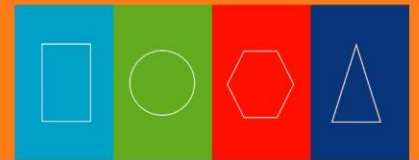
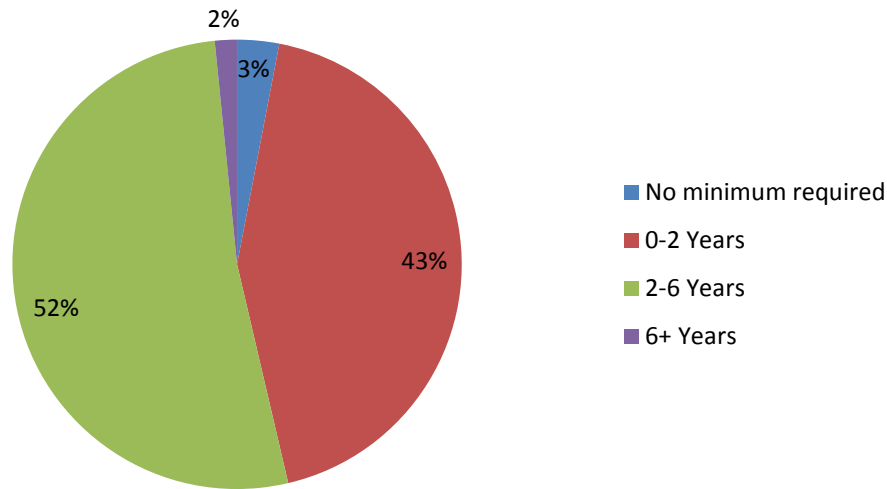


Figure 9.3 Vacancies for personal and protective services providers by experience required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group

Difficult to fill vacancies

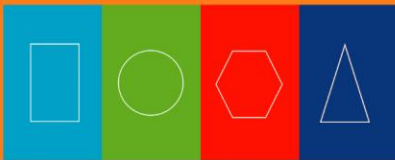
There were very few difficult to fill positions for personal and protective services occupations with mentions confined to qualified childcare workers and ethnic chefs.

Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- There were 843 new employment permits issued to non-EEA workers engaged in personal and protective services provision.
- Amongst them, those employed in catering as chefs/cooks were the most numerous (298).
- Healthcare assistants and attendants were the second most numerous, with 289 permits granted.
- Of the total, 42% of new permits were issued for spouses/dependents. A further 234 new permits, or 48% of the remainder, were issued for those from Romania or Bulgaria.

Job announcements

There were relatively few job announcements for personal and protective services occupations. Those that occurred were mostly confined to carers in the healthcare sector (between 100 and 200 jobs) and sports and leisure staff (<50).

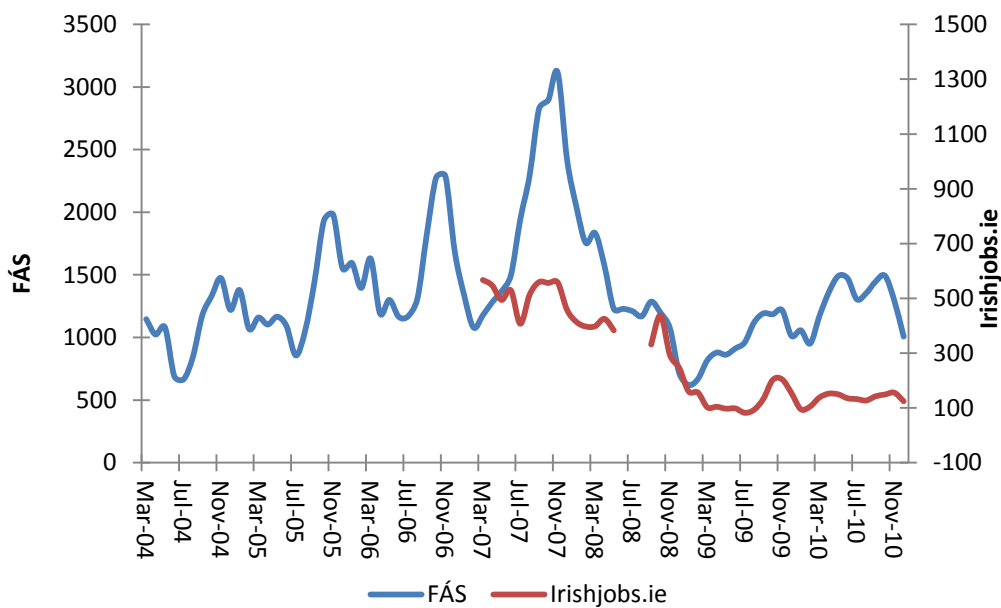


10. Sales Occupations

The number of vacancies for sales workers was the highest towards the end of 2007, when over 3,000 vacancies a month were advertised through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank and up to 500 on the Irishjobs.ie website. The difference in scales as presented in Figure 10.1 for the two vacancy sources is most likely due to the advertisement channel bias which varies by occupational group. Although magnitudes of vacancies differ between the two data sets, the direction and timing of the downturn coincide: the number of advertised vacancies started to decline in the first quarter of 2008 and stabilised at a significantly lower level during 2009 compared to the peak. There were some signs of growth in the number of advertised vacancies for sales workers in the first half of 2010 although this reversed by year end.

