



AHECS

2013

GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYABILITY SURVEY

AHECS

The voice of Higher Education Career Services

- Promoting Excellence & Partnerships
- Professional Development & Training
- Advocating Employability in Higher Education



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Foreword

The Irish recruitment market for today's graduate is buoyant but competitive. To succeed it is vital that graduates understand current labour market trends and are able to harness and promote their achievements and relevant employability skills to their best advantage to achieve their career goals.

The production of the AHECS Graduate Recruitment & Employability Survey aims to inform on current recruitment trends by sector, potential earnings and to evaluate the key employability skills sought by employers, including those that employers feel need further development. It is hoped that this report will prove a useful tool to AHECS associates and its stakeholders, including academics and employers, when devising policy and assisting students to make informed career choices.

The good news is that graduate recruitment is increasing across most disciplines but is very strong in the IT and engineering degree disciplines. Overall the predicted average increase across all sectors is 3% and this, though modest, is a very welcome development after several challenging and difficult years for graduates.

The survey identifies to both graduates and policy makers the importance of employability skills in the graduate recruitment process. The ability to work in a team is identified as the most important skill, but it is interesting to note that over 50% identified a positive attitude as the next most important attribute. Self-management and business awareness are skills employers value highly in prospective hires, and they have indicated that students need to further develop their awareness and competencies in these areas.

Another interesting finding is that relevant work experience is equally as important as academic results when employers are short-listing for interviews. Formal work placements and internships contribute significantly to the employability skill set valued by employers. However, many courses do not have a formal work placement as part of the curriculum and for those students, Careers Services are continuing to introduce creative initiatives designed to focus on developing employability skills. The findings of the report strengthen the argument for the introduction of an employability skills module in all undergraduate disciplines and the recommendation that work placement be included as a formal or optional module for all degree programmes.

Our graduates are competing in a global market, with graduates from across Europe, Asia, the Americas and Australia. Academic programmes must therefore provide our students not only with an academic education but also significant opportunities to develop employability skills, business awareness and work experience, during the course of their university education.

It is hoped that AHECS Members, graduate recruiters and graduates will find this survey helpful as the findings will be a key influence in the graduate recruitment policy decisions of many of the top recruiters in Ireland in the coming year.

We would like to extend our thanks to all those employers who participated in this survey.

AHECS Labour Market Task Group.

Chair: Linda Lynch (UCC) Committee: Eleanor Donoghue (UCC), Angela Collins (WIT), Treasa Morgan (CIT), Bridie Kiloran (GMIT), Ger Lardner (DCU), Linda Gaughran (TCD), Catherine Lyster (LyIT) and Paula Murray (NUI Maynooth).

METHODOLOGY

The AHECS Graduate Recruitment & Employability Survey was developed as an AHECS Labour Market Task Group initiative. The research was commissioned to allow the association to track graduate recruitment trends over time and subsequently provide valuable information for AHECS members in working with both students and employers.

The questionnaire was designed by the Labour Market Task Group and contained 20 questions pertaining to graduate recruitment numbers, employability skills and graduate starting salaries. The survey also allowed the data to be filtered for the development of separate sectoral guides in seven distinct graduate labour market areas.

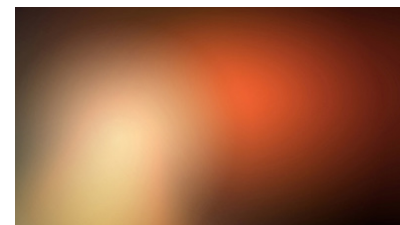
The Survey was conducted in Summer 2013. A researcher was engaged to carry out the survey and an invitation to participate was extended to 76 employers by telephone. This was then followed by email invitation with a link to Survey Monkey. Subsequent telephone calls were arranged to assist with any queries. Of the companies contacted, 47 participated.

The following companies were happy to be named:

- Analog Devices International
- Grant Thornton
- Bristol-Myers Squibb
- VMware
- Merck Sharp & Dohme
- Paddy Power
- PWC
- Mercury Engineering
- Kingspan
- KPMG
- BearingPoint
- Irish Distillers
- Kepak
- Bank of Ireland
- Sepam Group
- Kerry Group
- Musgrave Group
- EY
- Abbott
- Biomarin Manufacturing Ireland
- Blarney Woolen Mills
- Boston Scientific

A further 25 employers participated in the survey but chose to remain anonymous.

THE GRADUATE MARKET @ a glance



Industry or Business Sector Respondant	No of graduate vacancies 2012/2013	No of graduate vacancies expected 2013/2014	How vacancies are expected to change in 2013/2014	Median graduate starting salaries 2012/2013	Median graduate starting salaries 2013/2014	How starting salaries are expected to change in 2013/2014
IT & Telecommunications	260	298	↑ 14.6%	€29,785	€29,785	-
Engineering & Manufacturing	119	133	↑ 11.76%	€27,642	€28,571	↑ 3.36%
Food & Drinks Industry (incorporating Retail & Sales)	304	292	↓ 3.9%*	€26,055	€26,000	↓ 0.2%
Pharmaceutical	34	36	↑ 5.8%	€30,857	€31,214	↑ 1.15%
Banking, Insurance, & Financial Management	276	285	↑ 3.26%	€24,900	€24,900	-
Accountancy & Professional Services	950	963	↑ 1.4%	€21,400	€21,400	-
Law & Legal Services	166	166	-	n/a	n/a	-

*This is an inflated figure due to one particular company indicating a significant decrease for the next campaign because of increased retention rates of graduates.

- The predicted number of vacancies is expected to increase in 2013/14, particularly in the IT & Telecommunications and Engineering & Manufacturing sectors.
- Despite these predicted increases, the indications are that starting salaries for graduates will remain fairly static in the coming year, even though the demand for graduates is growing.
- The only sector which is predicting an increase in graduate starting salaries is the engineering and manufacturing sector with a modest predicted increase of 3% in salaries.
- Overall the graduate recruitment market still remains competitive and is expected to remain so in the coming years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Graduate recruitment is set to rise

- There is a projected increase of 3% across the graduate recruitment market for the 2013/2014 campaign with over 40% of employers surveyed indicating that they are predicting increases next year.
- There is a projected increase in graduate recruitment numbers in all but two of the sectors surveyed. The IT & Telecommunications and Engineering & Manufacturing sectors appear the most vibrant, with projected increases of 15% and 12% respectively.
- The most prominent reason for projected increases is an increased focus on recruitment from the graduate sector (50%). In addition, 33% of employers cited a projected growth in business while 17% noted a recorded increase in business.
- There is a healthy projection for growth of 6% in the Pharmaceutical sector. The Accountancy & Professional Services sector is due to grow moderately (1%), while the Law & Legal Services sector is expected to remain static.
- Only 9% of employers projected a decrease in graduate recruitment and, of these, a majority 67% noted that this is due to improved retention rates of graduates. A minority 33% indicated a projected decline in business.
- There is a projected decrease in graduate recruitment numbers in the Food & Drinks industry of 4%. However, it should be noted that this appears to be an inflated figure due to one particular company indicating a significant decrease in new hires for the next campaign due to the increased retention of existing graduates.

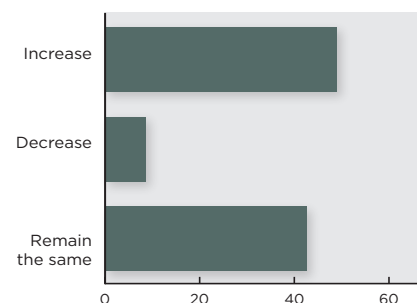


FIG.1 Projection for graduate recruitment 2013/2014

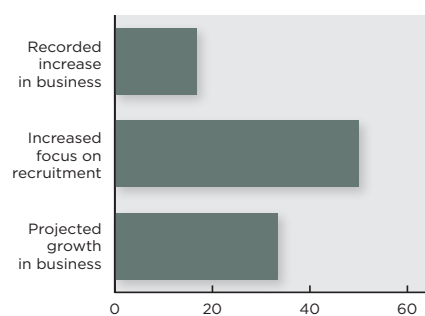


FIG.2 Reasons for increase in graduate recruitment.

Commerce and Engineering are the most sought after degrees

- The most prominent degree disciplines are Commerce & Engineering with 79% of employers recruiting from Commerce/Business Studies and 68% of employers recruiting from Engineering degree backgrounds.
- Disciplines including Science (43%), IT (40%), Law (36%), Arts (28%), and Food Science (26%) also feature prominently in the graduate recruitment process.

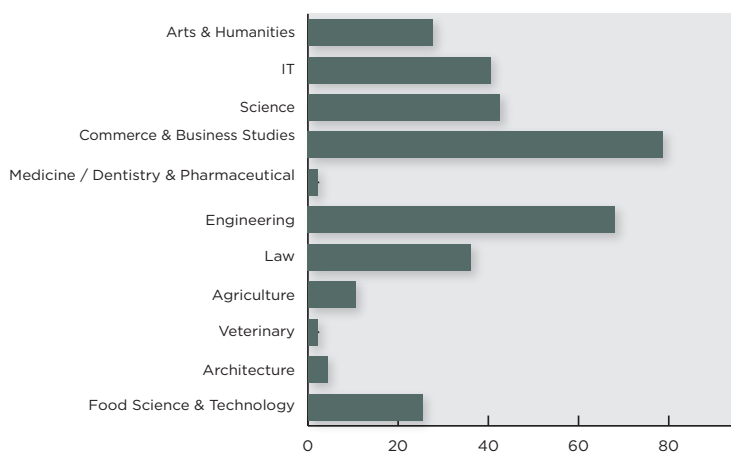


FIG.3 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

The minimum degree standard favoured by Graduate Employers is Honours Degree

- All employers surveyed typically recruit from Honours Degree level and 66% from Postgraduate level.
- Only 11% of employers indicated that they typically recruit from Ordinary Degree level (Level 7), while 13% typically recruit from PhD level.

