



# Graduate Market Survey 2017



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK  
OILESCOIL LUIMNIGH



University of Limerick  
Cooperative Education & Careers Division  
*Empowering Through Employability*









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# Introduction

Welcome to the University of Limerick Graduate Market Survey 2017. This survey is an annual snapshot of graduate recruitment across Ireland. The research results were compiled by the University of Limerick Cooperative Education and Careers Service Division (CECD). The participants of this survey are graduate employers who have engaged with the University of Limerick Careers Service in 2017. These include local, national and global companies – large and small – from a wide variety of sectors and disciplines. This year, the third year of the survey, 235 graduate employers participated. The survey was carried out between May and July 2017. Feedback from the organisations proves to be highly beneficial in preparing graduates for their future careers. The 2017 survey captures graduate recruitment trends, such as:

- Graduate employment by sector
- Location of graduate vacancies
- Number of available graduate vacancies
- Trends in graduate recruitment levels and salaries

235 graduate employers participated in the survey

- Types of graduates in demand
- Graduate recruitment process
- Top-ranking global graduate technical and soft skills
- Current challenges faced by graduate recruiters
- In-depth overview of the top four graduate employment sectors.

As a result of the 2017 survey, the participants and CECD have gained valuable insights on the graduate recruitment market. We would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey and we invite you to view the results and trends, as part of your ongoing exploration of the graduate recruitment market.





Reach  
your  
potential



# Participating Companies

Although the survey is entirely confidential, respondents were given the option to provide their company details. Of the 235 companies who took part, the following 112 are happy to include their company name in this publication.

DILLON EUSTACE

KOSTAL



LK SHIELDS  
YOUR LEGAL COUNSEL



HOMS  
SOLICITORS



ARYZTA  
Passion for good food



Deloitte.



EVERSHEDS  
SUTHERLAND



Musgrave

Johnson & Johnson

ARUP



SANOFI



MERCK



BIOMARIN

CITCO



POSITIVE  
EQUITY

**LIEBHERR****KEPAK****ONF** o'neill foley**Ornua**  
THE HOME OF IRISH DAIRY**Aon**  
Empower Results®Cambridge University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trustjpa brenson lawlor  
chartered accountants**bmr**  
bio-medical research Ltd.**ZURICH**hannover **re****DHL**  
GLOBAL FORWARDINGteaching  
personnelelementsix.  
a De Beers Group Company**BD****yw** YOUR WORLD RECRUITMENT GROUP  
Open your world to endless opportunities**ASPIRA****vsi**  
Local and global volunteering for peaceAn European  
Council  
for PeaceKing's College Hospital  
NHS Foundation TrustSantos Dumont  
Innovation in Aviation**ME**  
masterclass  
education**Guidewire****HEDGE**SERV**MURPHY**  
WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE**vibe****CENTRALIS****M&M WALSHE**  
GROUP**IRISH GARAGE EQUIPMENT****EY****vodafone****Celignis**  
Analytical**HLB** McKeogh Gallagher Ryan  
Chartered Accountants**MAGUIRE CAULFIELD BROWNE**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS**vmware****WINDMILL**  
GROUP

VISION TEACHING

**PSC**  
Audit | Accounting | Taxation**ttm**  
Healthcare  
Discover the possibilities**TRANSLIT**  
COMPLETE LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS**servisource**  
healthcare**Grant Thornton****WORLD TEACHERS**  
International Education Recruitment**enet**  
Open Access Networks**Resilience Care**  
Helping people live independent lives**ods**  
O'DWYER STEEL**CHINA RE****NAC****cpl**  
HEALTHCAREProjects **Abroad****FiNCAD****TRICEL**  
GENERATIONS OF INNOVATION**mercy**  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**Uniform**  
EDUCATION**Galtee Group**





Where  
will you  
land?



# Sectors surveyed

This year we adopted NACE, the standard classification of economic activity, as used by the CSO and HEA. NACE is an acronym derived from the French title Nomenclature générale des Activités économiques dans les Communautés européennes.

