

Skills shortage in Ireland's tech industry

Recent job losses in the IT / High Tech industries have weakened public confidence in the sector in Ireland.

In recent times the media has predominantly focused on less positive news regarding the industry particularly highlighting loss of jobs in the sector. The reality is that there is still a huge shortage of skilled workers in the industry and continued negative publicity by the media is only compounding this.

There are 74% more vacancies in the industry today over two years ago. The entire sector accounts for over 100,000 employees across Ireland.

Outside Ireland the confidence in the sector is very high. A new study has found record levels of confidence across the European technology sector and optimism about employment. 63% of company directors or executives involved in the study reported that they expect to increase employment over the coming year and only 4% expect to make cutbacks.

Ireland will struggle to continue attracting new multi-nationals if we cannot encourage greater uptake in third level technology courses. As with any sector, we cannot remain competitive within specific sectors forever; in terms of writing programme code we are no longer as competitive and some companies are shifting these operations further east. However, Ireland is still very competitive on the high value job front including areas such as designing, analysts, process experts and sales and marketing. The biggest problem is finding graduates to take these positions.

To secure the future of this sector within the Irish economy, we are either going to have to access the graduates at home or attract them in from abroad.

Through the Job Creation Strategy, Roscommon County Development Board and member agencies including the County Enterprise Board, the Western Development Commission, Enterprise Ireland, WestBIC, the IDA, the VEC and others are working to promote the uptake of technology career courses at ITs and colleges by Roscommon students.