



Graduate Market Survey 2021



AHECS is the voice of Higher Education (HE) Career Services, representing careers, employability and placement practitioners across Ireland. Representing 25 Universities and Institutes of Technology, we enable careers professionals to develop their skills and share best practice approaches and resources.

Together, our members and partners are facilitating over 400,000 students to get ahead. An Executive Board manages the Association with members from UCD, NUI Galway, TUD, NCI, DKIT and WIT, and the current co-chairs are Gavin Connell, Head of Careers, the University of Limerick and Trevor Johnston, Head of Careers, Employability and Skills, Queens University, Belfast.



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Welcome to the AHECS Graduate Market Survey 2021

Research results compiled by AHECS represent an annual snapshot of graduate recruitment across Ireland. Participants of this survey are graduate employers who have engaged with AHECS members in 2021. These include local, national and global companies, multinationals and SMEs, not-for-profit, from all sectors and disciplines. 302 graduate employers participated in this year's survey, the second year of the survey.

AHECS surveyed graduate employers between April and May 2021. Feedback from the organisations proves to be highly beneficial in preparing our graduates for their future careers. The 2021 survey captures placement and graduate recruitment trends, including:

- Average Salaries
- Disciplines in demand
- Employment by location
- Employment by sector
- Job vacancies
- Recruitment levels
- Work Placement activities

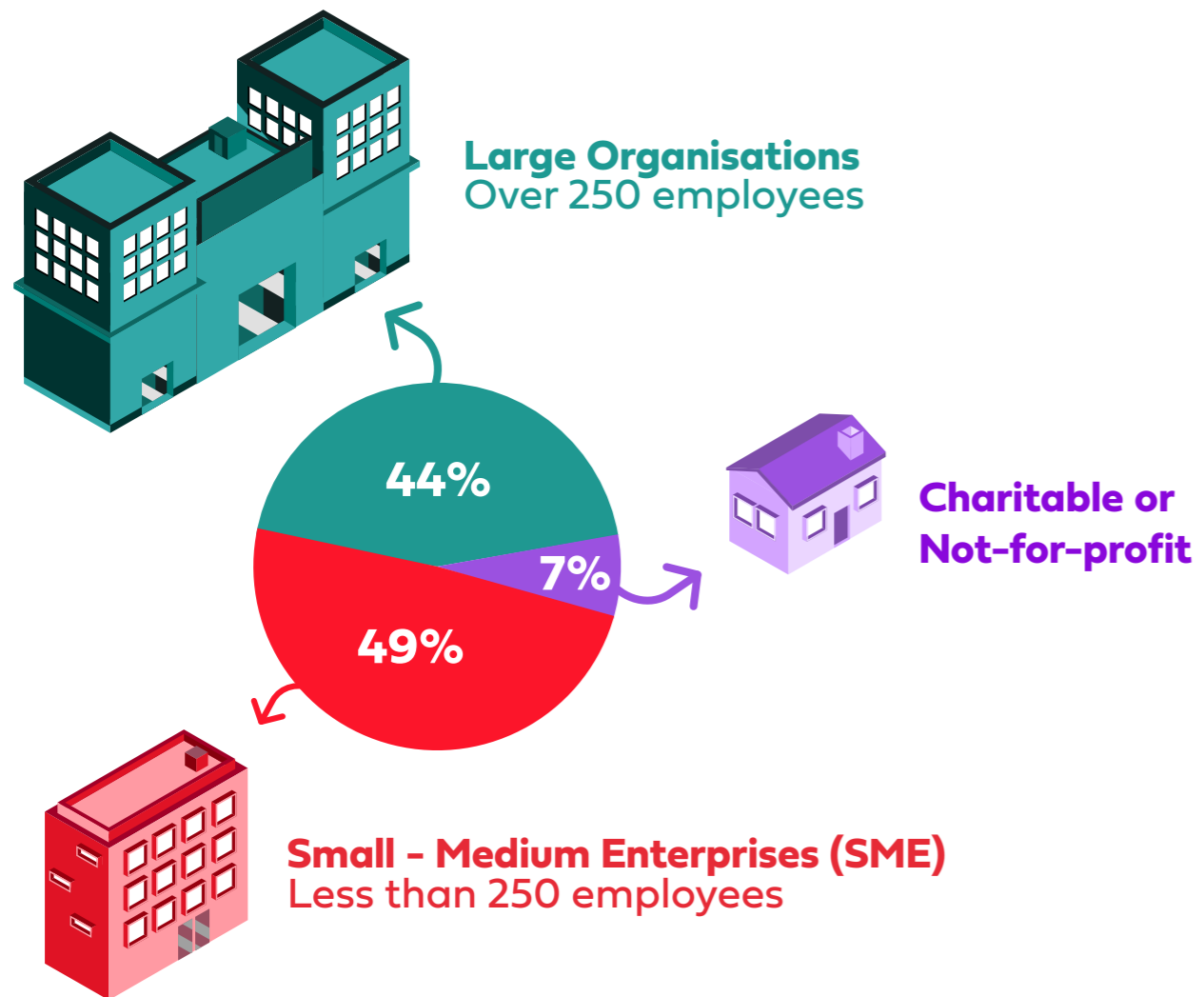
302

graduate employers
participated in the survey,
50% increase on last year

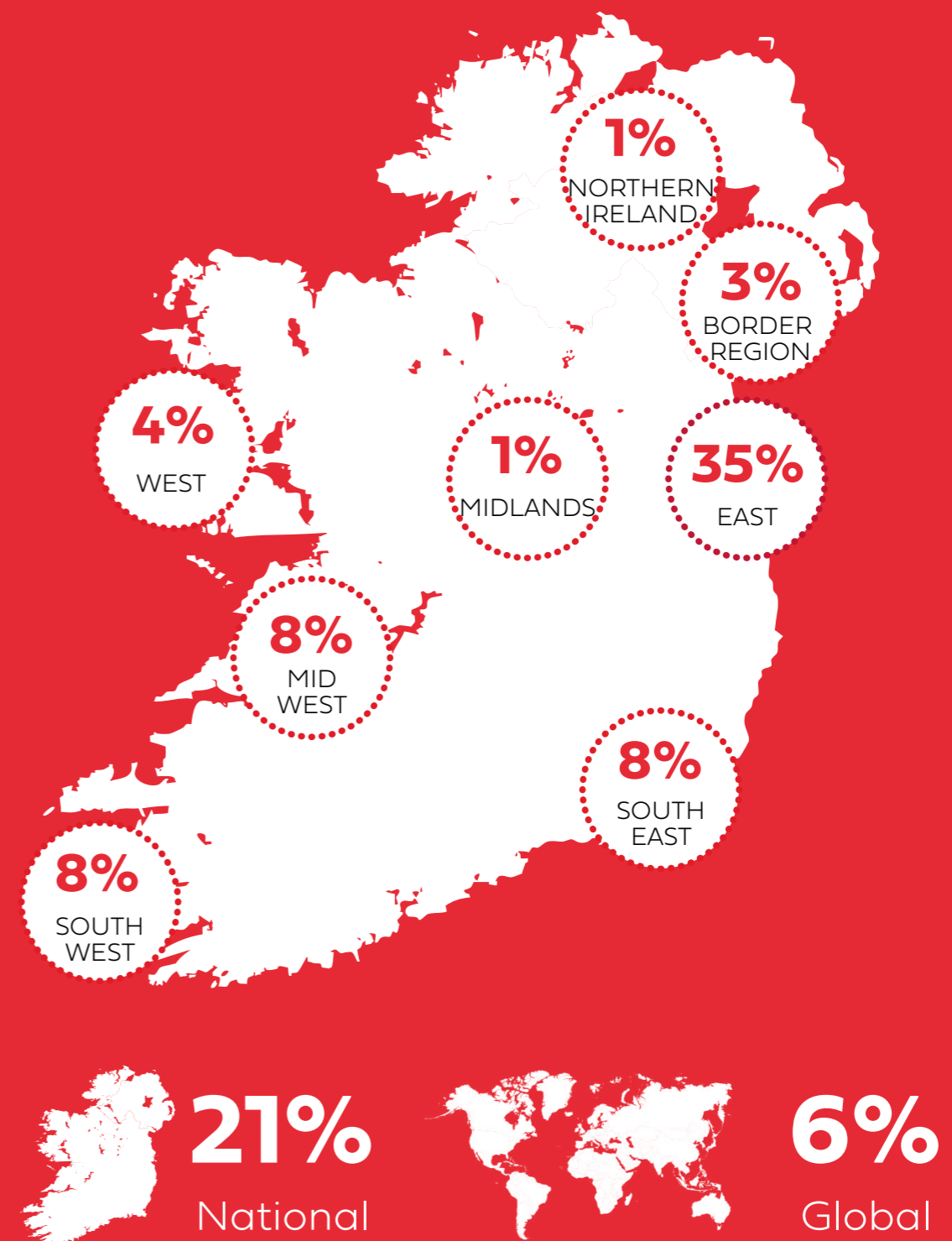
- Recruitment processes
- Top technical and soft skills, ranked by employers
- Recruitment challenges
- Covid-19 impact
- Employment sectors - overview of top five

The Graduate Market Survey 2021 provides employers, students, and AHECS with invaluable insights into the placement and graduate recruitment market. A particular word of thanks to everyone who supported and participated in the survey. We invite you to view the results and trends as part of your ongoing exploration of the placement and graduate recruitment market.