**22%**

Professional, scientific and technical activities

**4%**

Construction

**22%**

Manufacturing

**4%**

Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles

**12%**

Financial and insurance activities

**4%**

Other service activities

**11%**

Information and communication

**1%**

Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

**10%**

Education

**1%**

Transportation and storage

**7%**

Human, health and social work activities

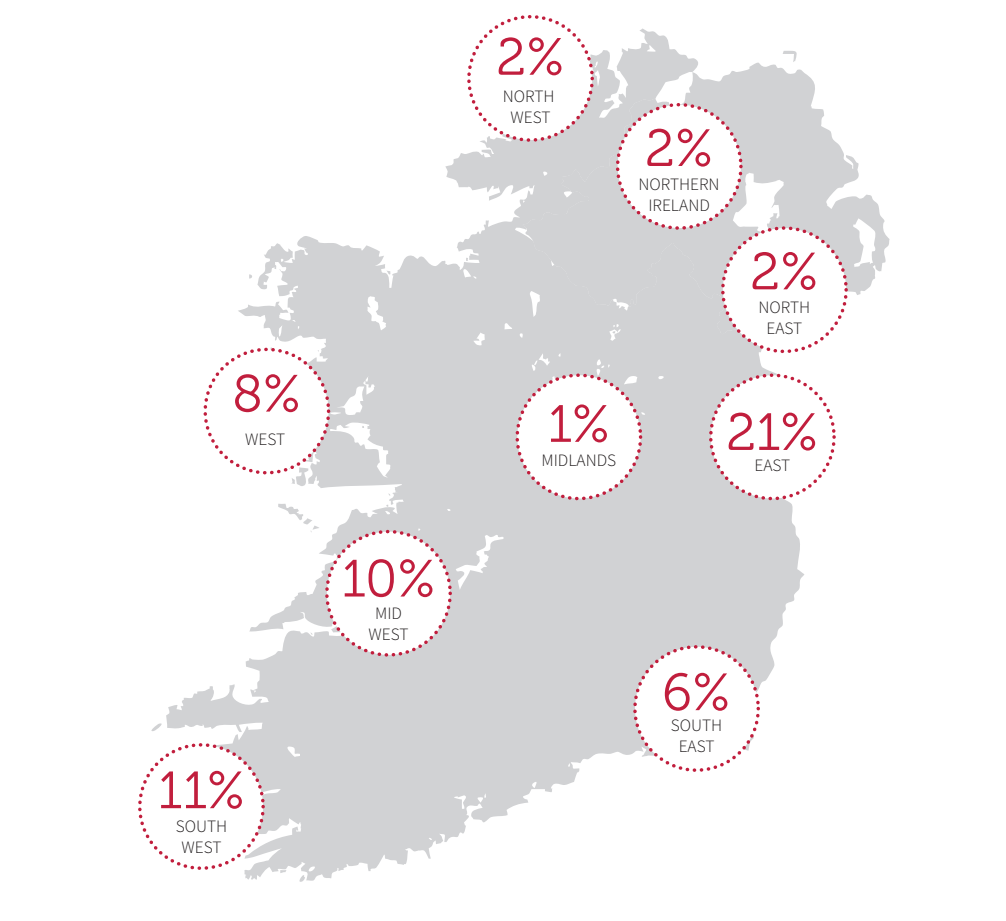
**1%**

Public administration and defence; compulsory social security

**1%**

Agriculture, forestry and fishing

# Location of graduate vacancies





# Number of graduate vacancies

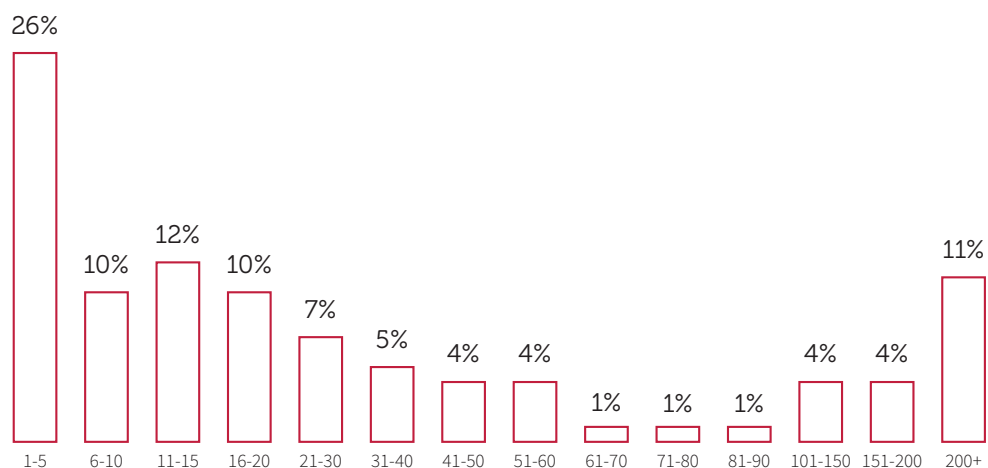
## Location of graduate vacancies

Our results for the jobs available in the graduate market in 2017 show that the highest percentage of jobs is in the east region at 21 per cent. This is followed by the south-west at 11 per cent, and the mid-west at 10 per cent. This reflects the national trend of strong economic growth in the east of the country, and increased regional economic activity in Cork and Limerick city. Interestingly, 20 per cent of the graduate jobs available are outside Ireland, where demand continues for Irish graduates within the sectors of education and allied health care.

## Expected number of graduate vacancies: 2017 results

How many graduate vacancies does your organisation expect to have for 2017/18, and how does this compare with 2016/17?

This year 26 per cent of respondents aim to recruit between 1 and 5 graduates. And 11 per cent of employers seek to fill over 200 graduate positions. The number of graduate vacancies available remains buoyant: 81 per cent of respondents indicate that they will be recruiting about the same number of graduates as last year, and possibly more.



# Recruitment level



15%

Many more graduate vacancies than in 2016/2017