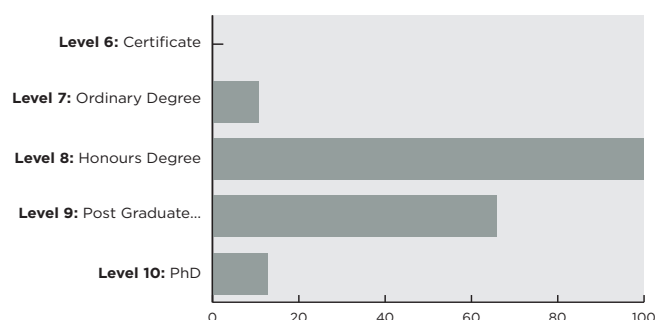


FIG.4 Academic levels in graduate recruitment

Graduate employers favour relevant work experience

- Relevant work experience was identified by 68% of employers as being significant when shortlisting graduates making it the most important criterion in the application process along with overall academic results (68%). Relevance of degree (57%) also featured strongly among employers.
- A total of 43% of employers identified proven employability skills as being very important in the shortlisting of graduates and a further 32% identified Extra Curricular Involvements as important.

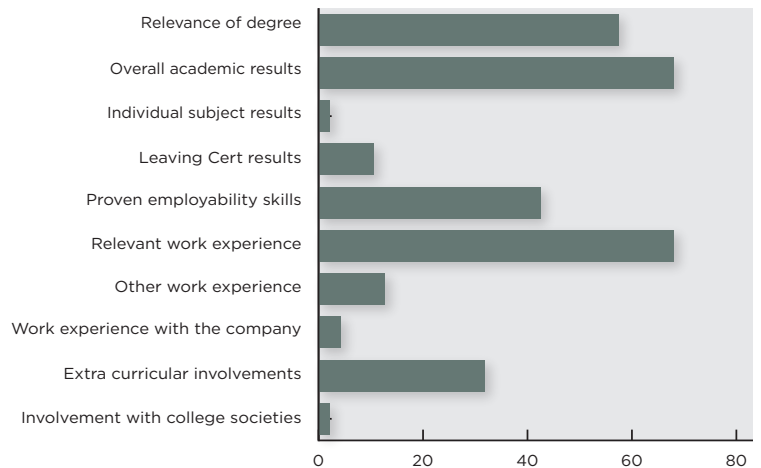


FIG.5 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

Top employability skills are teamwork and positive attitude followed by customer & business awareness and communications & literacy skills

- The ability to work in a team is identified as the most important employability skill when hiring graduates, with 66% of employers noting its importance. Interestingly, the next most prominent employability skill is a positive attitude, with 55% indicating its significance.
- Although the ranking varies from sector to sector, the top five employability traits which employers like to see in graduates are the ability to work effectively in a team, a positive attitude, communication & literacy skills and the development of business and customer awareness, particularly in relation to the relevant industry sector.
- Despite their significance in graduate recruitment, employers have identified that self-management (68%) and business & customer awareness (63%) need further development by Irish graduates. Communication skills (46%) and problem solving (40%) also feature strongly here.

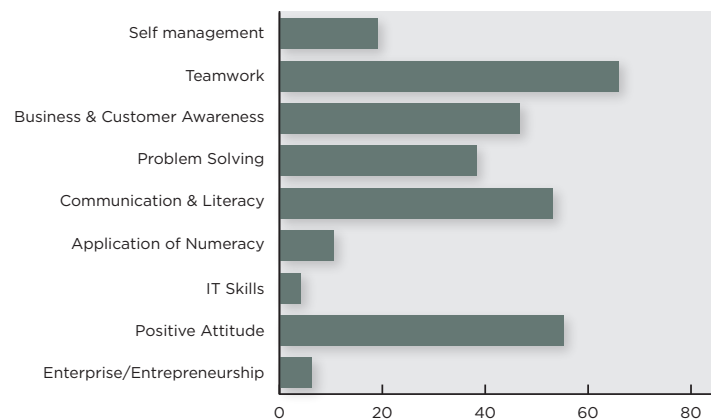


FIG.6 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment.

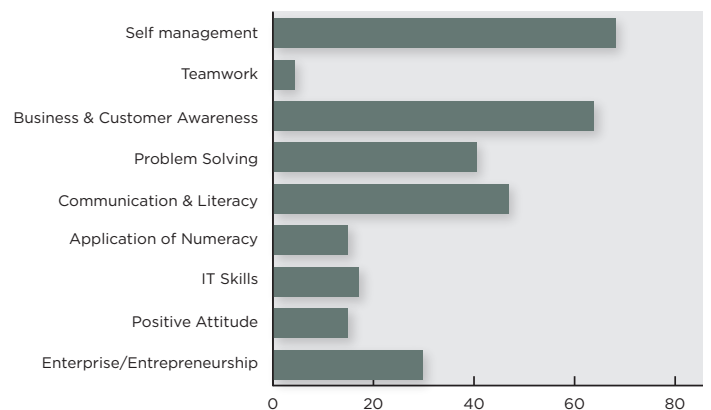


FIG.7 Employability skills which need improvement in graduates.

Average salaries remain static

- The starting salaries for graduates are predicted to remain static into 2014, with many sectors indicating no change and only very minimal increases in other sectors.

Trends @ a glance

ACCOUNTANCY & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



How many employees in total does your company have in Ireland and Northern Ireland

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Employee Numbers	0-50	51-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2500	2501-5000	5000+	Salary Median: €21,400
% of survey respondents	0%	14%	14%	29%	29%	14%	0%	

Current and projected graduate recruitment activity

- 57% of respondents recruited more than 100 graduates during the 2013 campaign with 85% hiring more than 20. The total number of graduates hired among all sector respondents was 950.
- All respondents saw the number of planned graduate hires in the coming recruitment campaign at least remaining the same with almost 60% projecting a slight increase. This is reflected in the projected figures for the next campaign which predicts 963 graduate hires, an increase of 1% on this year.
- There is more good news in the Accountancy & Professional Services sector as respondents projecting an increase in graduate hires are doing so due to a projected growth in business.

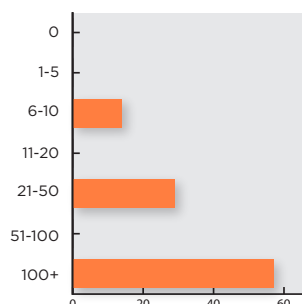


FIG.8 How many graduates did your company hire during the 2012 / 2013 recruitment campaign?

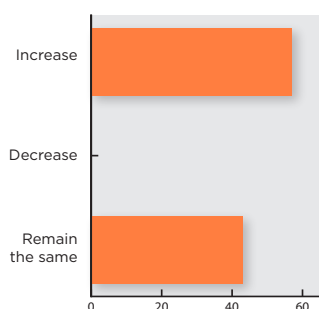


FIG.9 Projected trends in graduate recruitment in 2013/2014

Which degree disciplines do you typically recruit from?

- Accountancy & Professional Services employers hire from all sectors and particularly from Commerce, Law, and Engineering backgrounds. It is important to note that 29% of respondents hire from Arts/Humanities backgrounds, 71% from IT, 29% from Science, and even 14% from Agriculture. This is reflective of the new clients and industries with whom the Accountancy & Professional Services are working and so a variety of degree backgrounds become relevant.

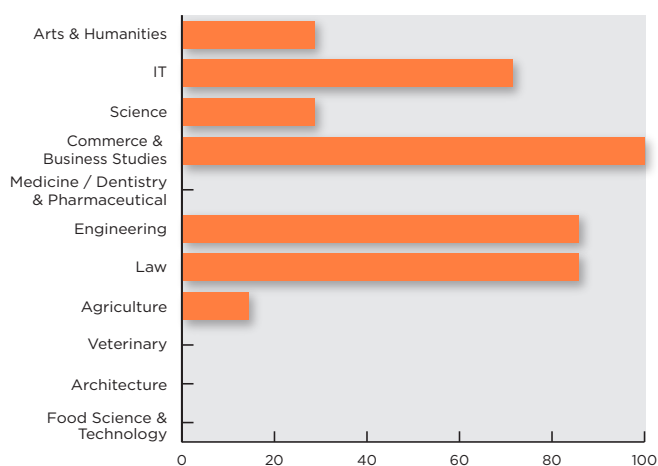


FIG.10 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

From which academic level do you typically recruit?

- According to respondents, the minimum requirement to apply to graduate roles in Accountancy & Professional Services is a Level 8 Honours Degree.

What do you view as being the most important criteria when shortlisting graduates?

Some key points have emerged here:

- Overall academic results and proven employability skills have emerged as significant criteria in the shortlisting process. 71% of employers have identified them as most important. There is a strong onus on students then to achieve high grades and develop their employability skills throughout their time in college. Undertaking relevant work experience and extra curricular involvements will also be important with regard to developing employability skills.

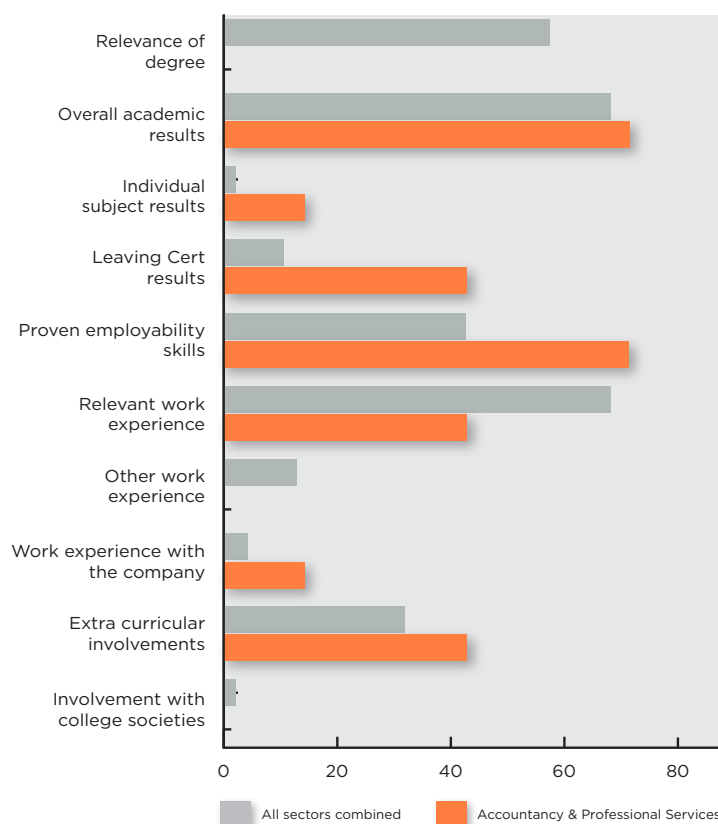


FIG.11 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

The graph above shows the criteria for shortlisting candidates that the Accountancy and Professional Services sector consider most important and compares this with the findings from all sectors combined.