Organisation Type

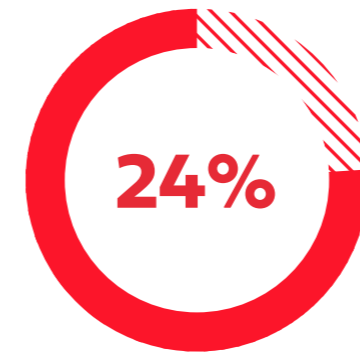


Organisation Location

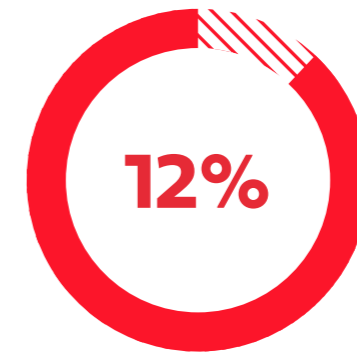


Sectors Surveyed

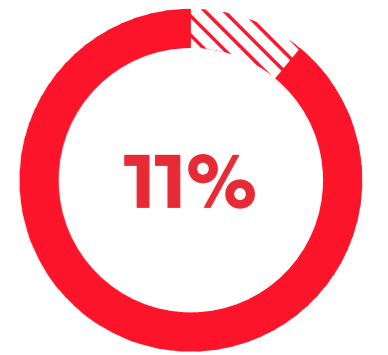
The Graduate Market Survey uses NACE, which is also used by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to ensure the standard classification of economic activity. NACE is an acronym derived from the French title Nomenclature générale des Activités économiques dans les Communautés européennes. NACE is the statistical classification of human health and social activities in the EU. For NACE classifications go to CSO.ie



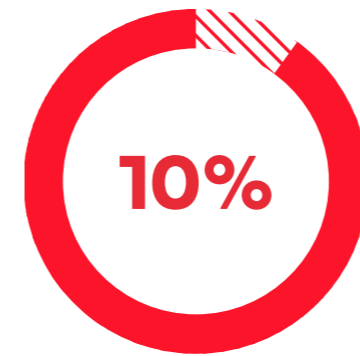
Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities



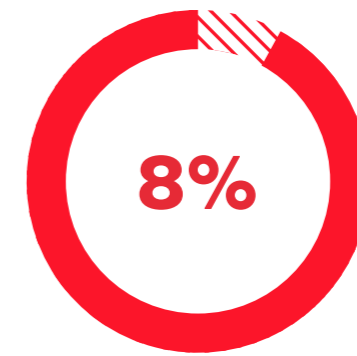
Manufacturing



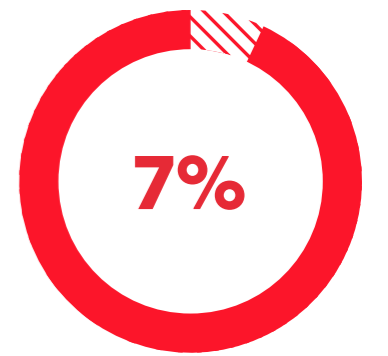
Information & Communication



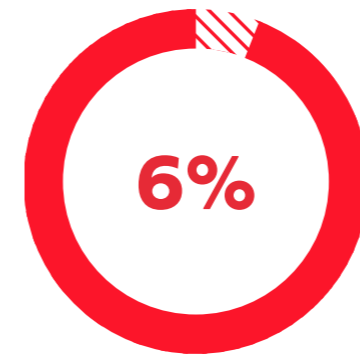
Financial & Insurance Activities



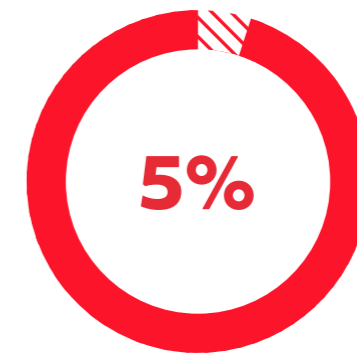
Construction



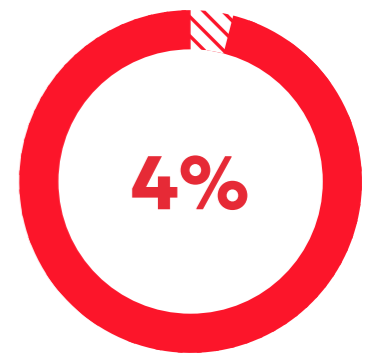
Other Service Activities



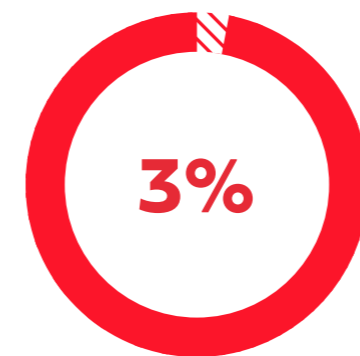
Education



Human Health & Social Work



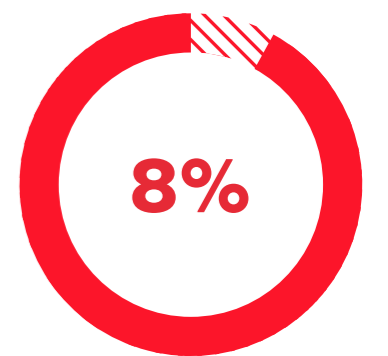
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation



Wholesale & Retail Trade



Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing



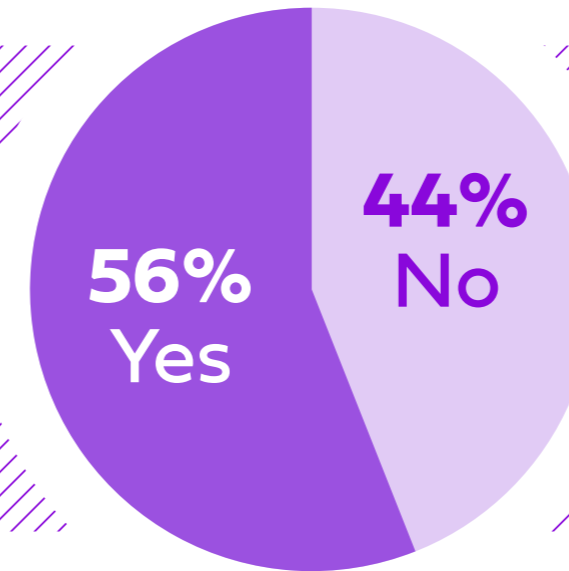
All Others

Work Placement



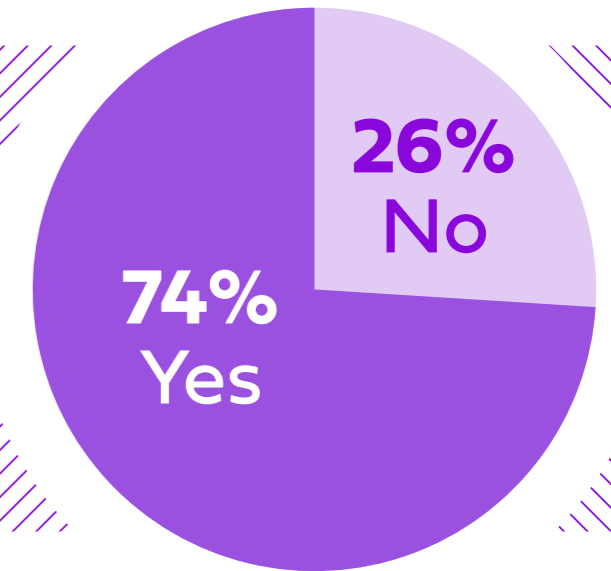
Summer Internships

Q. Do you offer Summer Internships?



Work Placements

Q. Do you offer Work Placements?



Duration of Work Placements



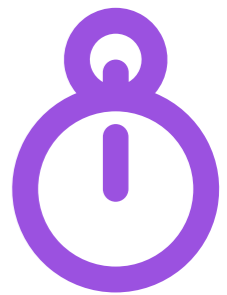
26%
Up to 3mths



47%
3 - 6mths



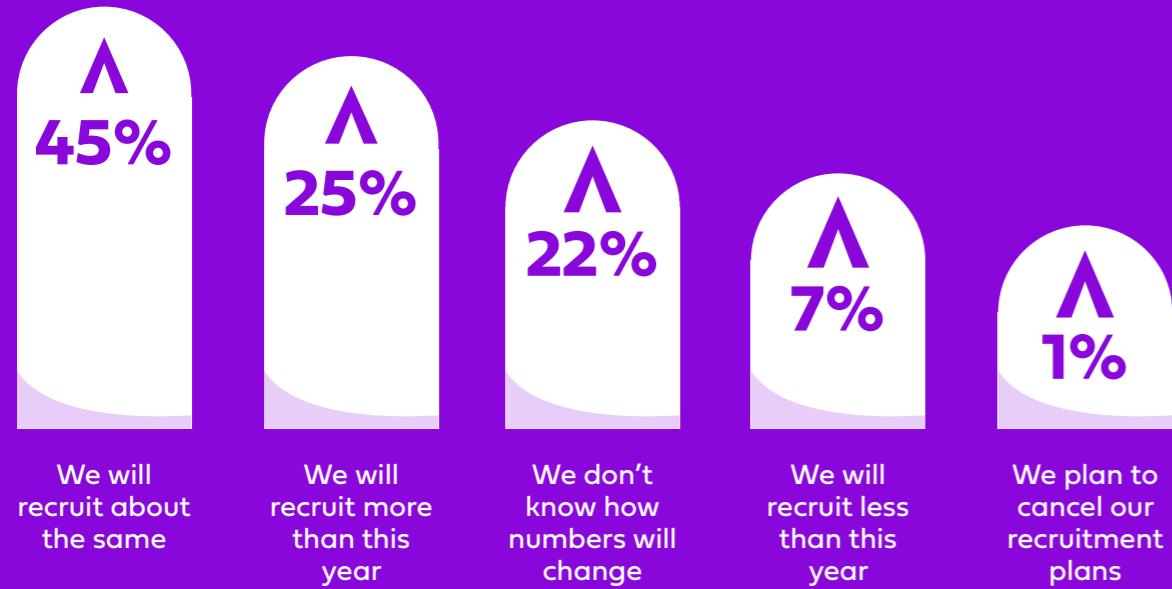
58%
6 - 12mths



15%
12mths +

Change in Hiring

Q. How do you expect the total number of work placements to change during 2021/22?



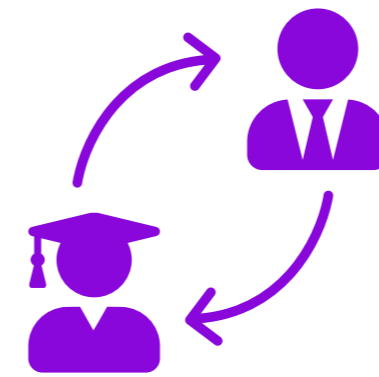
Withdrawn Offers

Q. Have you withdrawn any placement/summer internship offers as a result of Covid-19?



Conversion Rates

Q. Typically, what percentage of work placement students converted to graduate hires?

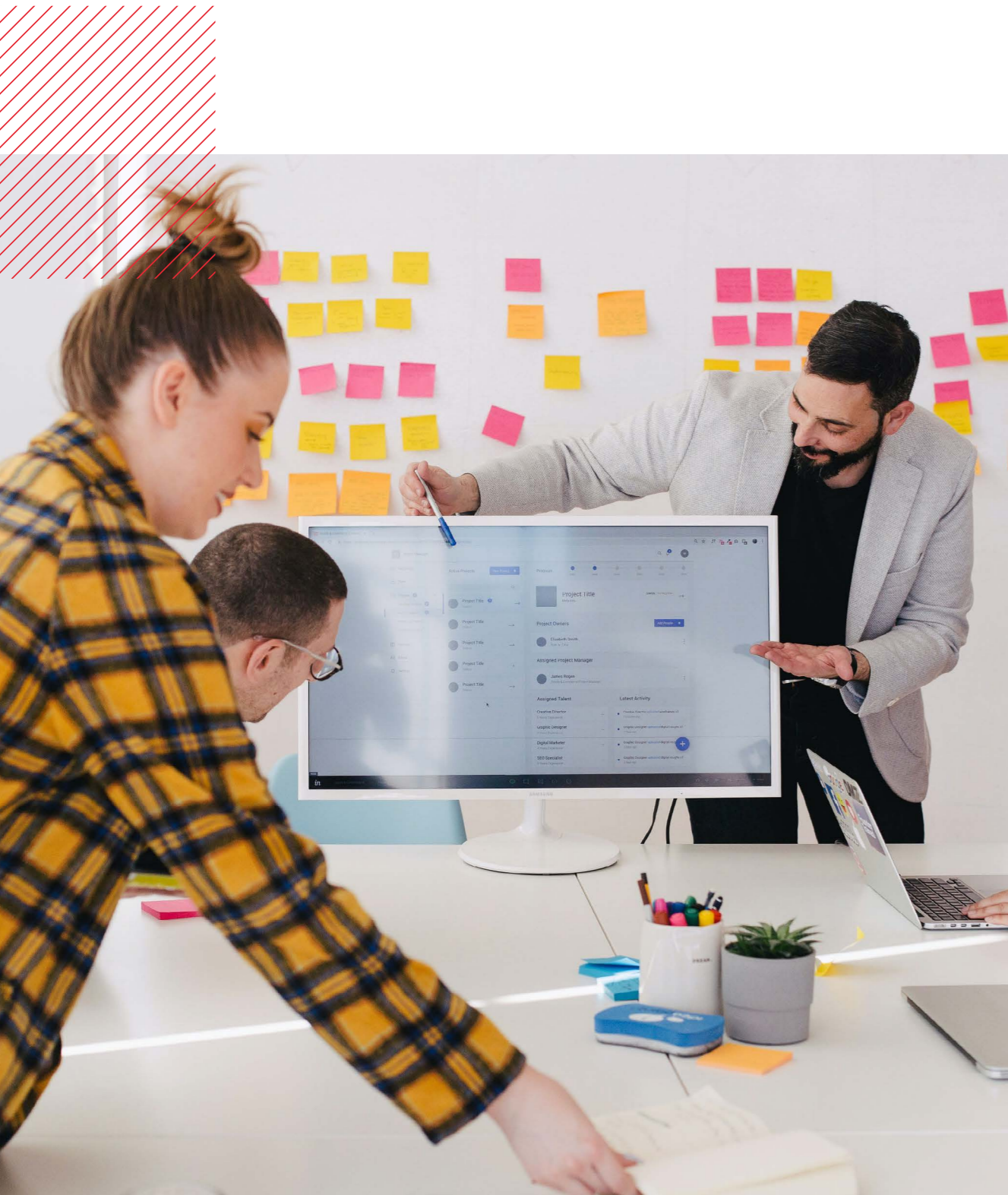


Average Conversion Rate

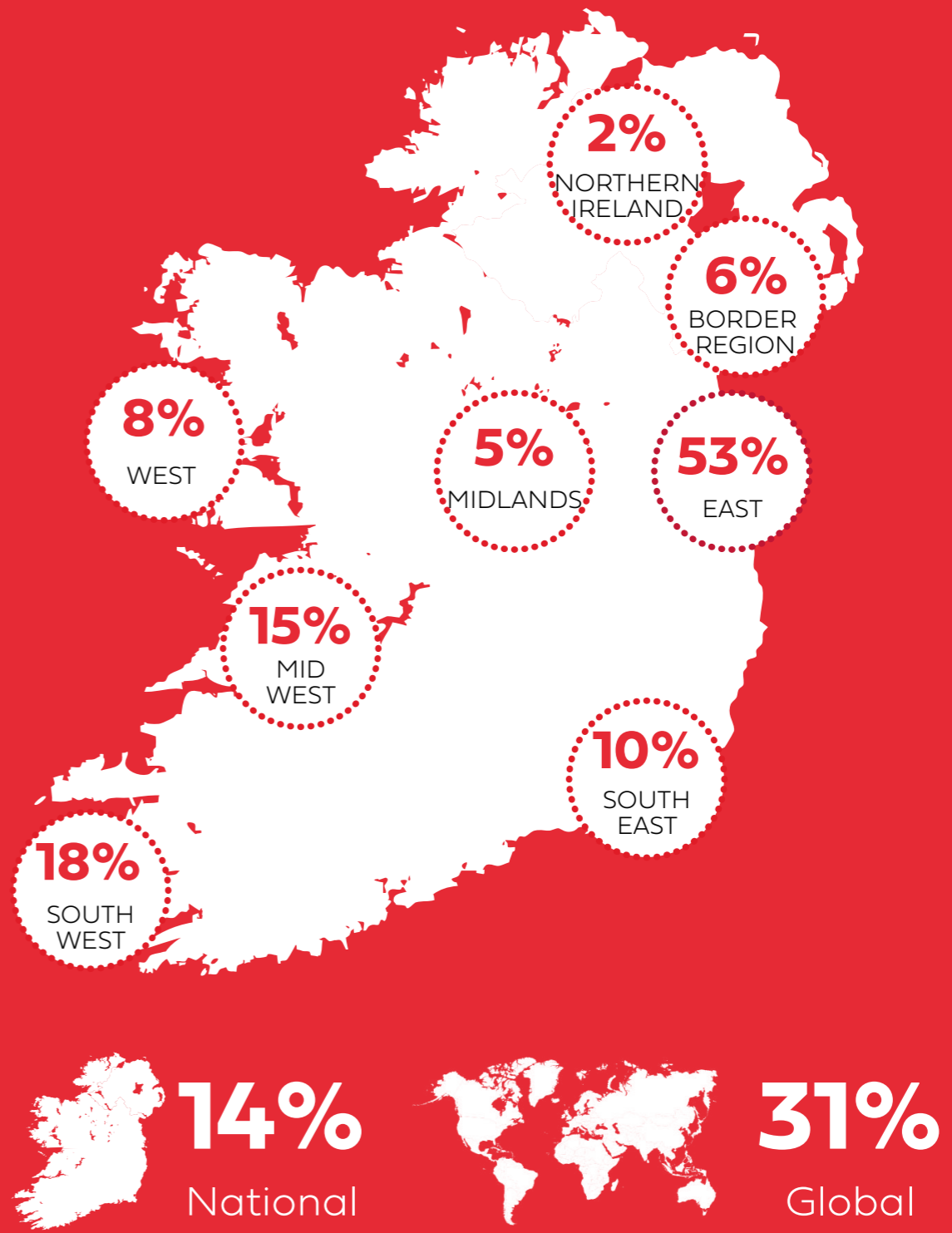
37%



Graduate Recruitment



Location of Graduate Vacancies





Number of Graduate Vacancies

Location of graduate vacancies

Due to the increased organisation participation rate, we have a more accurate representation of graduate vacancies. The jobs available in the graduate market in 2021 reveal the highest percentage of jobs available are in the East region at 53%, followed by the South-West at 18%, and the Mid-West at 15%. 14% of the jobs are national, and 31% are global.