Seasonality was detected in the vacancy data for sales workers. High levels of recruitment activity are exhibited in October each year, when many retail businesses take on staff in preparation for higher sales levels associated with Christmas shopping. The seasonally adjusted time series is presented in Figure A4 in the Appendix.

Figure 10.1 Vacancies for sales occupations (three-month moving average)

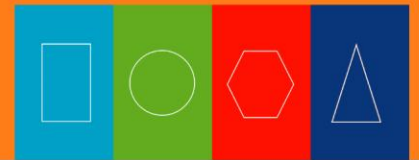


Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

Vacancies for sales occupations are concentrated in the following sectors:

- sales
- retail, wholesale and purchasing
- customer services.



Occupations

Vacancies for sales occupations were concentrated in the following occupations:

- technical sales representatives (e.g. medical devices, food and drink products, etc.)
- buyers (e.g. medical devices, engineering buyer, supply chain specialists, procurement specialist, logistics specialists etc.)
- sales persons
 - retail sale assistants
 - telesales (e.g. multilingual IT salespersons, telecommunication products salespersons)
 - multilingual on-line sales
 - field sales
 - multilingual customer care.

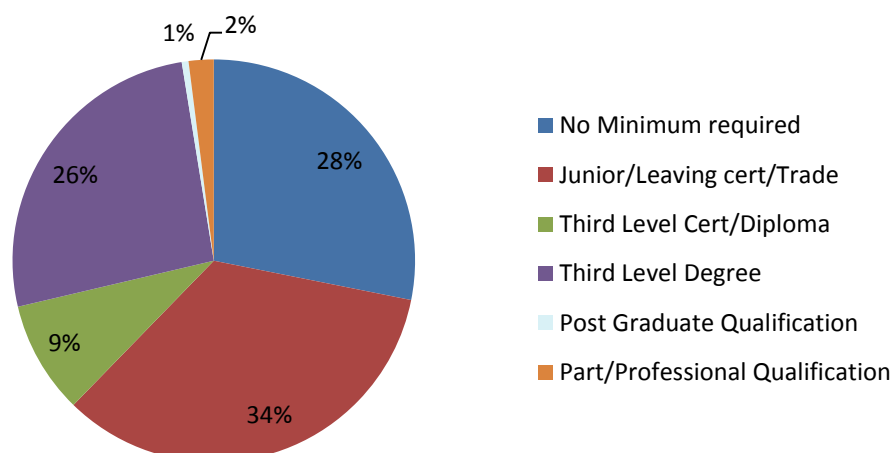
Skills

The majority of telesales, on-line and customer care vacancies required language skills. German and French were the most prominent languages required for customer service agent positions. Many vacancies required at least two languages with Italian, Danish, Norwegian, Spanish and Dutch also required in a number of vacancies.

Education

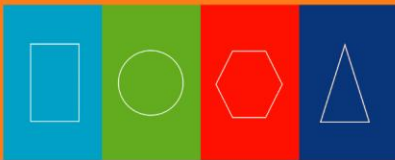
For the majority of posts advertised for salespersons, a third level qualification was not a prerequisite. A degree or above was a requirement in one quarter of all vacancies in sales.

Figure 10.2 Vacancies for sales persons by education level required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

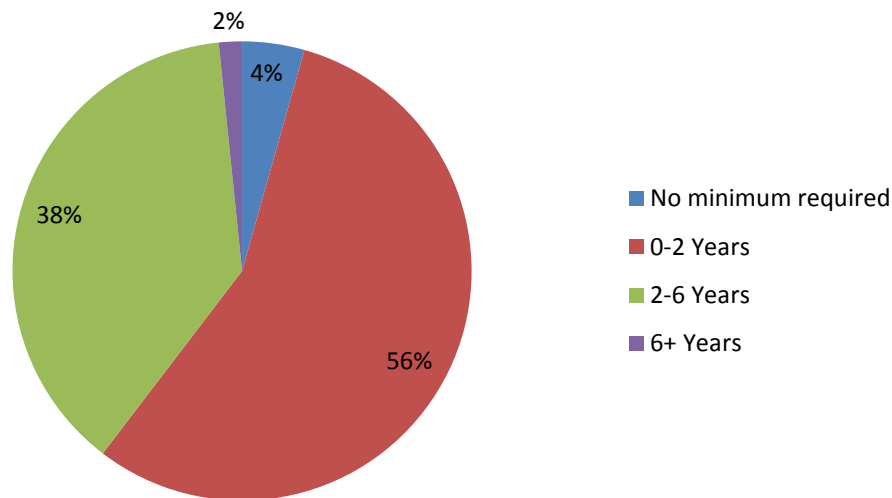
Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group



Experience

Up to two years of experience was specified as a requirement in the majority of vacancies advertised for salespersons.