More good news in the Accountancy & Professional Services sector as respondents projecting an increase in graduate hires are doing so due to a recorded increase in business and projected growth in future business.



Which employability skills do you view as most important when hiring graduates?

Key Points:

- As expected, business/customer awareness and communication literacy are identified by the majority of respondents (71%) as particularly significant skills in the Accountancy & Professional Services sector.
- Teamwork and problem solving also feature prominently and it is interesting to note that a “positive attitude” is viewed as equally important.
- Employers have indicated that they would like to see students focus more attention on communication & literacy skills, business & customer awareness, problem solving and self management.

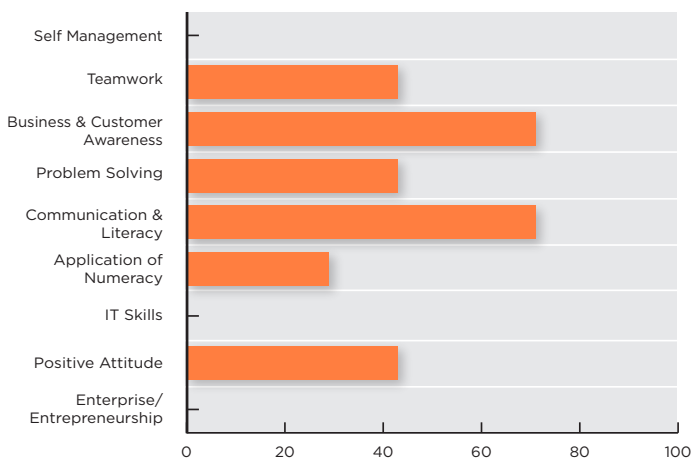


FIG.12 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment.

Employers were asked to make specific recommendations to students in order to improve their employability skills. Some key points were raised:

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Involvement with clubs & societies was a very prominent recommendation in the survey, as it was noted that this will help students to learn about responsibility, communication, and time management. Taking a position of responsibility was identified as being particularly important.

COMMERCIAL AWARENESS

Keep up to date with business news and become more commercially aware during your time in college. Read the business newspapers and websites to ensure you know what is going on in the business world from day to day.

Interact more with the business community and volunteer for work experience. This will help to develop your business awareness and your connections in the business world.

BE PROACTIVE

Be proactive and seek out opportunities by taking the time to attend employer events, workshops, and talks throughout your time in university.

Show initiative in everything that you do from your studies to work experience, and develop a positive can do attitude along the way.

INTERNSHIPS

Seek out summer internships whether on a paid or an unpaid basis. Internships are a brilliant way of getting relevant work experience while in college. They are also valuable from the point of view of developing commercial awareness and establishing professional connections.

Employer opinions on the next 5 years in the Accountancy & Professional Services sector:

“The Accountancy sector has remained a big graduate employer even in the depth of the economic crisis. I see this continuing as we are moving into other areas and expanding our business into new markets.”

“The outlook for our core business is stable and we are also experiencing growth in areas such as Advisory which draws on expertise from lots of backgrounds and may open doors to an even wider variety of disciplines.”

“Competition is increasing all the time and students are becoming increasingly aware that to secure a job they need to be a good all-rounder, achieve good academic results, get work experience (internships) and also show involvement in other activities (voluntary bodies, societies, clubs etc.)”

“The Accountancy & Professional Services sector has started to look at graduates outside of the ‘standard’ business courses and are now competing for graduates from IT, Engineering, Science, etc., and this trend will continue.”

“There will always be a need for graduates in our sector as the foundation of the firm is built on trainees. We will be looking to recruit from different academic backgrounds and not just Accountancy & Business. Over the past year we have recruited graduates from various disciplines due to the different sectors in which we operate.”

Trends @ a glance

IT & COMMUNICATIONS



How many employees in total does your company have in Ireland and Northern Ireland

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Employee Numbers	0-50	51-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2500	2501-5000	5000+	Salary Median: €29,875
% of survey respondents	14.29%	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	

Current and projected Graduate Recruitment Activity

- There was some variation among participants in terms of the number of graduates recruited. 86% of the companies surveyed took on 11 or more graduates, with 29% recruiting more than 50 graduates in the last campaign. Only 14% did not undertake any graduate recruitment.

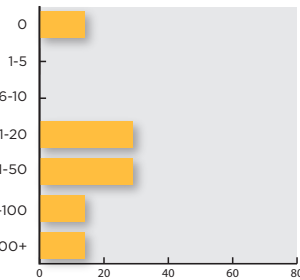


FIG.13 How many graduates did your company hire during the 2012 / 2013 recruitment campaign?

- None of the IT & Telecommunications companies surveyed expect graduate recruitment numbers to decrease, with a significant 86% indicating an increase in numbers for the coming campaign. This is reflective of a sector that is buoyant and in growth.

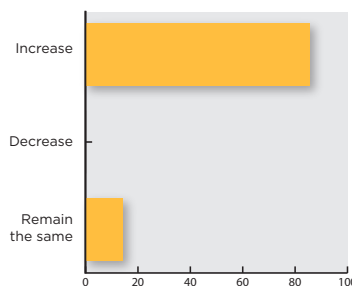


FIG.14 Projected trends in graduate recruitment in 2013/2014

- The primary reason for the expected increase in graduate recruitment is an increased focus on the recruitment of graduates, which is very good news for students. Recorded and projected increases in businesses were also cited by employers in the sector.

Which degree disciplines do you typically recruit from?

- IT and Business disciplines are most prominent here and so too is Engineering due to the technical nature and problem solving focus of such degree programmes. Of further note here is the level to which IT & Telecommunications companies recruit from Arts & Law backgrounds (42%). The companies surveyed typically recruit from honours degree and post graduate degree level.

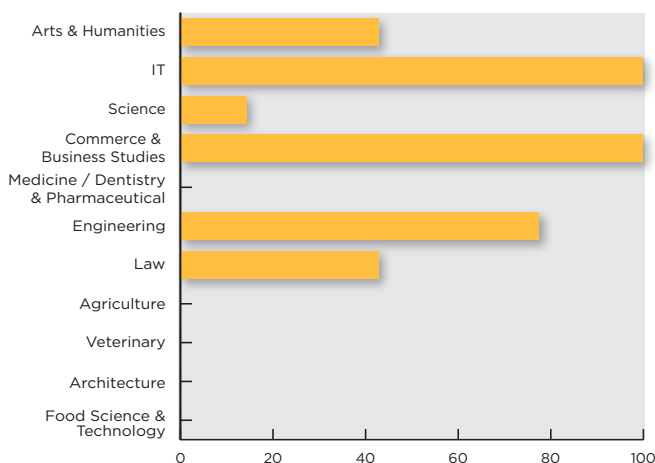


FIG.15 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

From which academic level do you typically recruit?

- The companies surveyed typically recruit from honours and postgraduate degree levels, with the indication being that no graduate recruitment takes place below this level.

What do you view as being the most important criteria when shortlisting graduates?

- Firstly, the relevance of the degree and the overall academic results are identified as the most important criteria, followed by degrees with a work placement content.
- In addition, extra curricular involvements have been strongly weighted by employers in the sector with almost 43% of respondents viewing such involvements as a key consideration in the shortlisting process.

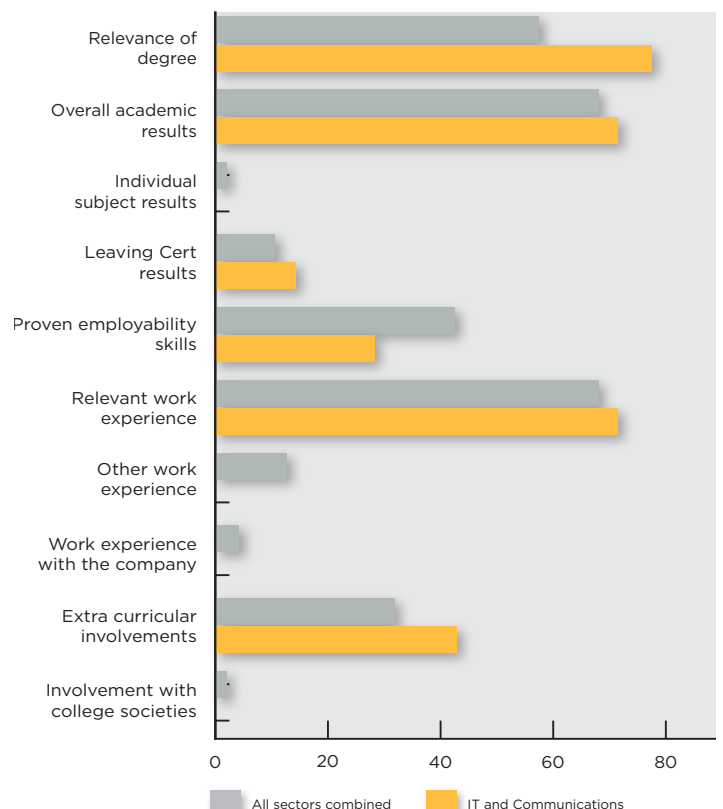


FIG.16 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

The chart above shows the criteria for shortlisting candidates that the IT and Communications sector consider most important and compares this with the findings from all sectors combined.

IT & Telecommunications companies surveyed do not expect graduate recruitment numbers to decrease, with a significant 86% indicating an increase in numbers. This is reflective of a sector that is buoyant and growing.



Which employability skills do you view as most important when hiring graduates?

- Teamwork and communication skills are identified as most important when hiring graduates from this sector.
- A positive attitude is much valued and will impact greatly on graduates' ability to work and communicate well with others.
- Two employability skills that have been identified as needing further attention from graduates are business & commercial awareness and self management skills.

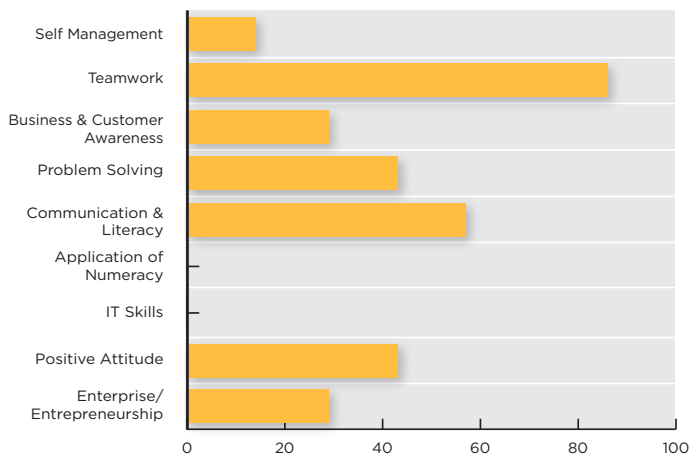


FIG.17 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment.