Expected number of graduate vacancies: 2021 results

Q. How many graduate vacancies does your organisation expect to have for 2021/22, and how does this compare with 2020/21?

Overall, 75% of respondents indicate they will recruit approximately the same number of graduates as last year, and possibly more, this is a significant increase on last year (46%). 9% will recruit less than 2020 and 1% are planning to cancel their graduate recruitment plans for 2021. 15% of employers do not know how their graduate recruitment numbers will change for 2021 yet, which reflects the continuing uncertainty in specific sectors at the moment due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recruitment Level



30%

We will recruit more than last year.



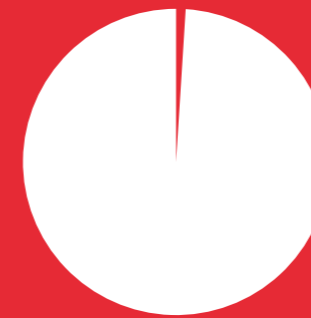
45%

We will recruit about the same as last year.



9%

We will recruit less graduates this year.



1%

We are planning to cancel our graduate recruitment plans.

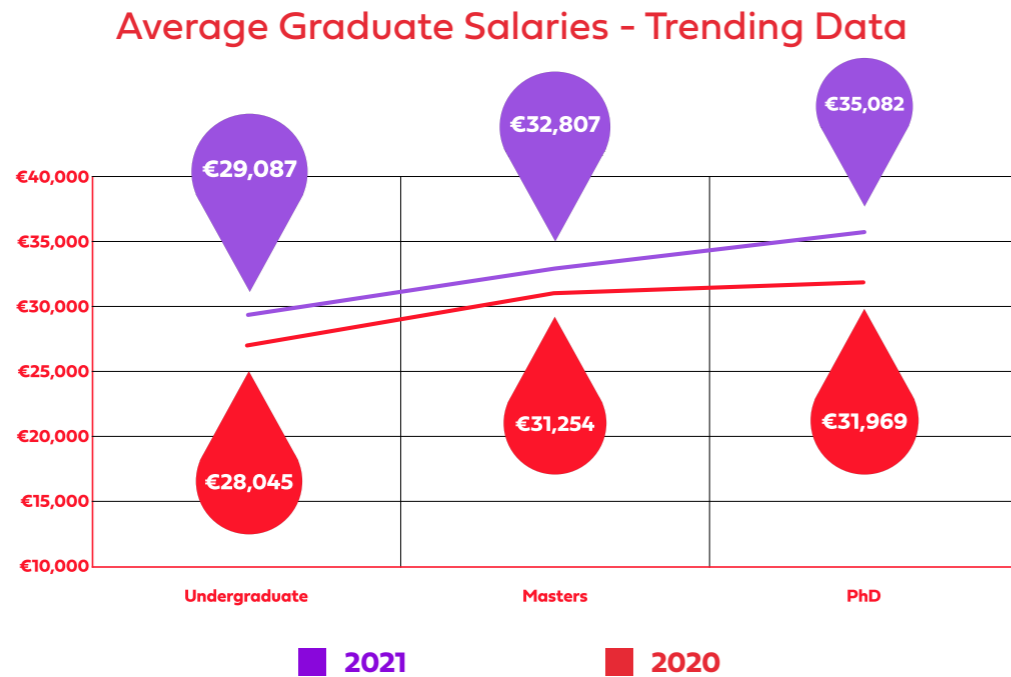


15%

We don't know how numbers will change yet.

Graduate Salaries

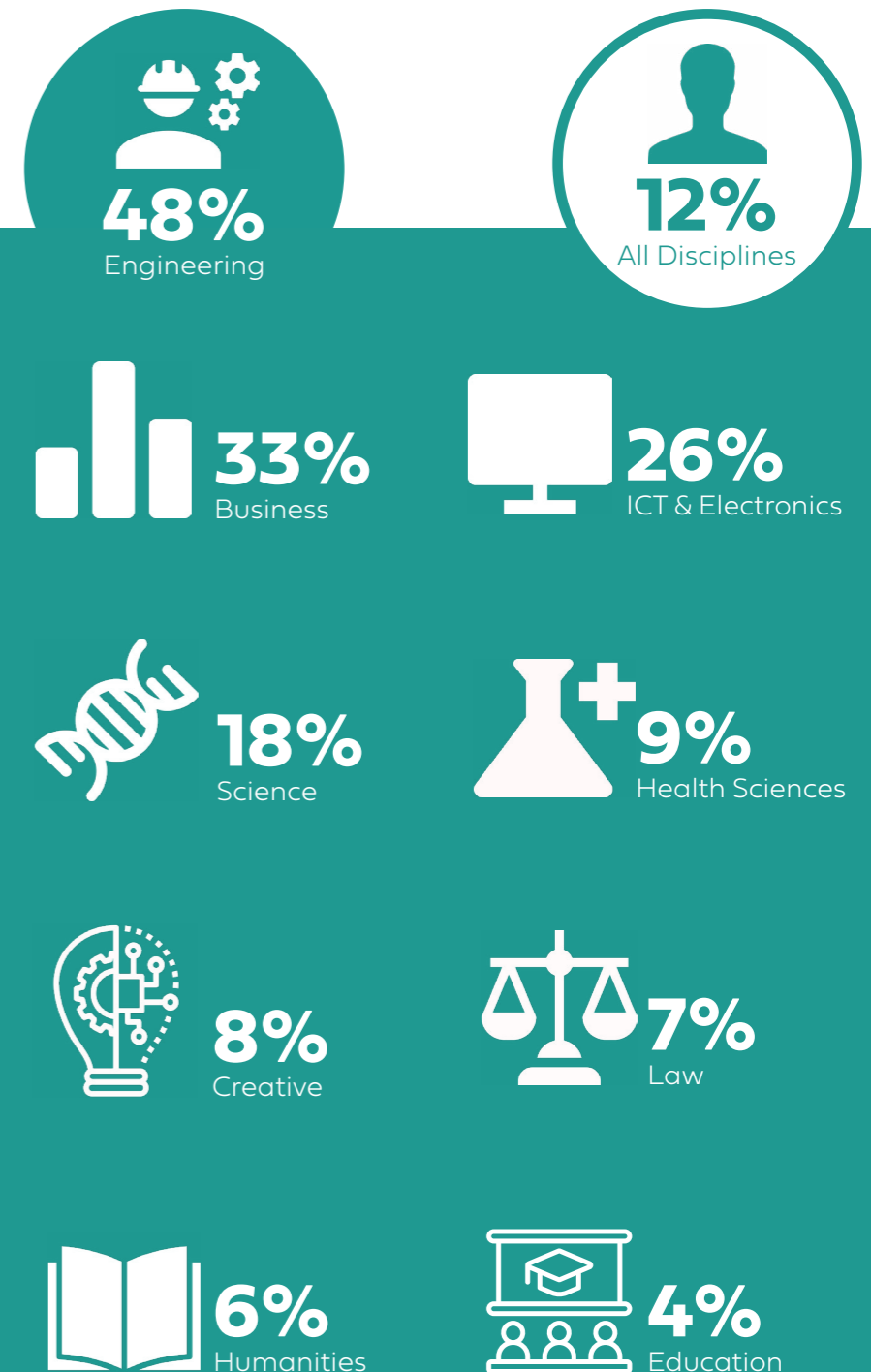
Average trending data.



This table presents the average starting salaries on offer to graduates, based on their level of educational qualifications. It clearly illustrates the correlation between a graduate's level of education and the starting salary they can command in the market. The average salary for Undergraduates is €29,087, Postgraduate Master's degrees is €32,807, and PhD graduates is €35,082. All three award levels have experienced an increase in average salary, with PhD's increasing by €3000 since 2020.

Who should apply?