Figure 10.3 Vacancies for sales persons by experience required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group

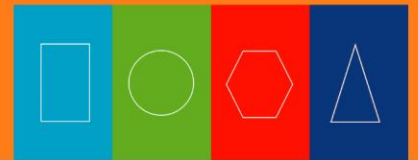
Difficult to fill vacancies

Sales and related occupations accounted for one-in eight of difficult to fill mentions.

- **telesales agents:** for specific industries and markets (e.g. telesales; online marketing) and with language skills (e.g. Dutch, German and Nordic languages, Arabic, Chinese, Italian)
- **customer service agents:** with technical product knowledge, IT skills and foreign languages skills.

Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

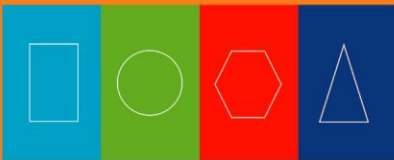
- There were 158 new employment permits issued to non-EEA salespersons; almost two fifths of these were granted their permits as a result of their spouse already holding a permit.
- Sales assistants were the most numerous, while technical sales representatives also featured prominently.



Job announcements

Sales and customer service occupations were the second most frequently mentioned category in the jobs announcements data for 2010, following professional occupations (combined they made up 56% of all job announcements). Jobs announcements in this category were for:

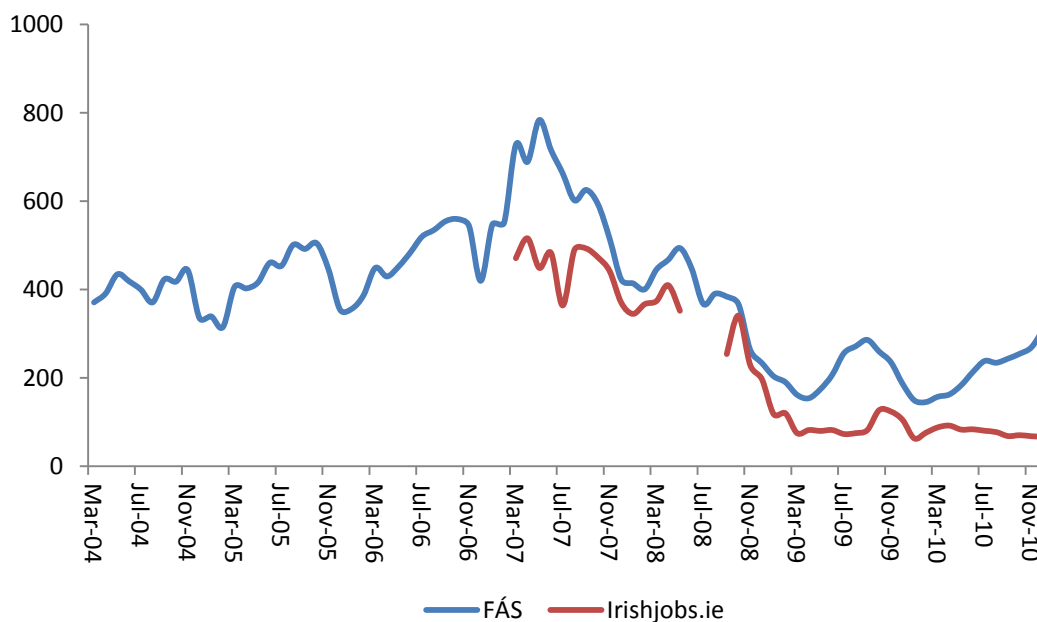
- multilingual call centre, customer service and IT (technical support) positions (e.g. in January, Paypal announced 100 multilingual customer service jobs; in July, Stream Ireland Ltd announced 425 customer technical support positions/telemarketing positions)
- sales assistants, particularly in retail outlets (e.g. Tesco announced 750 sales positions nationwide in July; Dublin Airport Authority announced 500 positions in March)
- other sales personnel positions were announced as part of overall job creation in other sectors e.g. pharmaceuticals (Freund), ICT (e.g. PFH Technology), energy/green economy (Airtricity; Ecoseal).