23%

Slightly more graduate vacancies than in 2016/2017



43%

About the same graduate vacancies than in 2016/2017



3%

Slightly fewer graduate vacancies than in 2016/2017



16%

Don't know yet



# Salary range

What do you expect the graduate entry salary to be in your organisation for 2017/18?

	€17,000 to €20,999	€21,000 to €24,999	€25,000 to €28,999	€29,000 to €32,999	€33,000 to €36,999	€37,000 to €40,999
Undergraduate	19%	26%	26%	15%	7%	7%
Postgraduate MSc	6%	19%	27%	24%	14%	10%
Postgraduate PhD	5%	10%	22%	21%	22%	20%

The above chart shows the average starting salaries that will be offered to graduates, based on their level of educational attainment. It clearly illustrates the correlation between a graduate's level of education and the starting salary they can command on the market.

**81%**  
of respondents indicate that they will  
be recruiting about the same number of  
graduates as last year, and possibly more





# Who should apply?

## 31%

of respondents said they are looking for graduate applications from all disciplines



This year 31 per cent of respondents said they are looking for graduate applicants from all disciplines. This highlights the general aim of graduate employers to diversify their talent pool, as the competition for suitable candidates heats up. Of the companies surveyed, 24 per cent are interested in engineering graduates, 19 per cent are interested in business graduates, and 16 per cent are interested in informatics and electronics graduates.



### 24%

Engineering



### 10%

Law



### 19%

Business



### 10%

Health & Science



### 16%

Informatics & Electronics



### 5%

Humanities



### 13%

Science

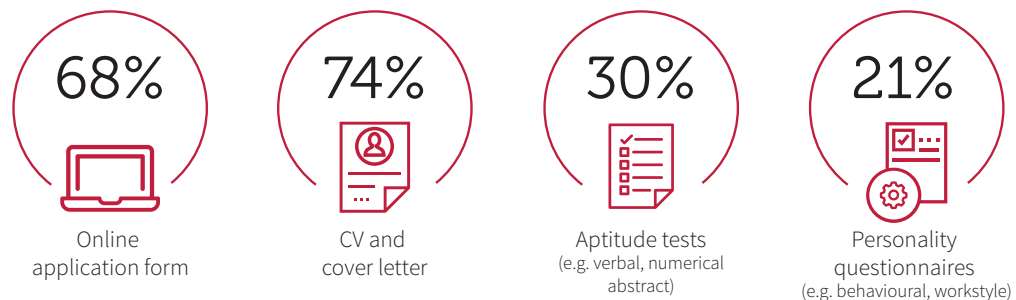


### 3%

Education

# Graduate application and recruitment process

Does your organisation use any of the following application/selection tools in your graduate recruitment activities?