Results for 2021 indicate little change in the discipline demand from 2020, 12% of respondent employers are looking for graduate applicants from all disciplines. This highlights the general aim of many employers to diversify their talent pool. Of the companies surveyed, 48% are looking for engineering graduates, 33% for business graduates, and 26% for ICT and electronics graduates



Application & Selection Tools

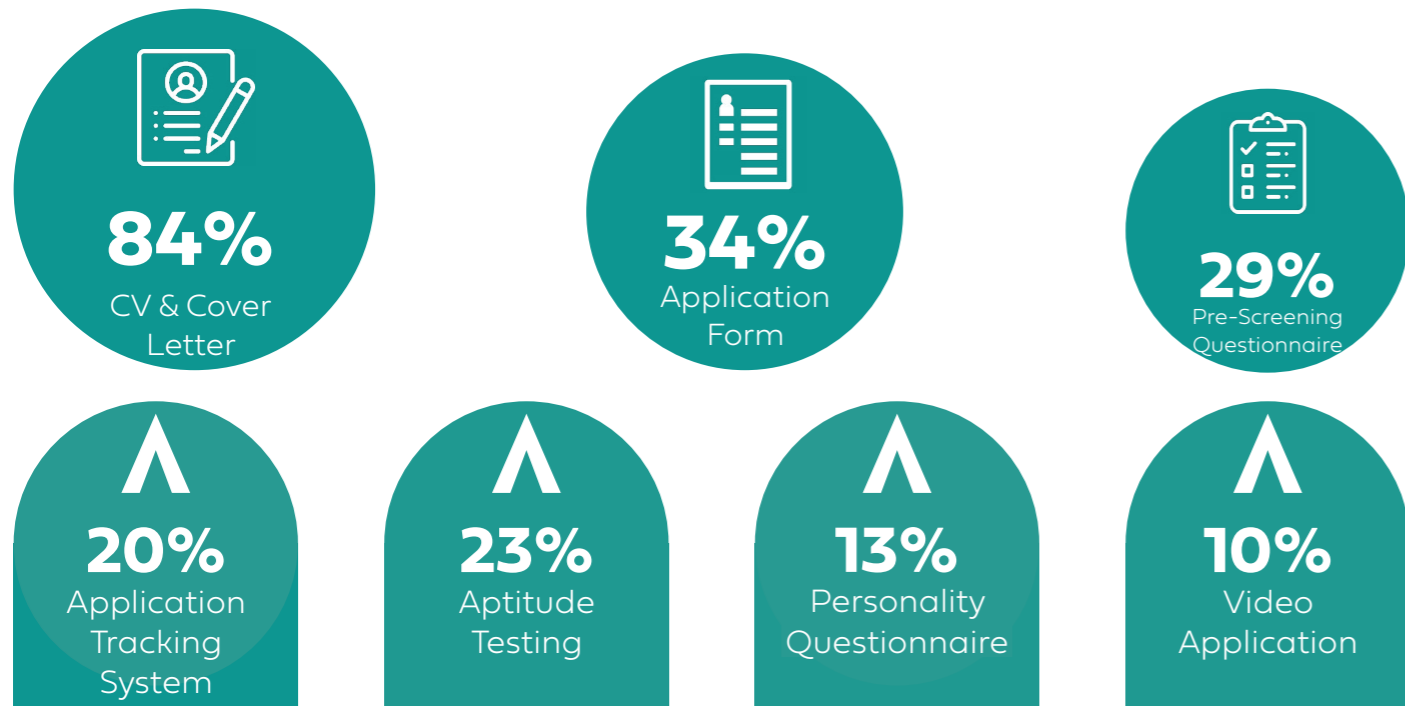
Application Stage

Results highlight the importance of having an excellent CV and cover letter with 84% of respondent employers indicating the requirement for a CV and cover letter at the application stage. Online applications are popular, used by 34% of the organisations surveyed. 29% of respondents are now using pre-screening questions at the application stage.

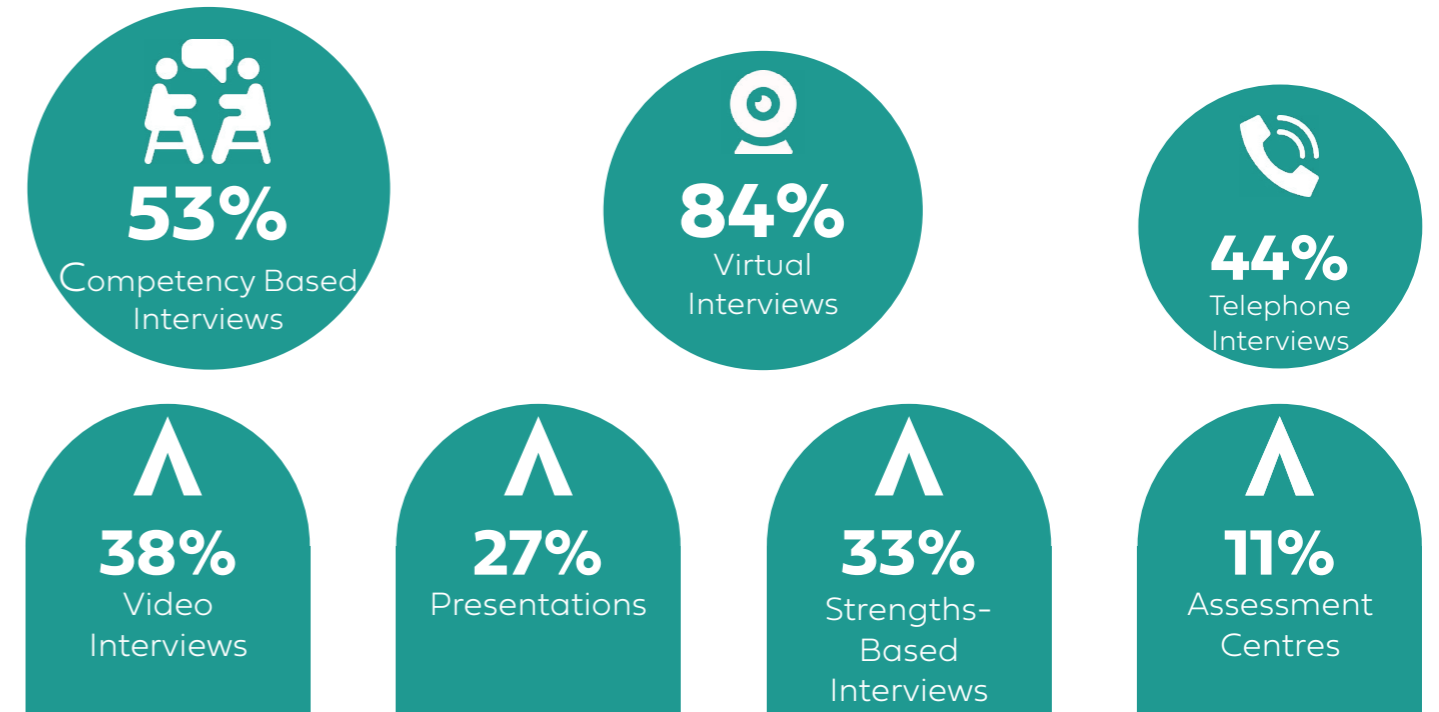
Selection Stage

The 2021 survey examined the most widely used selection methods. Survey participants could select more than one method from the list. The survey results reveal 53% of the organisations use competency/behavioural-based interviews. Virtual and telephone interviews remain popular, with 84% and 44% of companies surveyed using this method in their recruitment process. 27% of respondents use presentations, and 11% of respondents use assessment centres. 33% of organisations use strengths-based interviews. Other recruitment screening methods include reference checking (51%) and social media checks (11%).

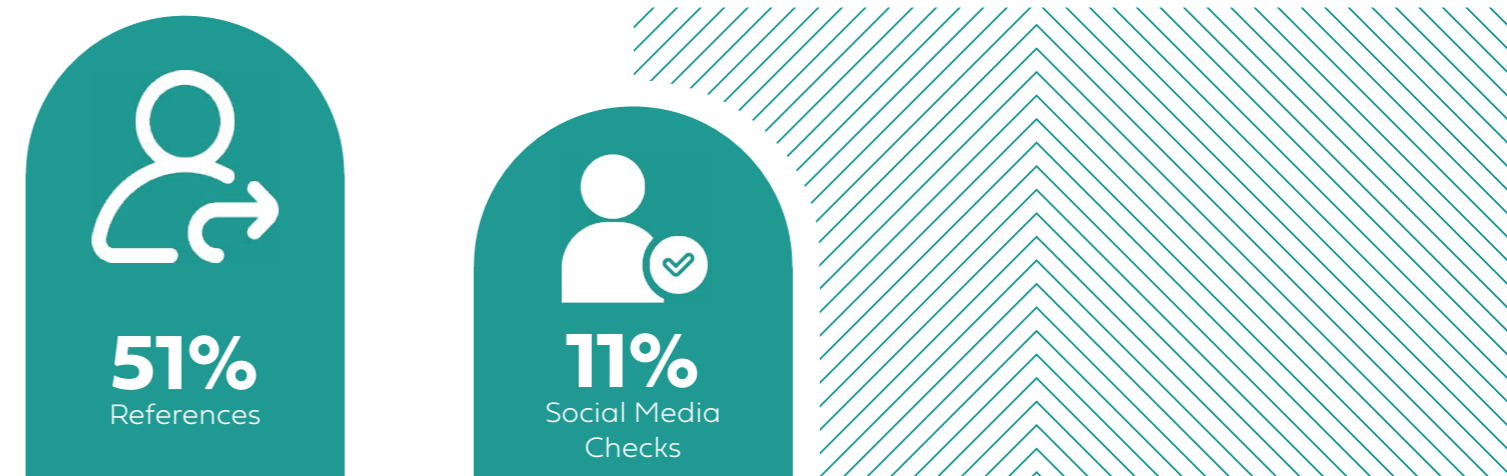
Application Process



Interview Process



Pre-Employment Process



Employers Ranking

Q. Please rank the following of how positively you view them when reviewing applications?



Graduate recruitment challenges

Q. Please rank the challenges you face in your graduate recruitment this year

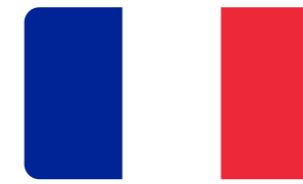
Not surprisingly, the 2021 survey results reveals that Covid-19 is the most significant challenge for employer respondents.