11. Operative Occupations

The number of vacancies for operatives was the highest around mid-2007, when up to 800 vacancies a month were advertised through the FÁS Jobs Ireland vacancy bank and up to 450 on the Irishjobs.ie website. The number of advertised vacancies started to decline towards the end of 2007 and throughout 2008 and stabilised at a significantly lower level than the peak during 2009. There have been some signs of growth in the number of FÁS advertised vacancies for operatives since the start of 2010.

Figure 11.1 Vacancies for operatives (three-month moving average)



Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

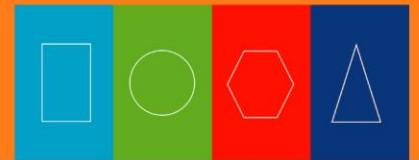
Vacancies for operatives are concentrated in the following sectors:

- engineering and utilities
- ICT
- manufacturing.

Occupations

Vacancies for operatives are concentrated in the following occupations:

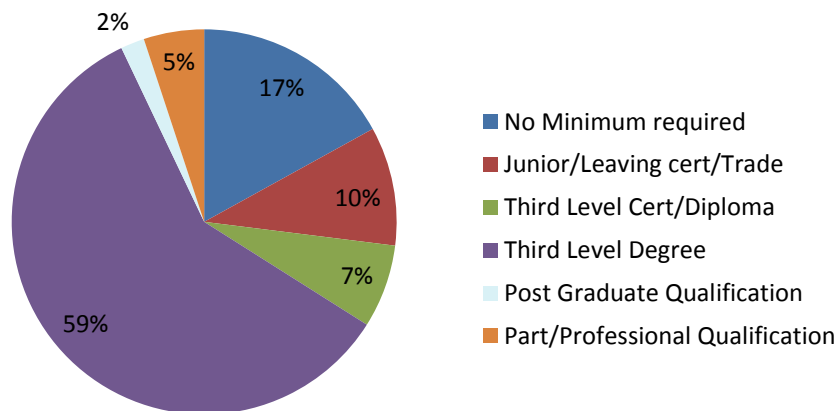
- machine tool operatives
- routine machine operatives.



Education

For the majority of posts advertised for operatives a third level qualification is specified as a requirement. This is surprising, given that the share of third level graduates amongst operatives does not exceed 35% for any operative occupational group. Probing into individual vacancies behind the aggregate operative vacancies suggests that coding issues have skewed this data with some technician engineering vacancies being classified erroneously in the operative category.

Figure 11.2 Vacancies for operatives by education level required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group

Experience

Over two thirds of all vacancies for operatives had 2-6 years of experience as a prerequisite, with a further 12% stating a requirement of 6+ years of experience.

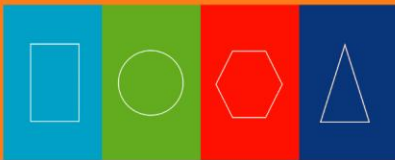
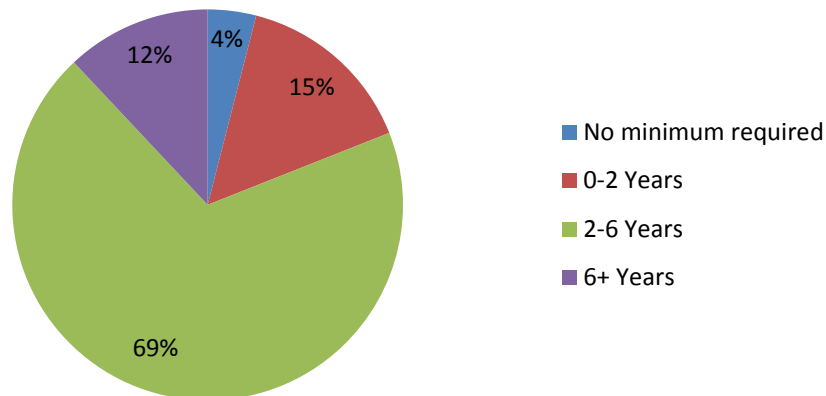


Figure 11.3 Vacancies for operatives by experience required, 2010



Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group

Difficult to fill vacancies

The demand for operatives remains very weak and was confined to:

- chemical process operatives: skilled operatives for the biopharmaceutical sector.

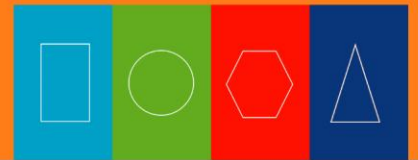
Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- There were 230 new employment permits issued to non-EEA persons to work as operatives in 2010.
- With 88 permits issued, transport operatives were the largest sub-group, while food operatives were the second largest (with 26 employment permits issued).