Employers were asked to make specific recommendations to students in order to improve their employability skills. Some key points were raised:

NETWORKING

Attend local events that are relevant to your area of interest, e.g. Chambers of Commerce events, conferences/talks, open evenings in local companies & learn how to network & build your network base. This will also help build on your knowledge of current business & economic trends & topics.

GET A MENTOR

Get a mentor in the IT & Telecommunications industry. It can be hugely beneficial to have someone to talk to in relation to questions you might have, and it is also a great way of keeping up to date with what is happening in the industry. In addition, getting a mentor is an excellent way of establishing further contacts within the sector.

INTERNSHIPS AND RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Gain relevant internship positions each summer while you are in college, even if the positions are unpaid. Be open to working for a start up company, even if it means working for free. The more work experience a student attains, the more real estate that candidate has when it comes to applying for graduate roles.

FURTHER ADVICE

Attending training sessions provided by Careers Services & employers will help develop a graduate in areas that are not addressed academically, i.e. Presentation skills, communications training etc.

Get involved with clubs & societies at leadership level. Undertake voluntary and charity work if possible and organize fundraising events.

Employer opinions on the next 5 years in the IT & Communications sector:

"The opportunities for graduates within this sector will only increase over the next 5 years. Europe is now twice as large as the U.S. in terms of internet population (Global Trends 2013), this which will provide enormous opportunity for graduates. Those who use their time wisely at university by developing industry relevant skills and exposing themselves to the sector early on will benefit. With more graduates than ever entering the market, employers are now in a position to select candidates that have a specific skill set that they may require."

"IT/Computer Science market is growing and will continue to have a shortage of well qualified graduates based on our experience over a number of years."

"It will develop significantly as the IT industry is growing year on year. From our perspective we are intending on focusing greatly on the recruitment of graduates over the next few years with a view to growing our graduate & undergraduate numbers significantly so that 30% of all new joiners will come from the graduate market. This will mainly be due to a projected growth in our business for the future & will be driven from our leadership team as they see the real value & benefit of recruiting top graduate talent into the company."

"I believe the graduate market will continue to grow within the IT sector, as companies a) put more focus on graduates and b) continue to experience high levels of growth."

Trends @ a glance

ENGINEERING & MANUFACTURING



How many employees in total does your company have in Ireland and Northern Ireland

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Employee Numbers	0-50	51-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2500	2501-5000	5000+	Salary Median: €28,571
% of survey respondents	0%	14%	29%	0%	43%	0%	14%	

Current and projected Graduate Recruitment Activity

- The number recruited by respondents totalled 119 graduates.
- 57% of respondents took on between 11 – 20 graduates each.
- None of the respondents in this sector indicated that recruitment numbers will decrease for the 2014 campaign, with 28% indicated an increase. This is reflected in the projected figures for next year which expect 133 graduate hires - an increase of 12%.
- The expected increase in graduate hires is due to a projected growth in business and an increased focus on graduate hiring in the sector.

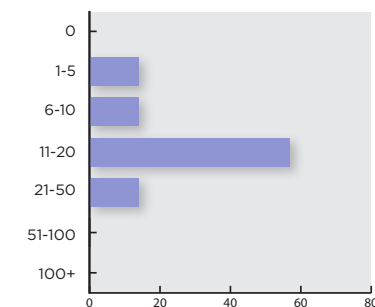


FIG.18 Number of graduates hired in 2012/13 recruitment campaign

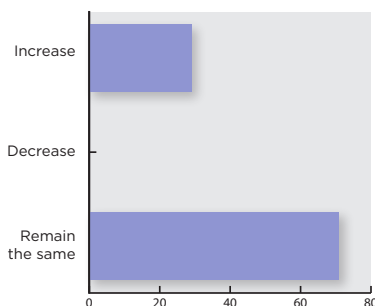


FIG.19 Projected trends in graduate recruitment in 2013/2014

Which degree disciplines do you typically recruit from?

- All respondents indicated that they recruit students from Engineering degree backgrounds. In addition, engineering & manufacturing companies also recruit from Commerce & Business Studies and, to a lesser extent, from Science, Arts, Agriculture, and Food Science backgrounds.

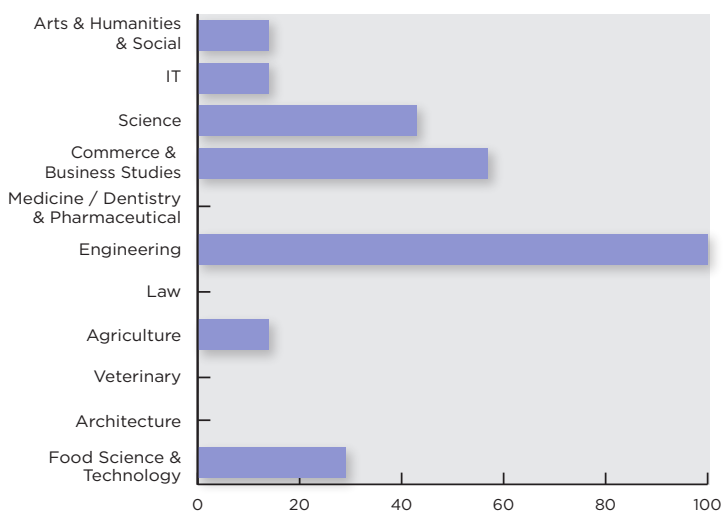


FIG.20 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

From which academic level do you typically recruit?

- All of the companies surveyed in this sector recruit from honours degree level 8, with 29% recruiting from level 7 ordinary degree and 57% recruiting from postgraduate level 9 or higher.

What do you view as being the most important criteria when shortlisting graduates?

- Relevance of degree was identified as the most important criterion when shortlisting graduates in the Engineering & Manufacturing sector. This is likely to be indicative of the specialist nature of many of the roles within the sector, a point which is backed up by the fact that gaining relevant experience is the 2nd most important factor, with 71% of companies noting its significance. At 57%, overall academic results are also highly valued by engineering & manufacturing employers.
- For most students, getting relevant work experience is not a great issue as many degree programmes have work placements built in to the course. However, it may also be advisable for current students to seek out relevant summer and internship experiences that will support any future applications to graduate roles.

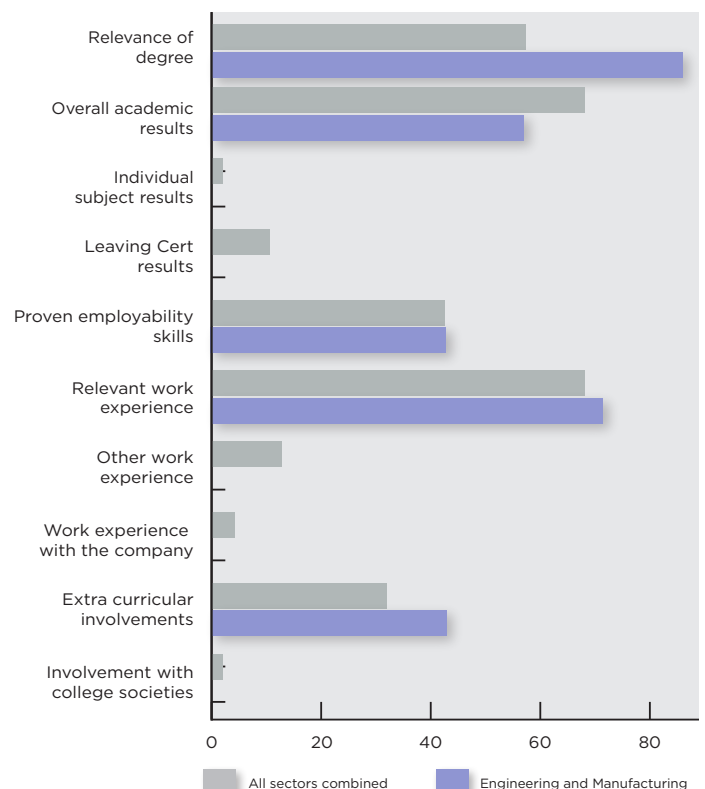


FIG.21 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

The graph above shows the criteria for shortlisting candidates that the engineering sector consider most important and compares this with the findings from all sectors combined.

Companies that expect an increase in graduate hires do so equally on the basis that there is a projected growth in business and an increased focus on the recruitment of graduates in the sector which is positive news for students.



Which employability skills do you view as most important when hiring graduates?

- All respondents agreed that teamwork is the most important employability skill for graduates to develop.
- A positive attitude was seen as being the next most important employability factor, with 86% of respondents identifying with this employability trait. Graduates need to be mindful of this, as well as achieving excellent results and gaining relevant work experience.
- Employers in this sector would like to see students develop employability traits such as business & customer awareness and self management skills.

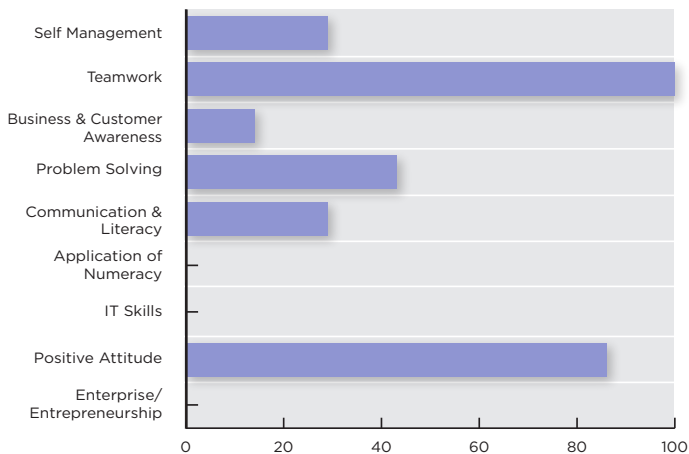


FIG.22 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment.