## Application stage

The importance of having an excellent CV and cover letter cannot be denied: 74 per cent of respondents indicate that they require a CV and cover letter at the application stage. Online applications are popular: they are used by 68 per cent of the organisations surveyed. A comparison

with the 2016 results shows that the use of aptitude tests and personality questionnaires has declined in the application stage. The use of aptitude tests has fallen from 42 per cent to 30 per cent. The use of personality questionnaires has fallen from 34 per cent to 21 per cent.

## Selection stage

The 2017 survey examined the most widely used selection methods. Survey participants could select more than one method from our list. The survey results show that 53 per cent of the organisations use behavioural-based interviews; this is a decline from 71 per cent in 2016. Telephone/Skype interviews remain popular: 53 per cent of companies surveyed use this method in their recruitment

process. Almost 25 per cent of respondents use presentations, and 20 per cent of respondents use group exercises. Strengths-based interviews are used by 16 per cent of the organisations. Other recruitment methods include case studies (13 per cent), written exercises (9 per cent), role plays (6 per cent) and in-box/in-tray exercises (3 per cent).

# Global technical and soft skills

## Technical skills ranked 1 – 12



Respondents were asked to rank 12 global technical and 12 global soft skills in order, according to the value of these skills to the organisation.

The market for highly skilled graduates is increasingly global. Economic and technological change is facilitating an internationalisation of business. Many companies, large and small, have international operations and international recruitment patterns. Given that the job market for graduates is becoming increasingly global, our survey asked employers to rank 12 global technical and 12 global soft skills in order, according to the value of these skills to the organisation.





The top five global technical skills are:

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

The top five global soft skills are:

1. Demonstrates respect for others
2. Works effectively in diverse teams
3. Builds trust
4. Open to new ideas/ways of thinking
5. Seeks opportunities for continuous learning.

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



## Soft skills ranked 1 – 12



# Graduate recruitment challenges

Please rank the challenges you face in your graduate recruitment this year in order (1 = most significant challenge)

The 2017 results show, yet again, that the number one recruitment challenge for respondents is the number of available graduates from specific degrees/skillsets. The next highest challenges are work-readiness of graduates, and graduate expectations at entry stage.



1

Number of available graduates from specific degrees/skillsets

4

Managing your on-campus profiles

2

Work readiness level of graduates

5

Setting and achieving diversity targets

3

Graduates expectation at entry level stage

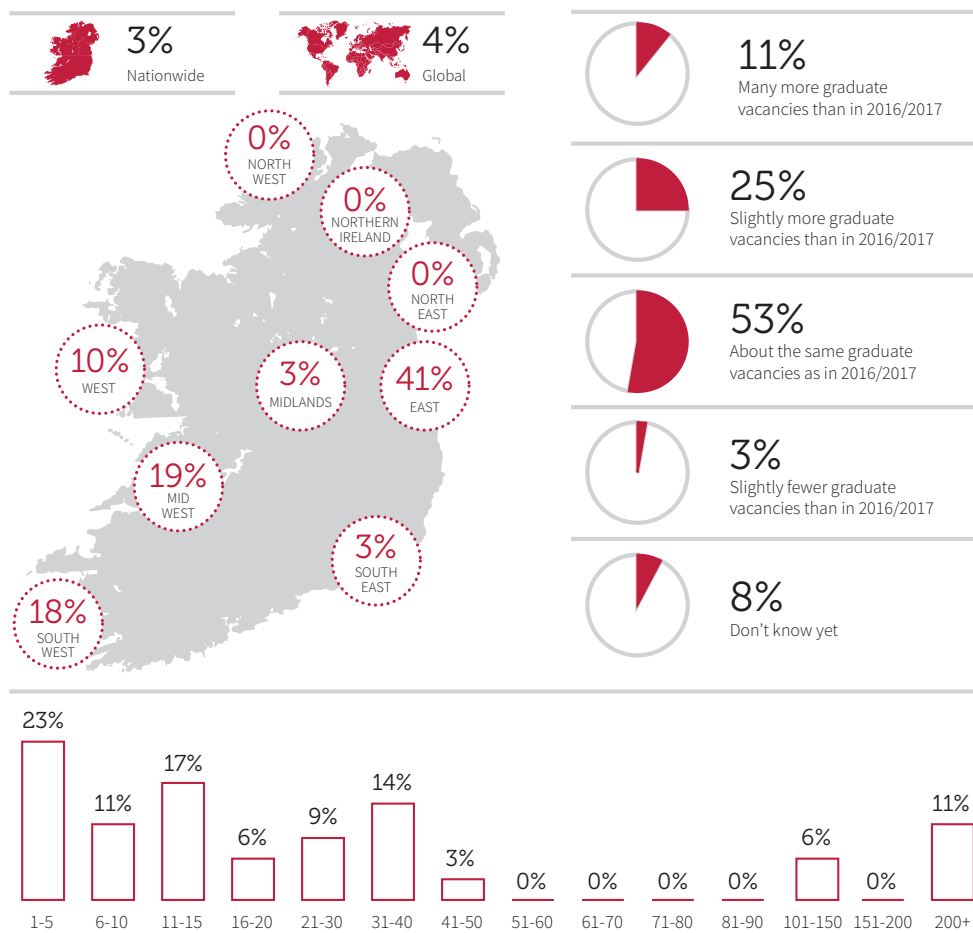
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Managing the employer – university relationship