Job announcements

Operatives were the third most frequently announced category of job announcements. Job announcements were confined to a limited number of sectors:

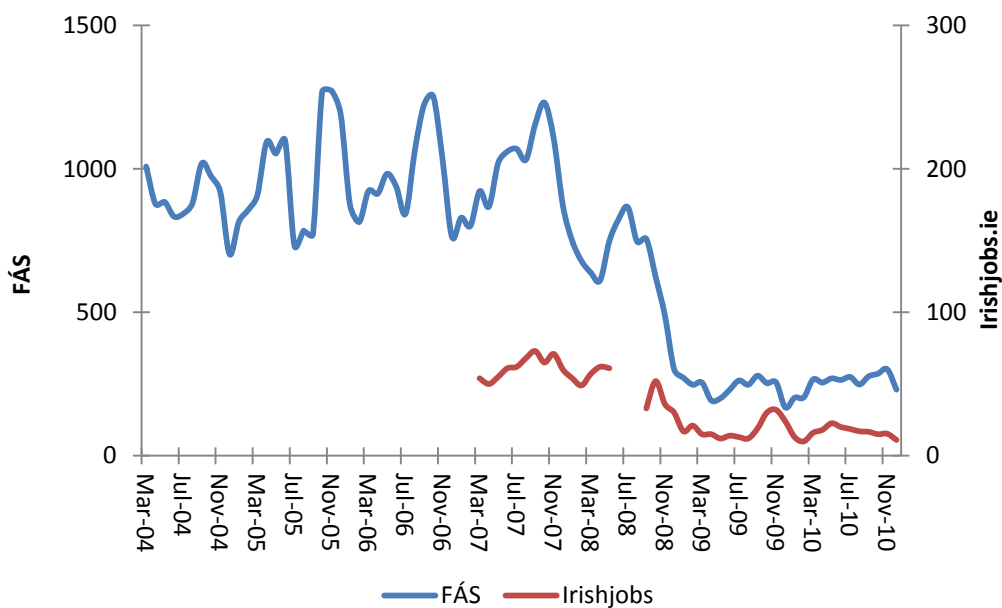
- Pharmaceutical & medical devices (manufacturing): there were a number of operative positions announced in 2010 e.g. Merit Medical; however, a significant number of job losses for operatives were also announced for this sector, outweighing any gains made.
- Green economy (manufacturing): most announcements were for a small numbers of jobs (50 or less), e.g. Ecoseal (attic insulation), Shabra (plastic bottle recycling), Crompton Greaves (green energy).
- Services: e.g. Dublin Airport Authority announced 400 ground staff positions in September, which included retail and operative positions.



12. Labourers

Vacancies for labourers tend to exhibit seasonality and peak in the third quarter of each year. The number of vacancies advertised for labourers ranged from 700 to 1,200 a month up until the end of 2007. It declined throughout 2008 and stabilised at a low level in 2009 and 2010 (Figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1 Vacancies for labourers (three-month moving average)



Composition of vacancies advertised in 2010

Sectors

Construction labourers accounted for the majority of FÁS vacancies for labourers during the peak years to 2007. In more recent years, these vacancies were concentrated in the hotel and catering sector.

Occupations

Vacancies for labourers were concentrated in the following occupations:

- Counterhands, catering assistants
- Kitchen porters
- Cleaners, domestics

Education

One in two vacancies advertised for labourers stated no minimum education attainment as a requirement.

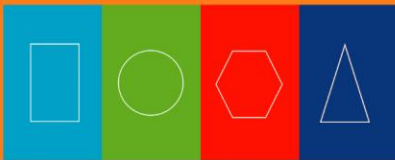
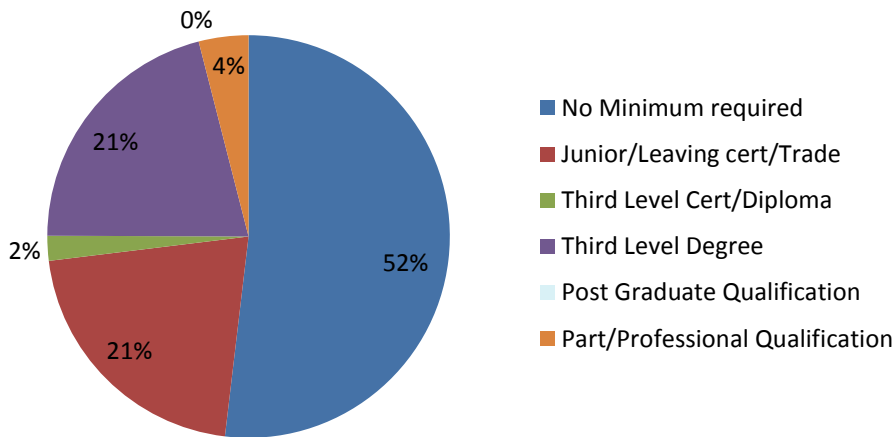