Employers were asked to make specific recommendations to students in order to improve their employability skills. Some key points were raised:

BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER AWARENESS

Improving awareness of the engineering and manufacturing industry was a very strong suggestion. Employers expressed some amazement at how little some graduates know beyond the scope of their degree programme. It was noted that such an awareness will have huge implications for graduates' initial careers. This will also help to demonstrate a passion for engineering.

LEARN A LANGUAGE

Learning a language was recommended by multiple employers as many have opportunities for work abroad and deal with international clients. One respondent noted that, ideally, graduates will have fluency in one foreign language and a willingness to pick up the business essentials of others as opportunities arise. The advice for students then is to learn a language alongside their degree if it is not already a part of the programme.

FINAL YEAR PROJECT

It is recommended that students choose a challenging final year project. The suggestion is that too many students choose an easier project in an effort to achieve a higher grade. However, companies are frequently more impressed with more challenging projects, as these will also allow graduates to show greater technical knowledge and ability at interview.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Taking an active role in clubs and societies
- Undertaking relevant summer internships.
- Improving communications skills by making presentations where possible in college.

Employer opinions on the next 5 years in the Engineering and Manufacturing sector:

"We are increasing numbers of graduates each year due to the growth within the industry and the increased number of projects the company is being awarded. We see increased requirements for Mechanical, Electrical and Quantity Surveyors. We are also seeing an increase in requests for Marketing students."

"I believe that the graduate job market will be competitive, with the economy beginning to show signs of recovery there will be further pressure on companies to select and retain the best talent. Ensuring that graduate programmes & opportunities remain attractive will be key."

"Although the company was established in Ireland and is headquartered in the country, the proportion of the Group's turnover from Ireland is less than 5%. Given the Company's growth strategy, this is unlikely to move upwards, even with a return to growth in the Irish economy. However, we expect a range of opportunities for Irish graduates in other countries in which the Group has a presence."

"We would expect projected growth in our sector due to the importance of bringing talented young people into the industry."

"The semiconductor industry experiences peaks and troughs on an ongoing basis. Having said that, ADI consistently hires graduates (approximately 20 each year) to build our future pipeline of engineers. We have seen an increase over the past couple of years in the numbers of students selecting electronics as a course of study and, as a result, this gives us a wider choice when selecting the strongest graduates for our roles. This could potentially lead to increase competition between graduates seeking employment."

"The market remains strong. Graduate recruitment is part of our talent management pipeline and we have a five year plan in place."

Trends @ a glance

BANKING, INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



How many employees in total does your company have in Ireland and Northern Ireland

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Employee Numbers	0-50	51-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2500	2501-5000	5000+	Salary Median:
% of survey respondents	0%	20%	20%	20%	20%	0%	20%	€24,900

Current and projected Graduate Recruitment Activity

- Graduate recruitment numbers were significant in the sector, with 80% of employers surveyed recruiting 21 or more graduates and 40% recruiting more than 50. The total number of graduates recruited by respondents in the sector totalled 276.
- None of the respondents indicated that there would be a decrease in graduate recruitment in the coming campaign. In fact, 60% projected an increase in graduate recruitment numbers, while 40% see graduate hires remaining the same. Overall, there is a projection that 285 graduates will be recruited by respondents in 2013/2014, which represents an increase of 3%.
- The projected increase in graduate hires is primarily due to an increased focus on graduate recruitment, with 67% indicating this is the case. 33% noted a recorded increase in business.

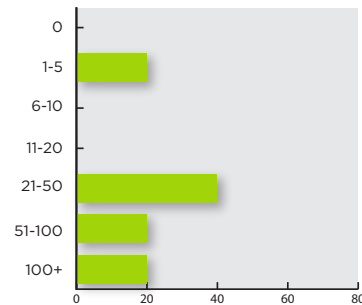


FIG.23 How many graduates did your company hire during the 2012/2013 recruitment campaign?

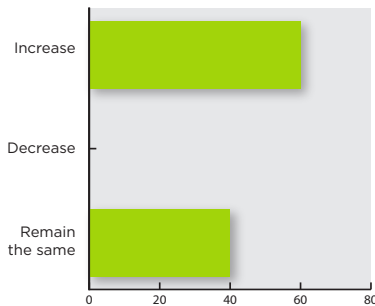


FIG.24 Projected trends in graduate recruitment in 2013/2014

Which degree disciplines do you typically recruit from?

- There is less diversity in terms of the variety of degree disciplines recruited from compared to most other sectors. The most prevalent degree discipline in the Banking, Insurance,

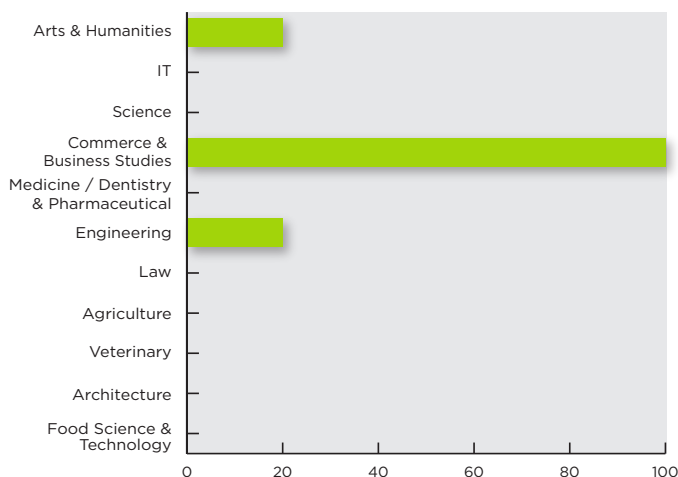


FIG.25 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

& Financial Management sector is Commerce/Business Studies with all respondents indicating they recruit strongly from this background. 20% of respondents noted recruitment from both Engineering, & Arts backgrounds and no other degree disciplines were identified.

From which academic level do you typically recruit?

- Predictably most graduates are recruited in the sector from Level 8 & 9, with all respondents typically recruiting from honours degree level and 60% recruiting from postgraduate degree level. Interestingly, 20% noted recruitment from PhD level.

What do you view as being the most important criteria when shortlisting graduates?

- Overall, academic results are highly valued in the sector, with all respondents indicating that results play a significant role in the short listing of candidates.
- The relevance of degree is the next most prevalent factor in short listing graduates.
- The other criteria identified by employers in the sector are work experience, either with the company or from other sources.

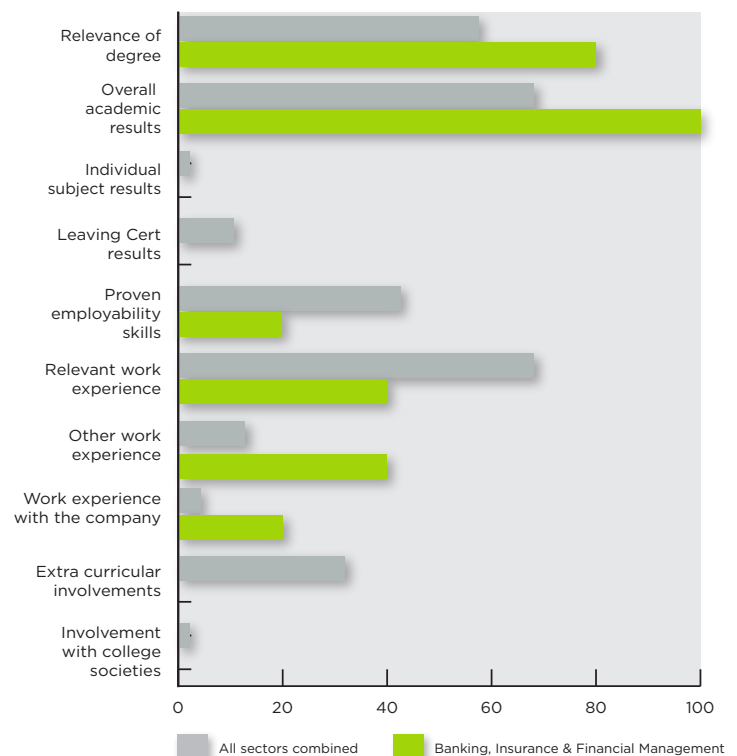


FIG.26 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

The graph above shows the criteria for shortlisting candidates that the engineering sector consider most important and compares this with the findings from all sectors combined.

Overall academic results are highly valued in the sector, with all respondents indicating that results play a significant role in the short listing of candidates.



Which employability skills do you view as most important when hiring graduates?

- Four major skills emerged here and all are closely related to the nature of the work in the Banking, Insurance & Financial Management sector. Business & customer awareness is a key employability skill that graduates will need to have developed before applying to companies in the sector, as this will help in communicating well with customers which is also identified as a core employability skill by 60% of respondents.
- Given the nature of the work in the sector, employability skills such as the application of numeracy and problem solving are also highly valued by employers here.
- Employers in this sector would like to see students develop employability traits such as self management and problem solving.

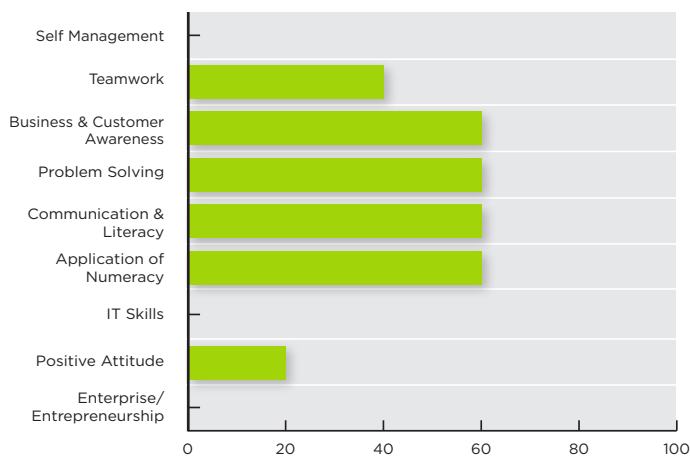


FIG.27 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment

Employers were asked to make specific recommendations to students in order to improve their employability skills. Some key points were raised:

DEVELOP YOUR IT SKILLS

Take the time to develop your IT skills during your time in college. Even if IT is not part of the curriculum, it is a good idea to develop IT skills outside of college. In particular, it is very useful to develop proficiency in Excel and other technical skills including Pivot Tables and V Lookup.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Attention to detail is so important in this sector. It can be difficult when you're trying to learn a multitude of new things in the workplace and particularly in today's fast paced work environments. Take your time and proof read everything. This should start in your academic work and be reflected in everything you do.