# Sector analysis

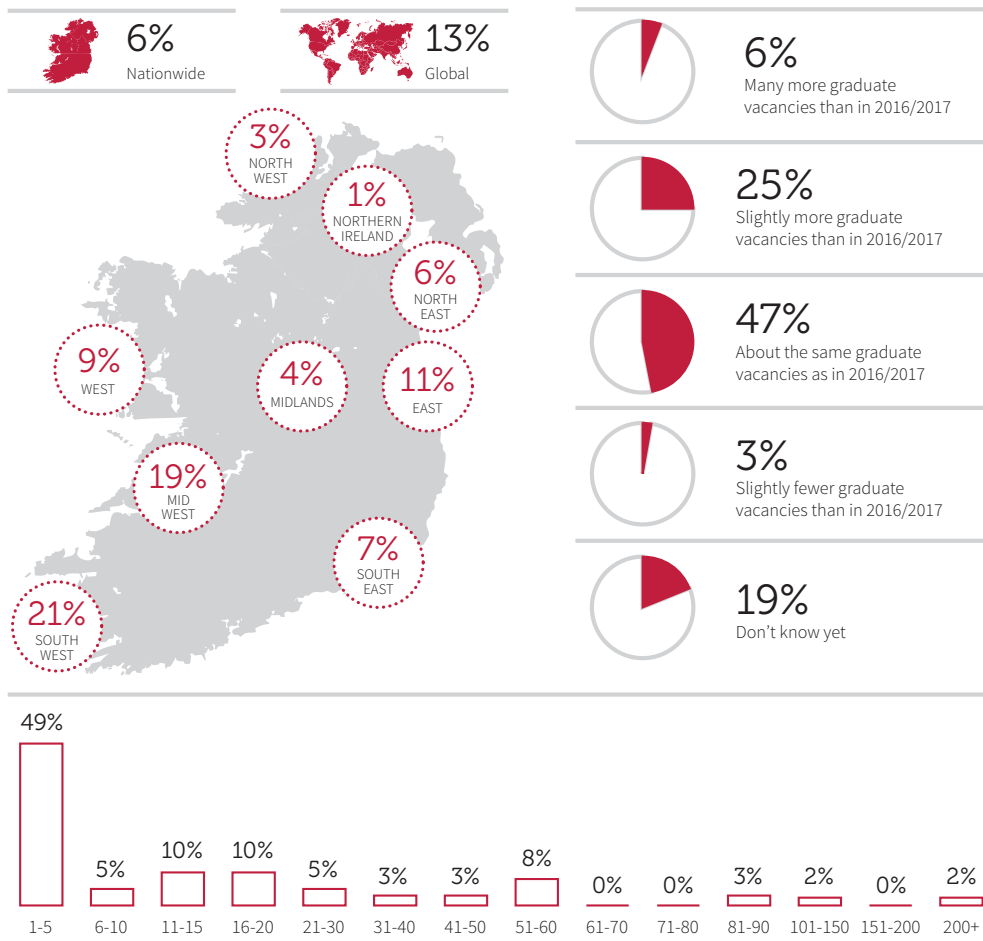
## Professional, scientific and technical activities