Figure 12.2 Vacancies for labourers by education level required, 2010



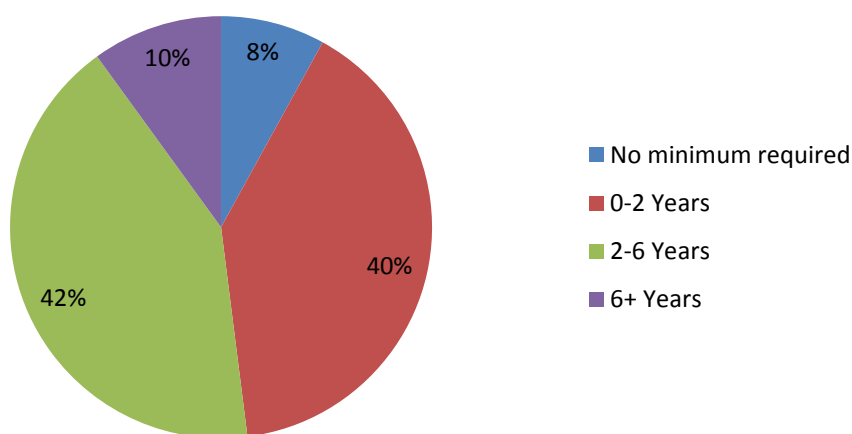
Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group

Experience

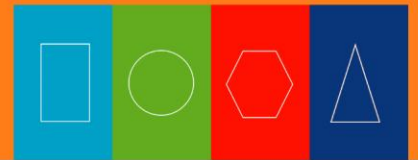
Experience features as a requirement in most vacancies advertised for labourers with only 8% of vacancies stating none as a prerequisite.

Figure 12.3 Vacancies for labourers by experience required, 2010



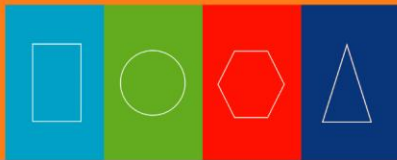
Source: Irishjobs.ie

Note: Due to the occupational bias found in individual advertisements channels, Irishjobs.ie is not likely to capture a representative share of vacancies in this occupational group



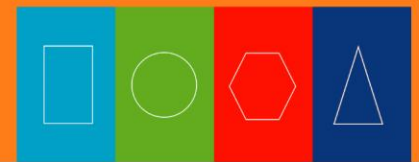
Vacancies filled with non-EEA workers

- There were 536 new employment permits issued to persons from outside the EU to work as labourers in 2010 - this amounted to 13% of all permits issued;
- One quarter of labourers were issued permits due to their spouses already holding a permit; 61% of the total were issued to those from Romania or Bulgaria.
- Most of non-EEA labourers were working as cleaners (158); those working in the catering industry were the second largest sub-group, followed by factory labourers and agricultural labourers, most of whom were engaged in the equestrian industry (e.g. work riders).



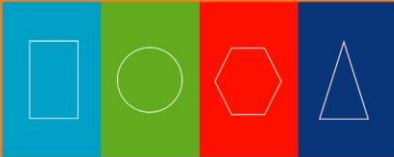
13. Key findings

- Although the number of newly advertised vacancies is significantly lower than at the peak in 2007, vacancies continue to arise
- The overall number of vacancies in 2010 was up on the previous year for both FÁS and Irishjobs.ie.
- Newly advertised vacancies in Irishjobs.ie and the Irish Times were mostly concentrated in managerial, professional, associate professional occupations and jobs related to various aspects of customer care; newly advertised vacancies in FÁS Jobs Ireland were concentrated in personal services (e.g. care, catering and security) and sales (including customer care activities)
- Newly advertised vacancies for professionals spanned a range of fields: ICT, engineering (e.g. energy systems), health, finance and related
- Customer care related vacancies featured prominently in all sources; they spanned different sectors and levels of skill:
 - Technical support (mostly in ICT ranging up to associate professional level)
 - Customer care (spanning various sectors (e.g. ICT, financial, retail, etc.))
 - Sales (spanning various sectors (e.g. IT, telecommunications, etc.))
- Vacancies have continued to exist at the lower end of the skills scale with numerous vacancies advertised monthly for security guards, catering staff, carers etc.
- Language skills were a prerequisite for many of the newly advertised vacancies particularly in customer care activities; while the demand spanned a variety of languages, German, French and Nordic languages were most frequently mentioned as a requirement
- The minimum education requirement for a significant share of all newly advertised vacancies was a third level qualification
- The data suggests that the demand is mostly limited to experienced candidates
- The findings from the vacancy data analysis are broadly supported by the job announcements in 2010
- Employers also have vacancies that are proving difficult to fill with suitable candidates; this is evidenced in:
 - the results from the recruitment agency survey suggest that difficult to fill vacancies exist for a number of occupations (e.g. ICT professionals, financial experts, engineering experts, healthcare professionals etc.)
 - the data on employment permits issued to non-EEA nationals, which confirms that employers are sourcing some skills from outside the EEA area (e.g. ICT professionals, managers, nurses, doctors, etc.).