The next recruitment challenge is the competition for graduate talent from employers within their sector. These are followed by the number of available graduates from specific degrees/skillsets and graduate expectations at entry level.



Foreign Languages

Q. What foreign languages do you require in your organisation?



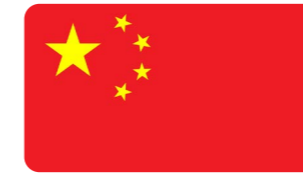
18%
French



18%
German



14%
Spanish



9%
Chinese



8%
Italian



6%
Dutch

Graduates Positions: Covid-19

Q. Have you withdrawn any graduate offers that you have already made as a result of Covid-19?

81%
No

10%
Yet to make an offer

7%
Yes

2%
Don't Know Yet

1%
May in the future

Graduate Hire Start Date

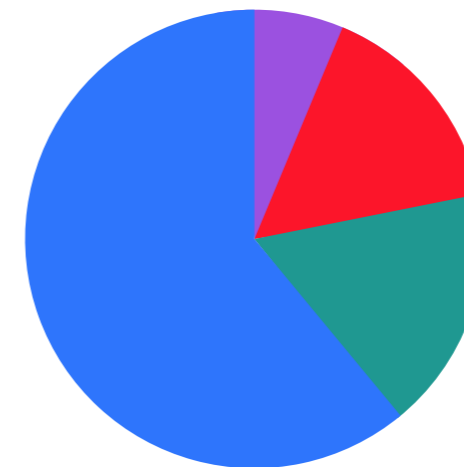
Q. Do you anticipate deferring the start date of graduate hires in 2021?

62%
No

16%
Unsure

14%
N/A

8%
Yes



2022 Graduate Recruitment

Q. Do you anticipate deferring the closing dates for your 2022 graduate recruitment campaigns?

54%
No

23%
Don't know

10%
May in Future

9%
N/A

4%
Yes



Global Technical Skills



Respondent employers were asked to rank **12 global technical skills**, according to the value of those skills to their organisation.

Economic and technological changes are facilitating the internationalisation of business. Many companies, large and small, have international customers/operations and international recruitment patterns. The jobs market for highly skilled graduates is becoming increasingly global.

Top five global technical skills 2021:

1. Analytical thinking
2. Self-motivated
3. Collaborative
4. Flexibility
5. Comfortable with complex situations

Top five global technical skills 2020:

1. Analytical thinking
2. Self-motivated
3. Flexibility
4. Collaborative
5. Qualifications related to job

Global Soft Skills

Respondent employers were asked to rank **12 global soft skills**, according to the value of those skills to their organisation.

Organisations are challenging the national expectations of the graduate workforce. As the requirements of employers for their global workforce continue to change, graduates and providers of higher education must adapt to succeed.

Top five global soft skills 2021:

1. Positive attitude and energy
2. Ability to cope with pressure
3. Work ethic
4. Reliability
5. Seeks opportunities for continuous learning

Top five global soft skills 2020:

1. Positive attitude and energy
2. Work ethic
3. Ability to cope with pressure
4. Open to new ideas/ways of thinking
5. Seeks opportunities for continuous learning



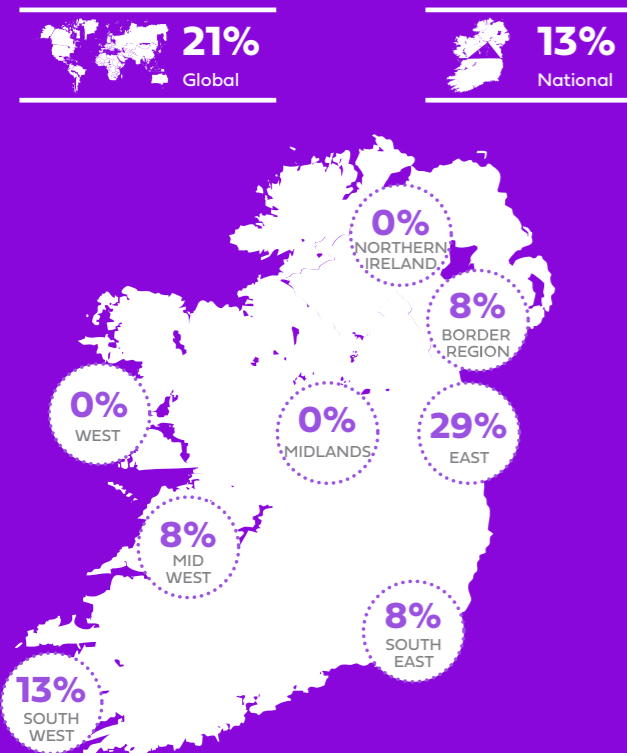
Sector Analysis

Construction

Survey results reveal that the East is the primary location for jobs in the construction sector with 29% of jobs on offer in this region, followed by the South-West at 13%, and the South-East and Mid-West at 8%. 2021 results reveal that 77% of companies will hire the same number or more graduates as they did in 2020; 8% will hire slightly less than last year.

The top three Technical Skills are Self-Motivated, Collaborative, and Analytical Thinking. The top three Soft Skills are Positive Attitude and Energy, Listens/Observes for Deeper Understanding and the Ability to Cope with Pressure.

Results also reveal that the average starting salary for Undergraduates is €28,667, Master's degree is €34,000, and PhD graduates is €32,333.



Construction Technical Skills Ranked 1 – 12



Construction Soft Skills Ranked 1 – 12



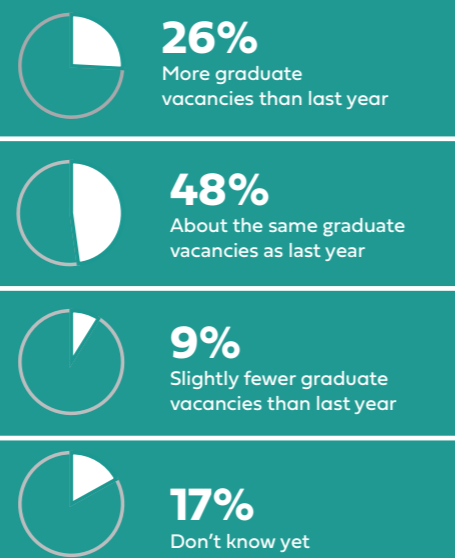
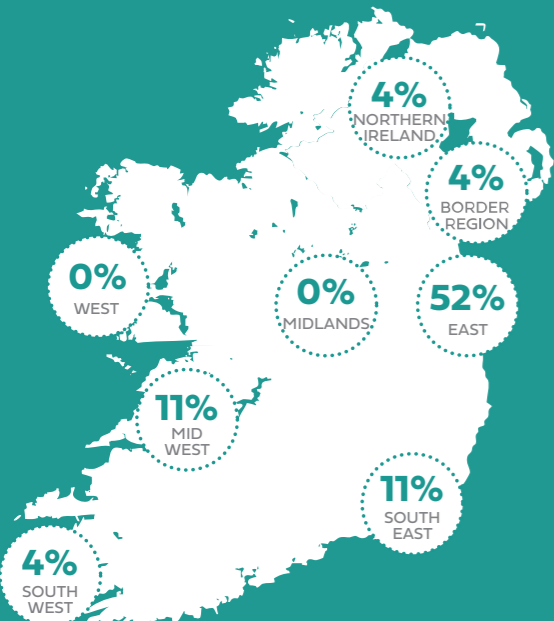
Sector Analysis

Finance & Insurance

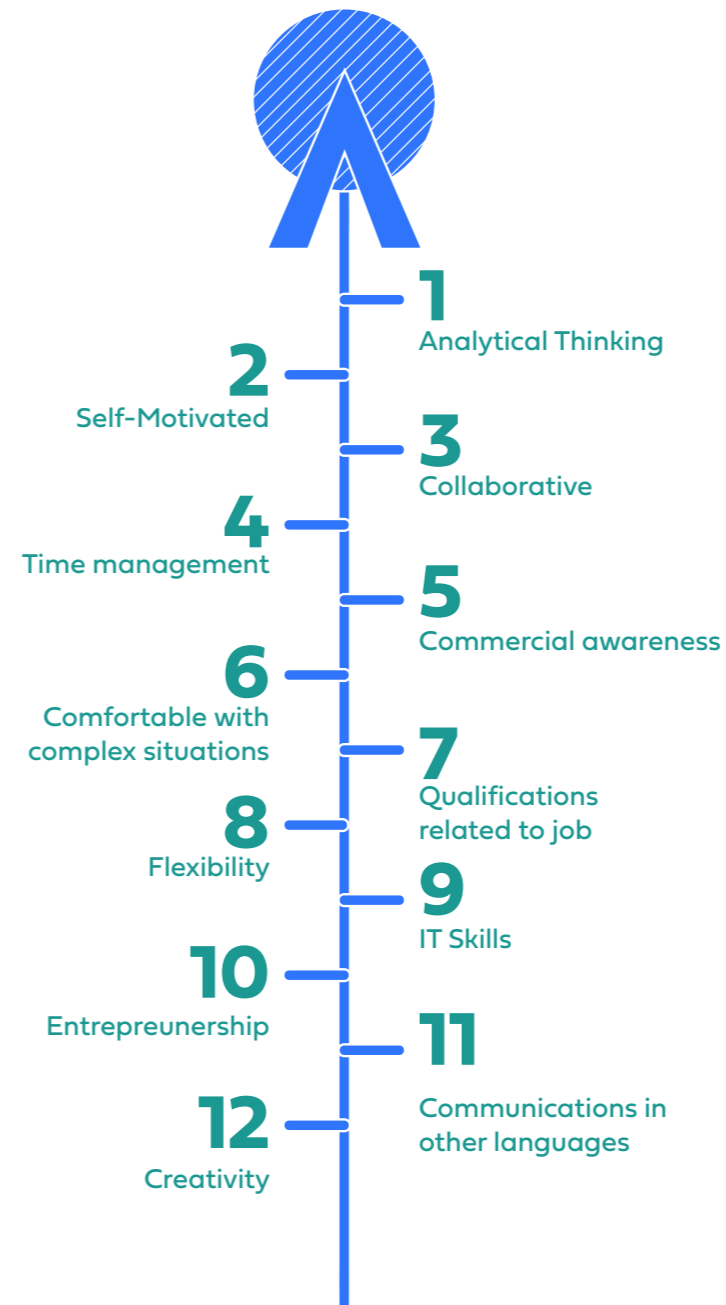
Survey results reveal the East as the primary location for jobs in the finance and insurance activities sector with 52% of jobs on offer in this region, followed by the South-East and Mid-West at 11%. The 2021 results reveal that 74% of companies will hire the same number or more graduates as they did in 2020, 9% will hire slightly less than last year.