Our results show that 41 per cent of jobs in this sector are located in the east region. This is followed by the mid-west at 19 per cent, and the south-east at 18 per cent. In this sector, 23 per cent of employers aim to hire 1–5 graduates, and 11 per cent seek over 200 graduates. Our survey shows that the average starting salary for undergraduate students is €25,090, master students is €28,000 and PhD students is €30,090. The survey results show 53 per cent of companies will hire the same number of graduates as in 2016/17, and 36 per cent of companies will hire more graduates than they did in 2016/17.



## Manufacturing

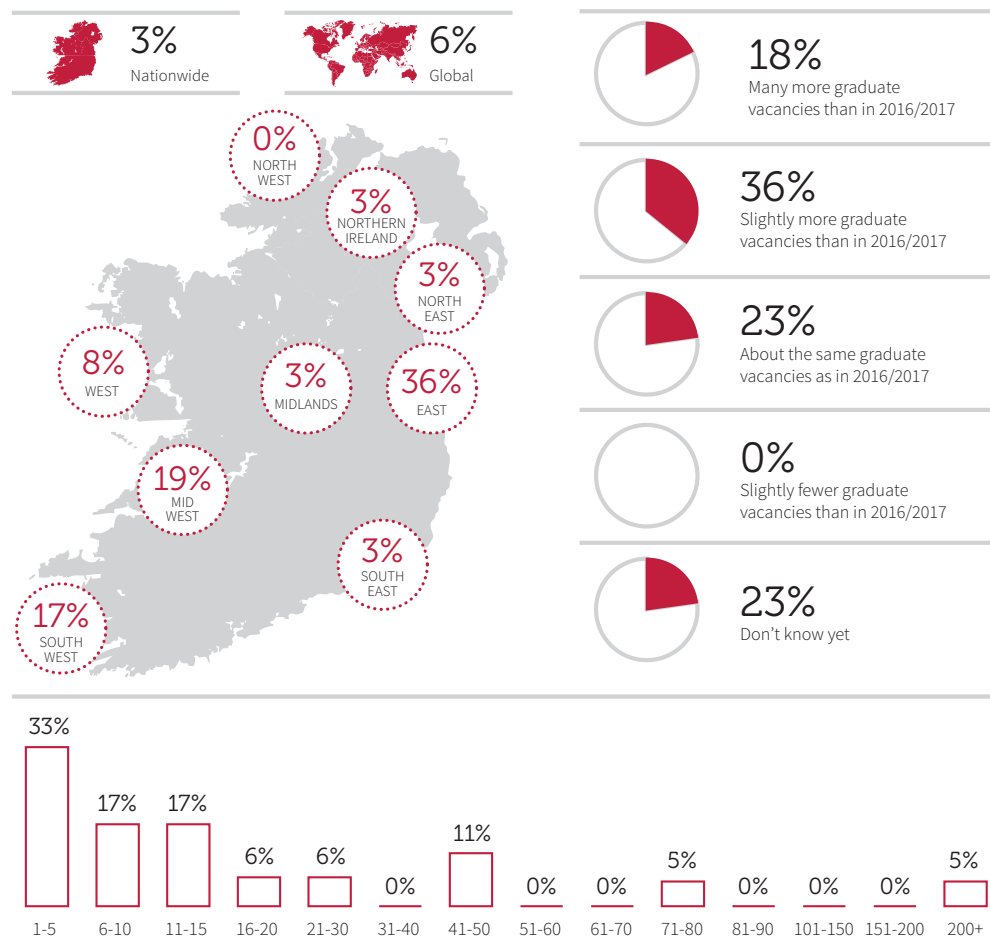
In this sector, 21 per cent of jobs are located in the south-west. This is followed by the mid-west at 19 per cent, and globally at 13 per cent. In this sector, 49 per cent of employers aim to hire 1–5 graduates. Our survey shows that average starting salary in this sector for undergraduate students is €29,139, master students is €32,023 and PhD students is €33,883. The survey results show 47 per cent of companies will hire the same number of graduates as in 2016/17, and 25 per cent of companies will hire slightly more graduates than they did in 2016/17.