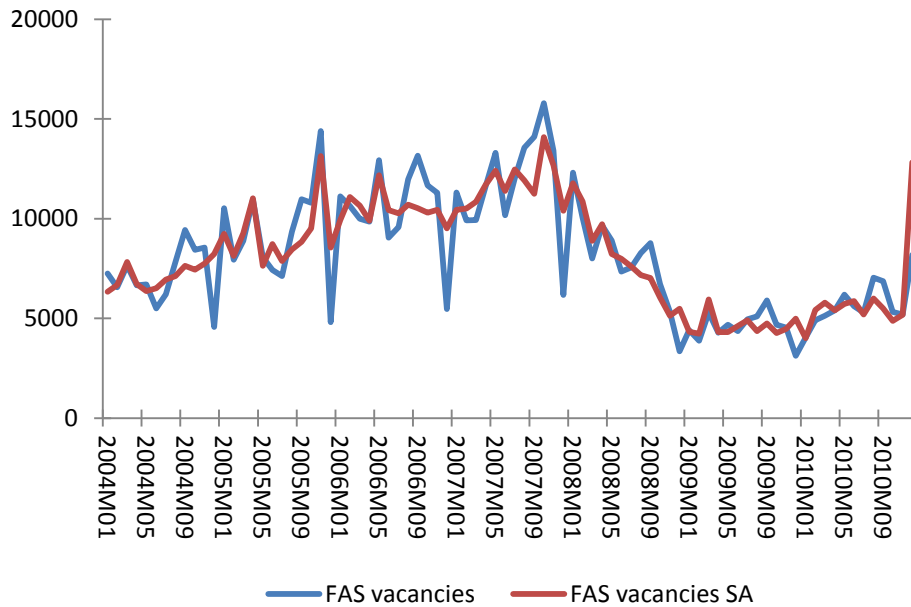
14. Policy implications

- Education and training
 - The analysis of the vacancy data 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
 - The analysis of the vacancy data points to 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
- Labour market interventions
 - The analysis of the vacancy data highlights the areas where employment opportunities exist, which should be used for career guidance purposes to assist in education and training choices of students and the unemployed
 - By highlighting areas where employment opportunities exist, the analysis of the vacancy data should be used to align labour market activation measures, such as the work placement programme, with labour market needs, thereby adding relevant work experience to the skills portfolio of the unemployed
- Immigration
 - Despite the high unemployment level in Ireland, the demand for some skills will continue to be met by candidates from non-EEA countries, at least in the short-term.



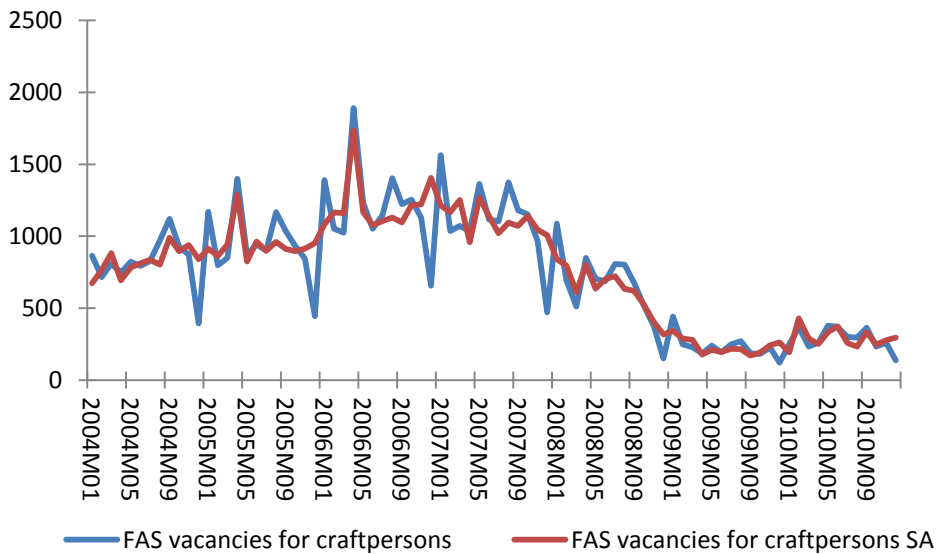
Appendix

Figure A1. Monthly vacancies notified to FÁS seasonally adjusted



Note: F-test for seasonality: seasonality present at the 0.1% level (F-value = 8.7); combined test for the presence of identifiable seasonality: identifiable seasonality present

Figure A2. Monthly vacancies notified to FÁS for craftpersons seasonally adjusted