ASK FOR HELP

There is a balance to be found between being confident and being cocky. Confidence is a trait that is highly valued in the sector, but so is appreciating the expertise of others. Do not be afraid to ask questions if you don't know something. If something has gone wrong and you don't know how to fix it, ask for help.

DEVELOP YOUR BUSINESS ACUMEN

Numerous suggestions were offered around this theme: Be aware of business etiquette as it relates to communications both verbal & written. Seek unpaid work experience in large organisations. This will enhance business acumen and communication skills. Develop a knowledge of your sector/ career area throughout your degree and seek a business mentor if possible.

Employer opinions on the next 5 years in the Banking, insurance and Financial Management sector:

"I believe the competition for strong business graduates will intensify, as it is a very aggressive market we are in. We as employers need to start early to educate the students to the opportunities that are out there. This starts with the academic staff in the universities."

"I think employment opportunities will develop in this area as this sector is developing in Ireland."

"Banking has been particularly hard hit. It isn't the glamorous world, it once was. I don't expect lots of growth for graduates in this area in the foreseeable future and as a result, I can see the competition for placement being really tough."

"There will probably be more demand for graduates with data analytic skills and also other European and Asian languages - based on current developments in the market and the continuing globalization of the industry."

"It (graduate recruitment) will increase. Fresh talent is needed to bring the sector forward."

Trends @ a glance

LAW & LEGAL SERVICES



How many employees in total does your company have in Ireland and Northern Ireland

Employee Numbers	0-50	51-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2500	2501-5000	5000+	Salary Median: n/a
% of survey respondents	0%	20%	40%	40%	0%	0%	0%	

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Current and projected Graduate Recruitment Activity

- 80% of firms surveyed have taken on more than 21 graduates in the last campaign. Among all respondents in the sector there was a total of 166 graduates recruited during the 2012/2013 campaign.
- While none of the Law & Legal Services employers indicated there would be a decrease in the expected number of graduate hires, only 20% suggested there would be an increase and so the sector appears reasonably static.
- Any expected increase in graduate recruitment for the 2013/2014 campaign has been put down to a projected growth in business but it should be acknowledged that the increase will be very moderate.

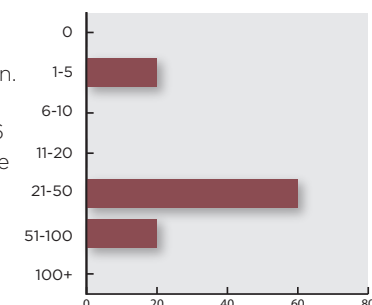


FIG.28 How many graduates did your company hire during the 2012/2013 recruitment campaign?

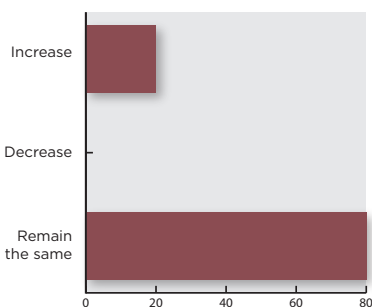


FIG.29 Projected trends in graduate recruitment in 2013/2014

Which degree disciplines do you typically recruit from?

- Students may be surprised to find the broad range of degree backgrounds from which Law & Legal Services employers recruit from. Predictably, Law & Commerce/Business backgrounds are very prevalent with 100% & 80% of respondents identifying these degree areas respectively. However, 60% also typically recruit from Arts, 40% from Science & Engineering, and 20% from IT and Food Science degree disciplines. This reflects the diverse range of industries and clients with whom the legal firms work.

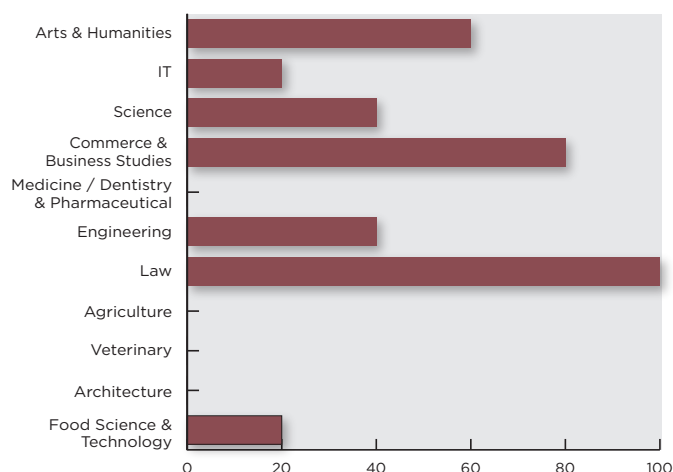


FIG.30 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

From which academic level do you typically recruit?

- Firms recruit from honours degree & postgraduate level, but also some recruitment does take place from ordinary degree level. None of the firms indicated that they typically recruit from PhD level.

What do you view as being the most important criteria when shortlisting graduates?

- Overall academic results has been identified by all respondents in the sector as being the key factor in shortlisting graduates. This is also interesting in the context of the degree backgrounds these employers recruit from, as there is a suggestion that the result rather than the discipline is most important. One respondent noted that they look for good all round high achievers with a willingness to learn regardless of the degree background.
- Relevant work experience is also identified as important in the shortlisting process. Having some work experience will help a candidate stand out in the application process.

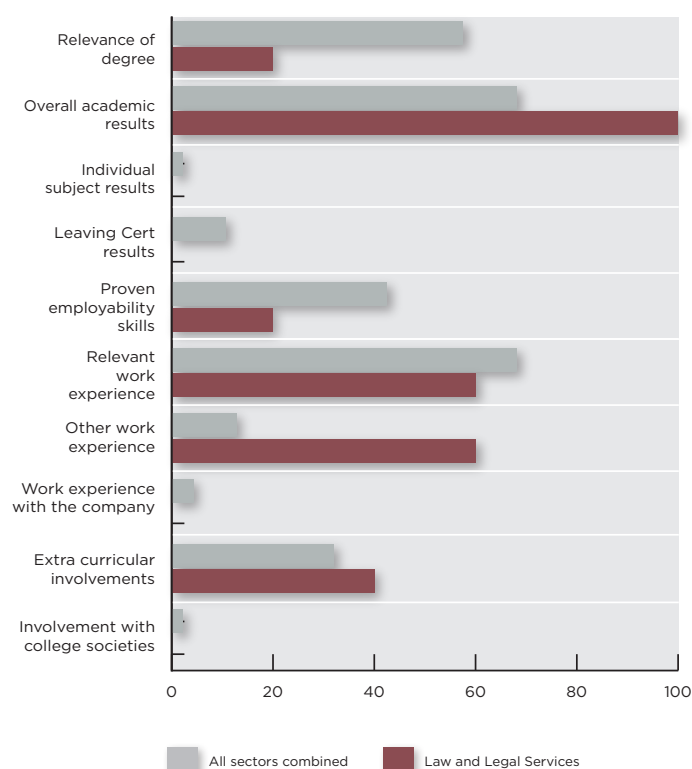


FIG.31 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

The graph above shows the criteria for shortlisting candidates that the Legal sector consider most important and compares this with the findings from all sectors combined.

Students may be surprised to find that Law & Legal Services recruit from a broad range of degree backgrounds.



Which employability skills do you view as most important when hiring graduates?

- Given that much of the work in the Law & Legal Services sector is client oriented, business and customer awareness (80%) and communication (80%) are understandably viewed as significant employability skills. Graduates will need to have developed these skills throughout their college careers.
- A positive attitude was viewed as important by 40% of respondents. One respondent noted that many graduates attend interviews and their attitude is “what can you do for me?” rather than “this is what I can do for you?”
- Employers in this sector would like to see students develop employability skills like business & customer awareness, self management and problem solving.

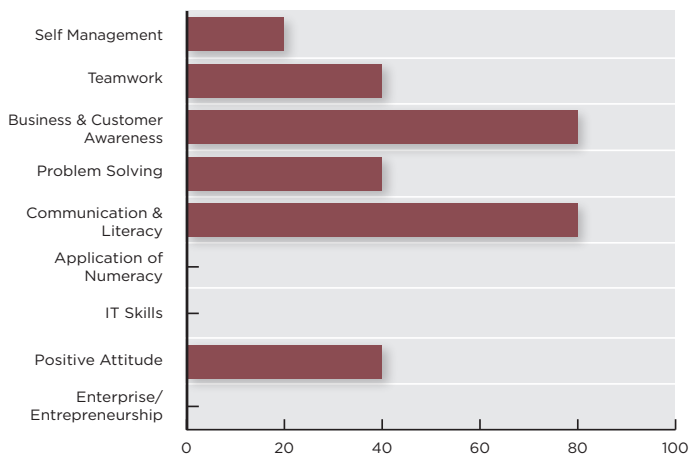


FIG.32 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment

Employers were asked to make specific recommendations to students in order to improve their employability skills. Some key points were raised:

TAKE RISKS!

Take risks! Students need to stretch themselves. Do something out of their comfort zone regularly and do not be afraid to get it wrong. This says something about the type of person being sought by some legal firms and suggests something about the attitude and personality of the graduate. You need to be able to stand out from the crowd.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL AND COMMUNICATION

Pay attention to detail in everything that you do. Pay attention to spelling and grammar in all of your work, including your application, as this will be important in your future work.

Take the time to develop your written as well as your oral communication skills while in college, as these are critical aspects of the job in Law & Legal Services.

DIFFERENTIATE

Companies are looking for well rounded candidates. Activities like travel abroad and voluntary work are important in this regard as they are useful in helping individual graduates stand out. Getting a summer internship is a good experience but you don't need this to be a very strong applicant. Firms want to know why and how you are different from other candidates.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

The firms in this survey have also advised students to get involved in the running of clubs and societies as this is a great way of improving one's self management skills which has been identified as a key deficiency among graduates. This will also provide opportunity for dealing with conflict which is an important part of the work in the Law and Legal Services sector.

Employer opinions on the next 5 years in the Law and Legal Services sector:

“Graduate recruitment numbers will be consistent over the next 5 years and because of this the standard expected of applicants will rise.”

“The market will remain tough for graduates owing to the prevailing economic climate. The best opportunities for graduates will continue to be in the mid-large size firms.”