The top three Technical Skills are Analytical Thinking, Self-Motivated and Collaborative. The top three Soft Skills are the Ability to Cope with Pressure, Positive Attitude and Energy, and Work Ethic.

Results also reveal that the average starting salary for Undergraduates is €28,545, Master's degrees is €31,769, and PhD graduates is €36,600.



Finance & Insurance Technical Skills Ranked 1 – 12



Finance & Insurance Soft Skills Ranked 1 – 12



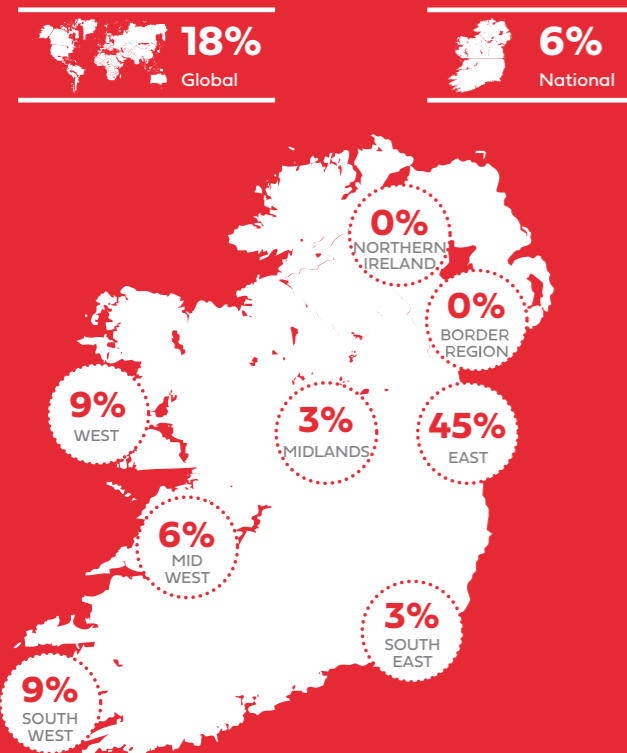
Sector Analysis

Information & Communications

Survey results reveal the East as the primary location for jobs in the information and communication activities sector with 45% of jobs on offer in this region, followed by the West and South-West at 9%. The 2021 results reveal that 87% of companies will hire the same number or more graduates as they did in 2020.

The top three Technical Skills are Analytical Thinking, Collaborative and IT skills. The top three Soft skills are Positive Attitude and Energy, Work Ethic and the Ability to Cope with Pressure.

Results also reveal that the average starting salary for Undergraduates is €31,609, Master's degrees is €35,714, and for PhD graduates is €35,857.



Information & Communications Technical Skills Ranked 1 – 12



Information & Communications Soft Skills Ranked 1 – 12



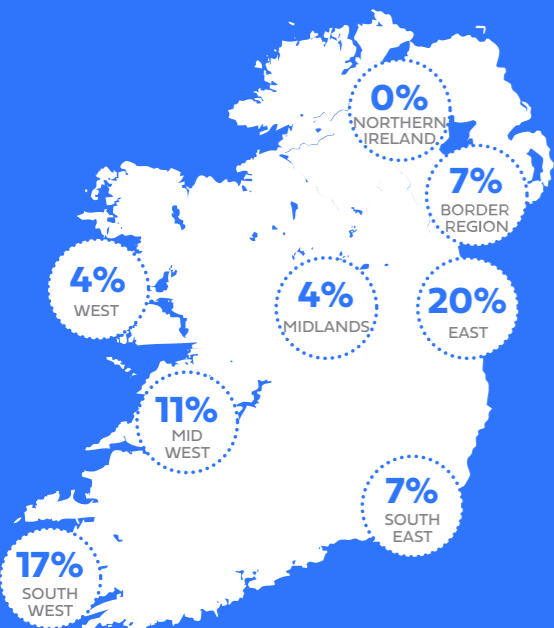
Sector Analysis

Manufacturing

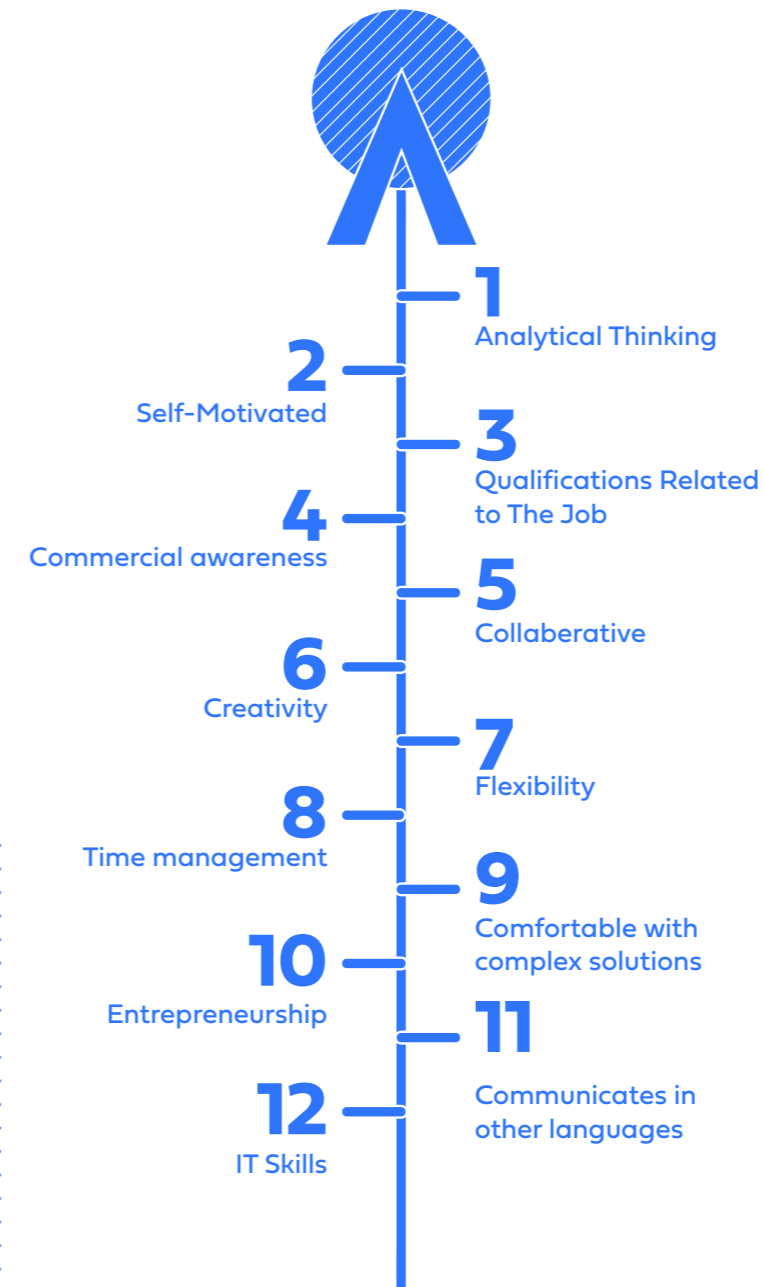
Survey results reveal the East Region as the primary location for jobs in the manufacturing sector with 20% of jobs on offer in this region, followed by the South-West at 17%. The Mid-West and South-East at 11% and 7% respectively. The 2021 results reveal that 69% of companies will hire the same number or more graduates as they did in 2020, 9% will hire slightly less than last year.

The top three Technical Skills are Analytical Thinking, Self-Motivated and Qualifications related to the job. The top three Soft skills are Positive Attitude and Energy, Work Ethic and the Ability to Cope with Pressure.

Results also reveal that the average starting salary for Undergraduates is €30,514, Master's degrees is €34,400 and for PhD graduates is €37,857.