Note: F-test for seasonality: seasonality present at the 0.1% level (F-value = 12.8); combined test for the presence of identifiable seasonality: identifiable seasonality present

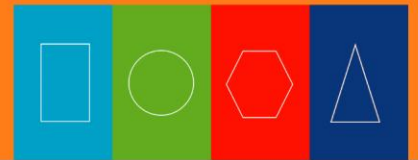
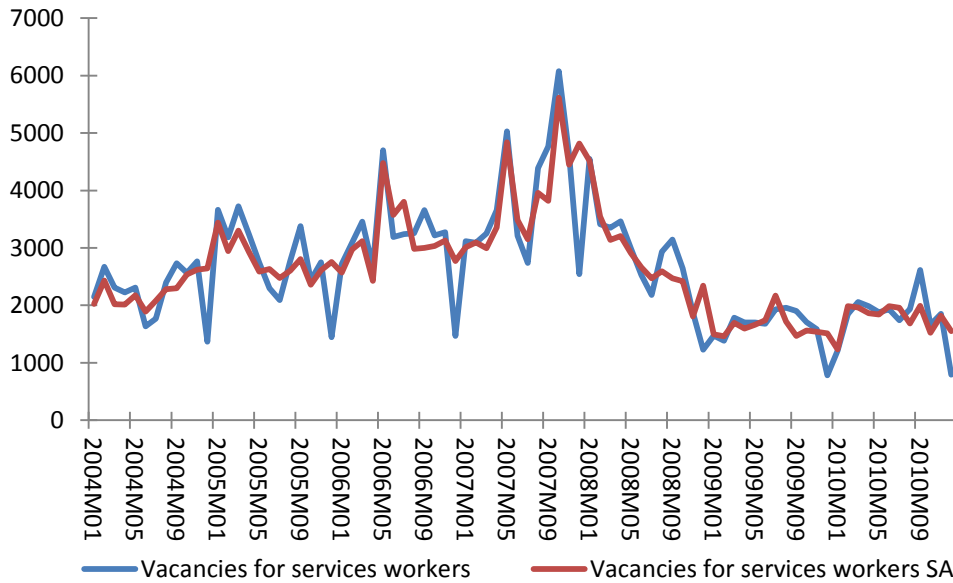
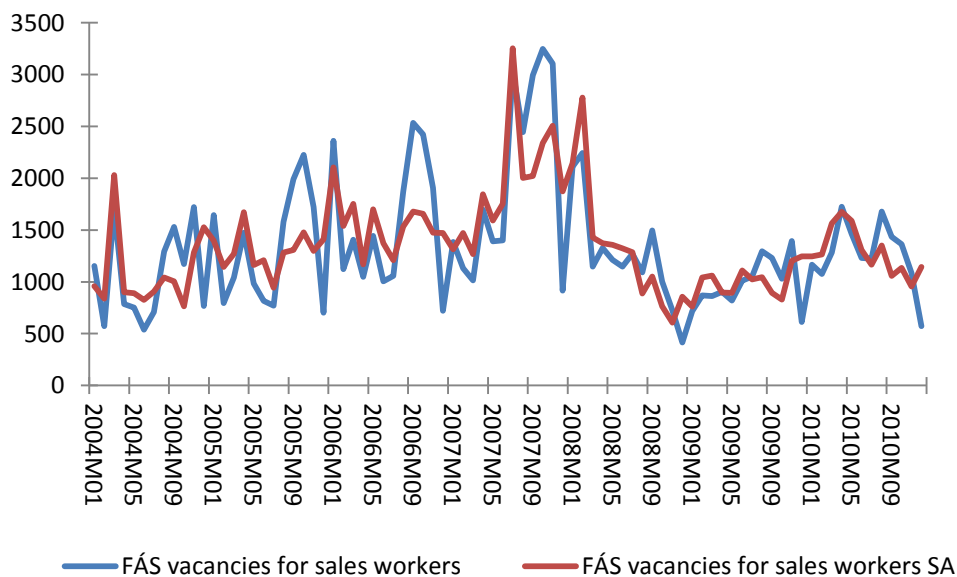


Figure A3. Monthly vacancies notified to FÁS for services workers seasonally adjusted

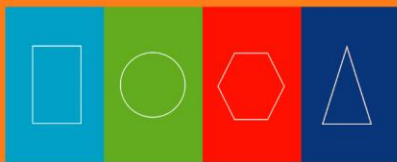


Note: F-test for seasonality: seasonality present at the 0.1% level (F-value = 13.7); combined test for the presence of identifiable seasonality: identifiable seasonality present

Figure A4. Monthly vacancies notified to FÁS for sales workers seasonally adjusted



Note: F-test for seasonality: seasonality present at the 0.1% level (F-value = 8.4); combined test for the presence of identifiable seasonality: identifiable seasonality not present



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