“The market in the legal sector has remained reasonably static and will continue to do so with some additional places for top students.”

“I think it will develop positively over the next 5 years but also very moderately. Graduate recruitment numbers are unlikely to change dramatically in the coming years.”

Trends @ a glance

FOOD & DRINKS INDUSTRY

(incorporating retail & sales)



How many employees in total does your company have in Ireland and Northern Ireland

Employee Numbers	0-50	51-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2500	2501-5000	5000+
% of survey respondents	0%	0%	33.33%	0%	50%	0%	16.67%

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Salary Median:
€27,750

Current and projected Graduate Recruitment Activity

- There were a broad range of graduate numbers recruited by each of the employers in the last campaign. Significantly, 50% of the companies recruited more than 21 graduates and 16% recruited more than 100 which reflects a healthy level of opportunity in an industry that is growing.

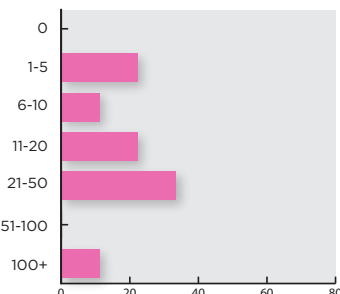


FIG.33 How many graduates did your company hire during the 2012/2013 recruitment campaign?

- 50% of respondents also expect an increase in terms of graduate recruitment for the coming campaign, while 33% have indicated that recruitment levels will remain the same, only 16% have noted that they expect a decrease in recruitment levels which again reflects a sector that is primarily in growth.

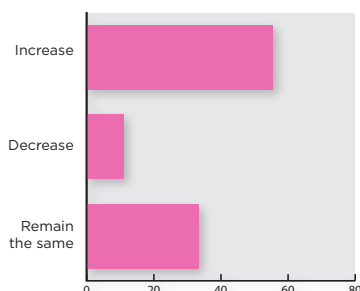


FIG.34 Projected trends in graduate recruitment in 2013/2014

- The good news for students and graduates is that the expected increase in graduate recruitment is due to a projected growth in business and an increased focus on the recruitment of graduates by companies in the sector. Furthermore, any projected decrease in graduate recruitment is due to improved retention rates rather than a decrease in business.

Which degree disciplines do you typically recruit from?

- Food Science, Engineering, Science, and Commerce are among the most prominent degree disciplines that companies recruit from in the Food & Drinks Industry. These companies have

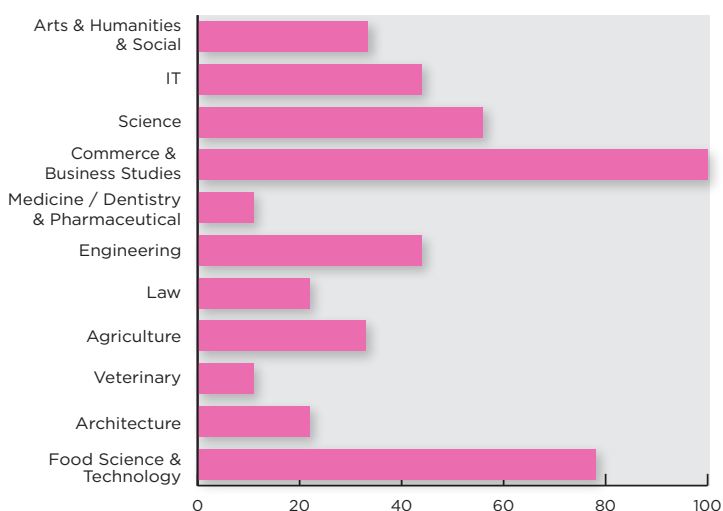


FIG.35 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

indicated that they recruit across all disciplines including Arts, Law and IT. This also reflects the many and varied functions within the companies and suggests that all students need to research the variety of roles on offer in all sectors and companies.

From which academic level do you typically recruit?

- Employers in the sector typically recruit from honours degree and postgraduate levels, but some recruitment does take place from ordinary degree level.

What do you view as being the most important criteria when shortlisting graduates?

- The relevance of the degree to the function and having relevant work experience are deemed to be the most important criteria in the sector. Many degree programmes have a formal work placement, but for those without, it is important for students to address the relevant work experience issue on their own initiative.
- Having proven employability skills is also an important criterion and while such skills are developed in part by relevant work placement, the onus is on students to develop employability skills further through extra curricular involvements, including involvement with societies, has also been identified as an important criteria when it comes to shortlisting graduates.

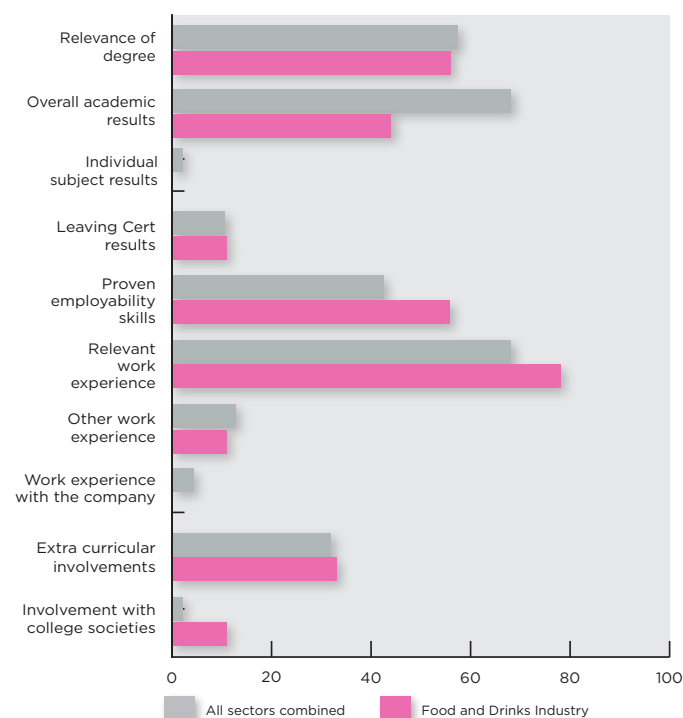


FIG.36 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

The graph above shows the criteria for shortlisting candidates that the Food & Drinks Industry sector considers most important and compares this with the findings from all sectors combined.

Significantly 50% of the employers in the last campaign recruited more than 21 graduates and 16% recruited more than 100 which reflects a healthy level of opportunity in an industry that is growing.



Which employability skills do you view as most important when hiring graduates?

- Developing excellent employability skills is clearly very important for students but so too is developing a positive attitude which has been identified as the most important criterion when hiring graduates.
- Teamwork is a more obvious key factor and this was put in to context by a respondent who noted that no matter what the role, in the end it is all about dealing with people.
- Employers in this sector would like to see students focus more on self management skills and have also identified project management as a skill that is important in this sector.

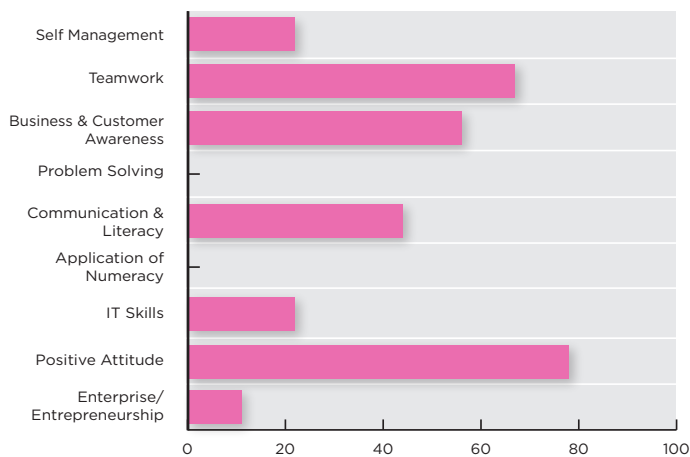


FIG.37 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment

Employers were asked to make specific recommendations to students in order to improve their employability skills. Some key points were raised:

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Attitude is everything for a company and the right fit for a company will be a person with the right attitude. Ensure that you develop this attitude through your studies in terms of meeting deadlines, asking questions where necessary and engaging in activities that will help develop skills required for the world of work.

DEVELOP YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS

Keep up the study on your language skills (even if you are not studying a language in university). More companies require those with strong competency levels in international languages. This will also allow you to avail of opportunities abroad and will make you more attractive to employers who have global bases and international clients.

DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

Improve your IT skills. Excel, PowerPoint etc are all skills graduates need in the workplace every day but are not really taught in University.

Graduates do not seem to have an understanding of industry in general – even basic knowledge of current affairs and its impact on business is lacking.

FURTHER ADVICE

- Learn how to sell yourself when making an application. Irish graduates do not sell themselves as well as their UK counterparts.
- Get some relevant work experience whether by undertaking summer internship or volunteering. We value all work experience but relevant work experience most of all.
- Engage in extra curricular activity in college such as involvement in clubs and societies.

Employer opinions on the next 5 years in the Engineering and Manufacturing sector:

"Our business is spread over 5 divisions: Energy, IT, Food and Beverage, Environmental and Healthcare, so it is difficult to say. I think if more Irish students had a greater knowledge of DCC and what it does, we would have more applicants. A move away from the best graduates applying to the 'big four' would dramatically change the market."

"Company is in growth, so I would expect the graduate jobs market to grow with it in the coming years."

"It will grow and continue to develop from strength to strength. The FMCG area has great potential to recruit fresh talent who can add value to an organisation."

"The Food & Drinks industry will stay steady and there will not be much movement."

"Graduate opportunities will increase in the next 5 years, as our business is in an expansion phase."

Trends @ a glance

PHARMACEUTICAL
SECTOR

How many employees in total does your company have in Ireland and Northern Ireland

Employee Numbers	0-50	51-200	201-500	501-1000	1001-2500	2501-5000	5000+
% of survey respondents	14%	0%	0%	43%	14%	29%	

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Salary Median:
€30,857

Current and projected Graduate Recruitment Activity

- Graduate recruitment figures were quite small, with none of the companies surveyed recruiting more than 10 graduates in the last campaign.
- 14% did not undertake any graduate recruitment at all during the 2013/2014 campaign.
- A significant 43% of respondents indicated that they expect graduate recruitment figures to decrease in the next campaign with only 28.5% projecting an increase in graduate recruitment. Given the already small existing recruitment numbers, the suggestion is for difficult times in the sector in the coming year.
- Of those companies projecting an increase in graduate recruitment, an increased focus on the recruitment of graduates is the primary reason for this. A projected growth in business is also noted.