Manufacturing Technical Skills Ranked 1 – 12



Manufacturing Soft Skills Ranked 1 – 12



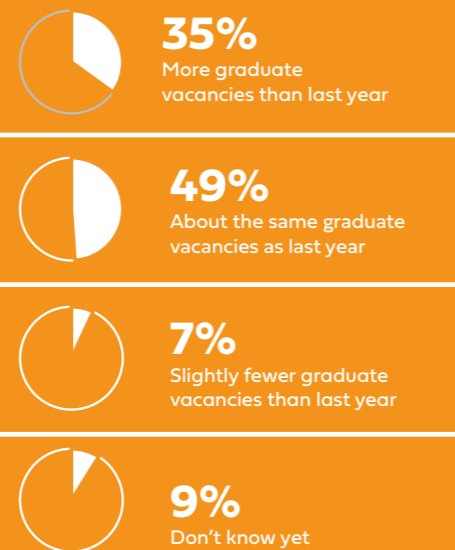
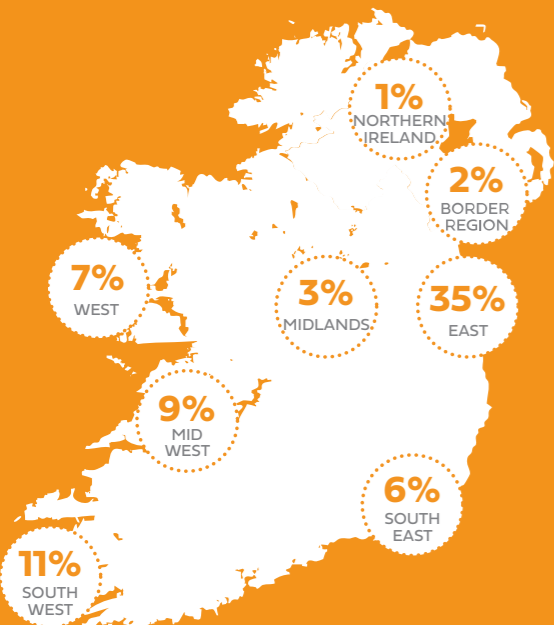
Sector Analysis

Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities

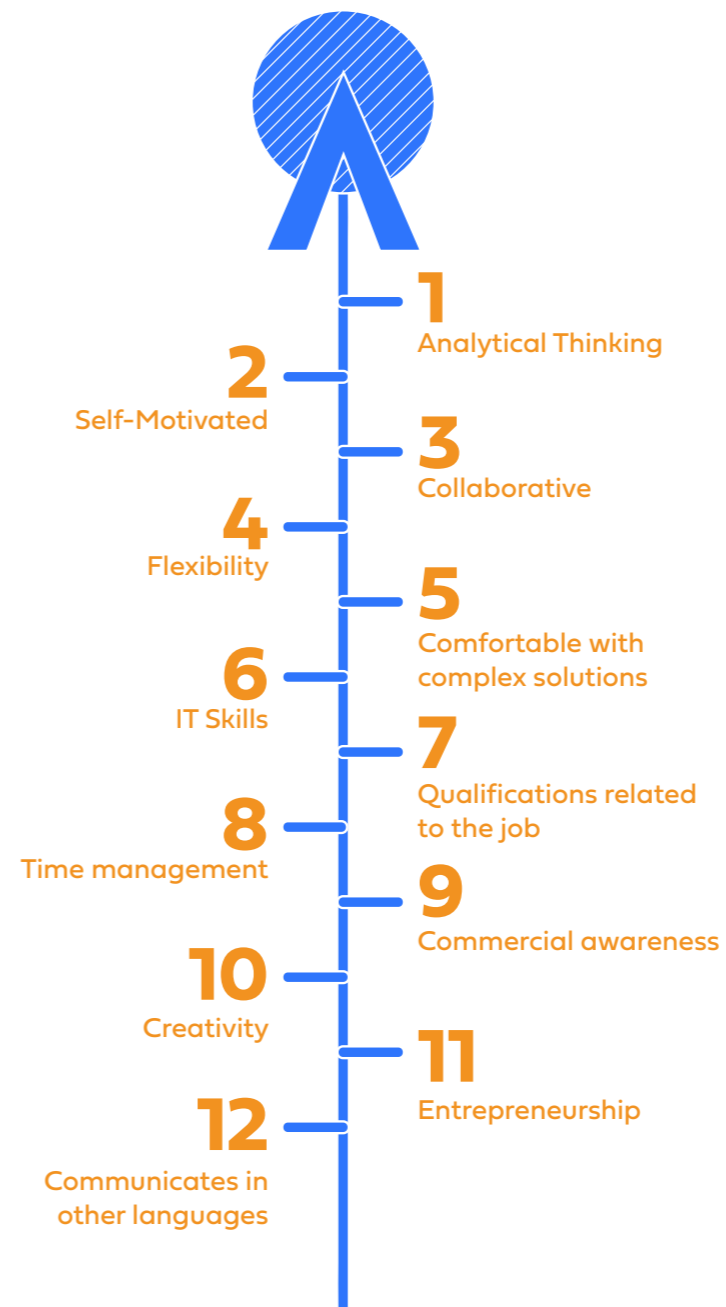
Survey results reveal the East as the primary location for jobs in the professional, scientific and technical activities sector with 35% of jobs on offer in this region, followed by the South-West at 11%, the Mid-West at 9% and the West at 7%. The 2021 results reveal that 84% of companies will hire the same number or more graduates as they did in 2020, 7% will hire slightly less than last year.

The top three Technical Skills are Analytical Thinking, Self-Motivated and Collaborative. The top three Soft skills are the Ability to Cope with Pressure, Positive Attitude and Energy, and Work Ethic.

Results also reveal that the average starting salary for Undergraduates is €29,468, Master's degrees is €32,833 and for PhD graduates is €34,429.

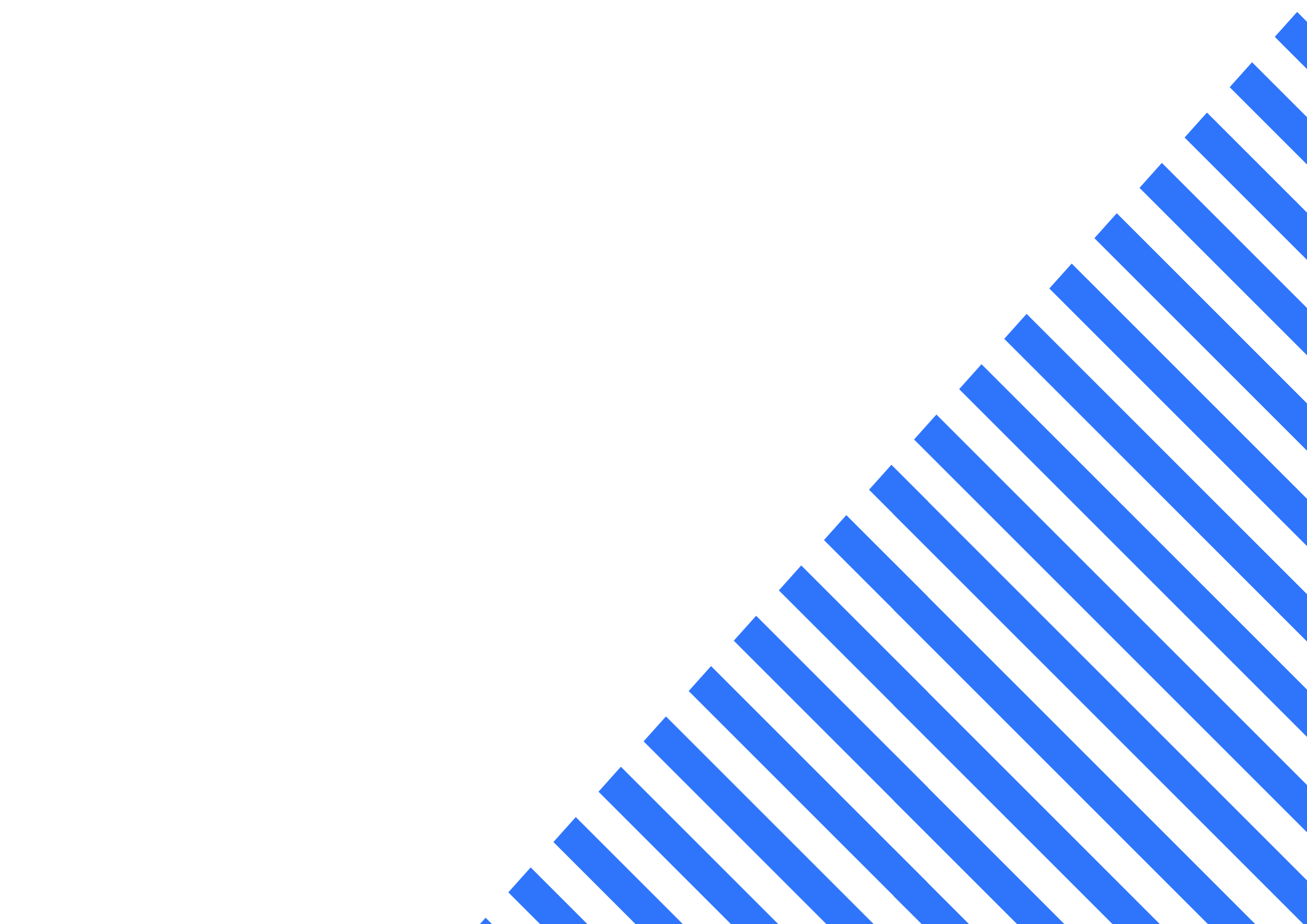


Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities Technical Skills Ranked 1 – 12



Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities Soft Skills Ranked 1 – 12







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