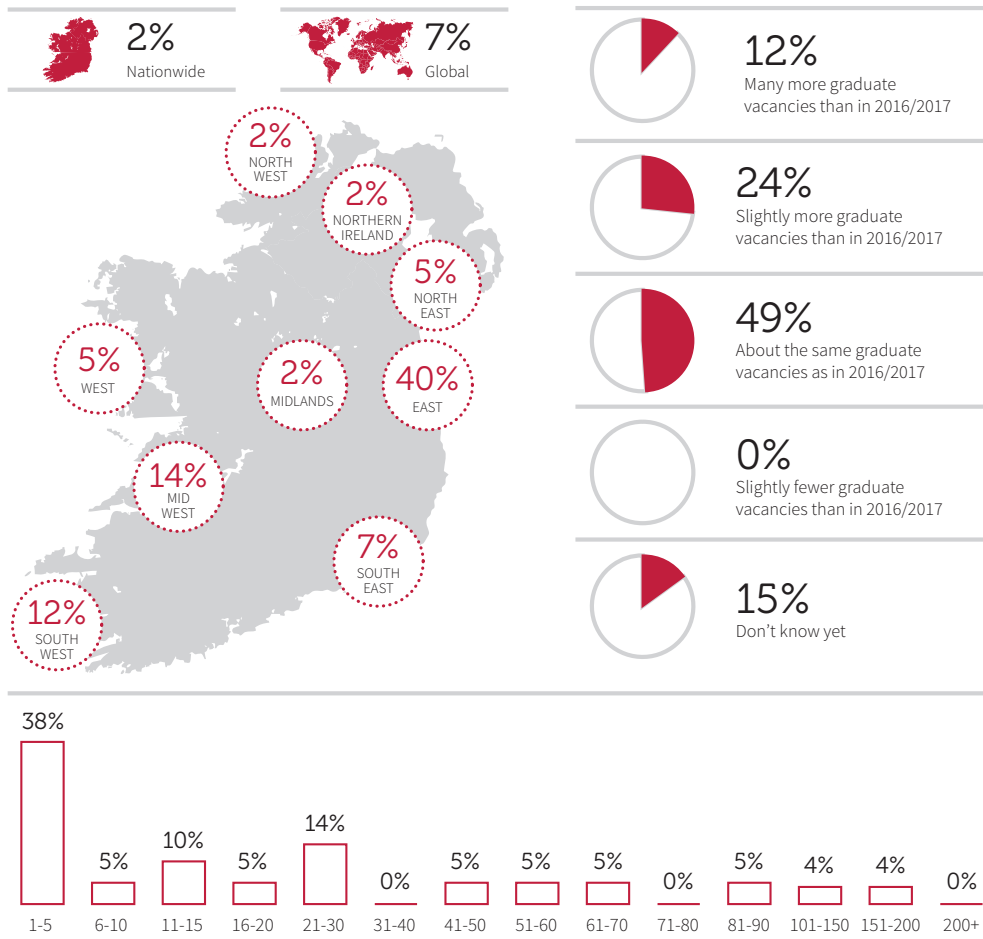
## Information and communication

In this sector, 36 per cent of jobs are located in the east region. This is followed by the mid-west at 19 per cent, and the south-west at 17 per cent. In this sector, 33 per cent of employers aim to hire 1–5 graduates. Our survey shows that the average starting salary in this sector for undergraduate students is €28,636, master students is €31,181 and PhD students is €33,545. The survey results show 36% per cent of companies will hire slightly more graduates than in 2016/17, and 18 per cent of companies will hire many more graduates than they did in 2016/17.



## Financial and insurance activities

In this sector, 40 per cent of jobs are located in the east region. This is followed by the mid-west at 14 per cent, and the south-west at 12 per cent. In this sector, 38 per cent of employers aim to hire 1–5 graduates. Our survey shows that the average starting salary in this sector for undergraduate students is €26,652, master students is €28,913 and PhD students is €30,304. The survey results show 49 per cent of companies will hire the same number of graduates as in 2016/17, and 24 per cent of companies will hire slightly more graduates than they did in 2016/17.







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