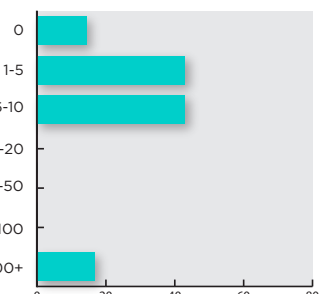


FIG.38 How many graduates did your company hire during the 2012/2013 recruitment campaign?

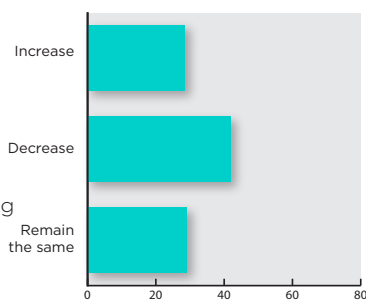


FIG.39 Projected trends in graduate recruitment in 2013/2014

Which degree disciplines do you typically recruit from?

- Predictably, companies in the Pharmaceutical sector recruit primarily from Science and Engineering degree backgrounds with all participants indicating that they recruit from both disciplines. Recruitment from Food Science backgrounds is also prominent and is acknowledged by 28.5% of companies. There is less diversity in terms of recruiting from other disciplines in the

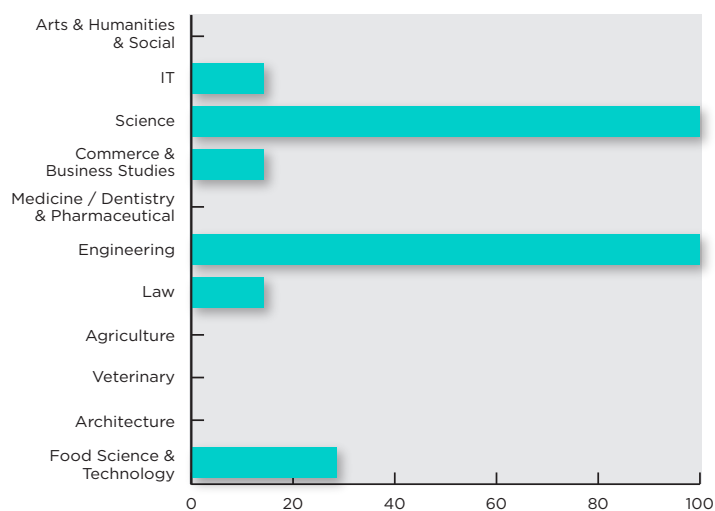


FIG.40 Degree disciplines that employers recruit from

Pharmaceutical sector although recruitment from Commerce, IT, and Law (14%) is also noted.

From which academic level do you typically recruit?

- In the Pharmaceutical sector there seems to be more prominence given to recruitment from postgraduate degrees and PhD's than in other sectors. It was noted by respondents that this is due to the level of expertise required in many roles and the fact that research positions will also require a research background.

What do you view as being the most important criteria when shortlisting graduates?

- Companies in the Pharmaceutical sector value relevant industrial experience very highly. For many students this will not be a huge issue as a formal work placement is a key part of the degree programmes. For those with no formal work placement, the onus is on students to secure relevant work experience of their own accord.
- Relevance of degree is noted as important in shortlisting by 86% of companies with overall academic results also featuring prominently at 57%. There is a strong academic focus in the Pharmaceutical sector when it comes to shortlisting. However, proven employability skills (43%) and extra curricular involvements should also be addressed by students and as one respondent noted "We look at the whole person, not just the academic person."

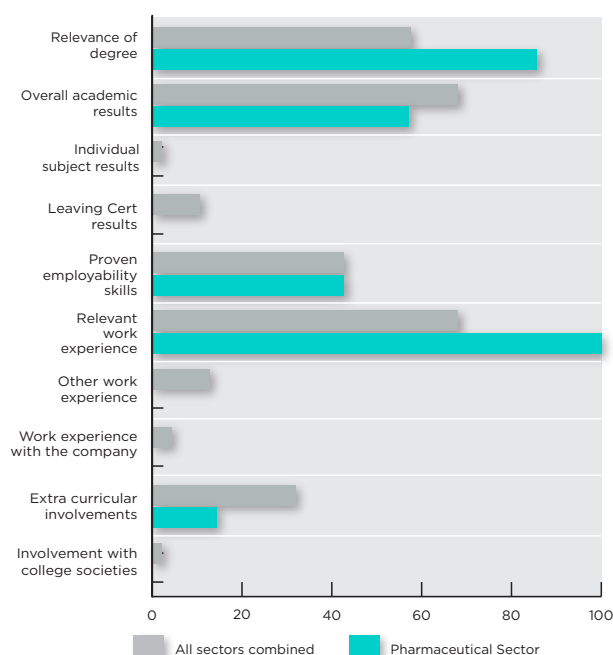


FIG.41 The most important criteria when shortlisting graduates

The graph above shows the criteria for shortlisting candidates that the Pharmaceutical sector consider most important and compares this with the findings from all sectors combined.

Companies in the pharmaceutical sector value relevant industrial experience very highly. For many students this will not be a huge issue as a formal work placement is a key part of the degree programmes.



Which employability skills do you view as most important when hiring graduates?

- There is a great diversity in the employability skills sought by employers in the Pharmaceutical industry and so again while there is emphasis on academic achievement, employers clearly value a broad range of experiences and skills.
- Teamwork is deemed as most important with business & customer awareness and a positive attitude also being highly valued.
- Employability traits needing further development are identified as business & customer awareness and self management.

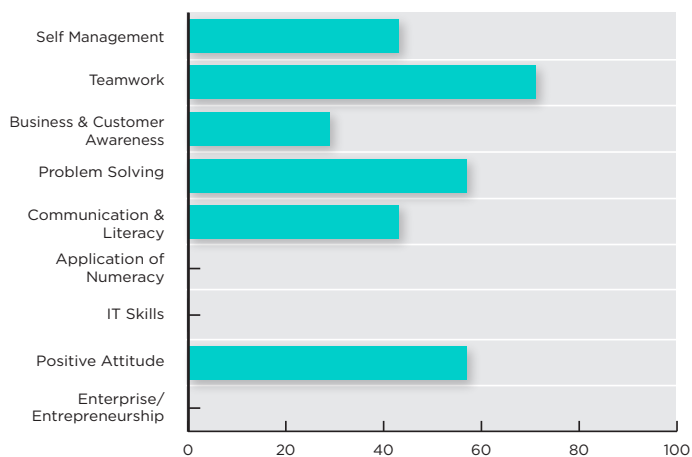


FIG.42 Employability skills which are most important in graduate recruitment

Employers were asked to make specific recommendations to students in order to improve their employability skills. Some key points were raised:

UNDERSTAND TEAMWORK

Working in a team is more than individual contribution towards a shared goal, it is about actively listening and engaging in the team, taking other people's ideas on-board, working towards the betterment of the team and achievement of the team goal. Sometimes people forget this and see teamwork as an opportunity to outshine team members.

IMPROVE YOUR WORK ETHIC

Having a strong academic background gives a strong basis for working in industry. Industry experience on top of these qualifications is invaluable. Respect and learn from the people you work with, observe how they work and manage their workloads. Having a strong work ethic and working hard seems obvious but not everyone has this.

UNDERSTAND THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Be aware of the companies in the sector you are aiming to get into. Look at what drives them and what is essential to their business success. Make an effort to develop a good understanding of current and future market trends in the industry.

FURTHER ADVICE

- Get a summer internship even if you have to do this on an unpaid basis.
- Get involved in clubs and societies. College results are important but it is not just about academic performance.

Employer opinions on the next 5 years in the Pharmaceutical Sector:

"I think graduates with relevant work experience/placements and hands on studies (i.e. in the lab) have an advantage over those who are lectured on theory and don't use the equipment regularly. It is important for students to receive practical studies as this helps them to gain work and perform well when they do."

"When choosing post-graduate studies an emphasis should be placed on the students desired future careers and plans. I receive CVs from students who want to work in the Biopharmaceutical industry but studied areas that were interesting to them at the time but not applicable to where they want to work."

"We expect to continue to recruit graduates based on talent development strategy."

"I believe they will continue to grow as there is now a great emphasis, especially within our company and sector, on developing talent and succession planning."

"The Graduate job market will decrease as one of our plants is closing next year."

"This should increase provided that graduates achieve even a basic work experience in their chosen area, i.e. internships."

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

This AHECS graduate employment survey, conducted in seven distinct graduate labour market areas, during the summer of 2013, has clearly identified the following criteria as being important to employers when recruiting graduates:

- Graduates from honours degrees or postgraduate degrees are the most sought after.
- Strong academic results.
- Relevant work experience is favoured by employers when short-listing for interview.
- Employability skills are also very important in the short-listing process.
- The employer is looking for a well-rounded individual with a positive “can do” attitude, teamwork and communication skills and good customer and business awareness.

The findings of this survey suggest that the majority of employers are looking to hire graduates with the above skills and attributes.

The recommendations the AHECS Labour Market Task Group make on conclusion of this survey are twofold, namely:

- Embedded Employability Skills Module in Curriculum.
- Work Placement option in all degree programmes

The inclusion of both of the above in academic programmes would lead to graduates with higher levels of employability and job readiness.

About the AHECS Labour Market Task Group

The role of the Labour Market Task Group is to:

- **Provide AHECS members with information on labour market trends influencing graduate recruitment;**
- **Build links with Industry and Employer Groups and;**
- **Create awareness among employers on how we can support their recruitment activities.**

We do this through our publications, training events and through the inception of a sub-group of employers, who work with the group in an advisory and supportive capacity.

The group is committed to building closer links with Industry, providing information on recruitment policies and initiatives, thus enabling our students to be best prepared for the work place.

About AHECS

Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) is the professional body for Careers Advisory and Work Placement Professionals within Higher Education in Ireland.

AHECS' mission is to lead, support and facilitate collaboration among Higher Education Careers Services throughout Ireland and be the recognised authority on graduate career development, learning and employability.

All 27 Universities and Institutes of Technology in Ireland, North and South, are members.

Produced by the AHECS Labour Market Task Group;

University College Cork (UCC), Cork Institute Technology (CIT), Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT), Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), Dublin City University (DCU)

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