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Engineering

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Engineering

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Your career in engineering

Engineers are consistently in demand across a wide range of employment sectors, with their unique skill sets being attractive to many employers operating in different sectors.

According to Engineers Ireland, entry-level engineering roles command an average starting salary of up to €44,000, so there are plenty of opportunities out there for graduates to make a solid start to an exciting and lucrative engineering career. The survey of more than 3,000 engineers, employers and sector stakeholders, salaries have increased in all engineering disciplines, and 84% of engineers agree there are plenty of job opportunities in Ireland.

For employers, skills such as problem-solving, communication and leadership are amongst those most commonly lacking in graduate recruits. These are skills common to engineering graduates. There is a great number of opportunities out there for engineering graduates, but you'll need to develop the skill sets that employers need.

Gain experience

Depending on what type of engineering degree you have, whether it be electronic, electrical, mechanical, civil or general engineering, there is a range of different roles available once you graduate. Your degree type will give you an idea of what area you want to work in, but you'll also have to think about the skills and qualities you possess. Activities like work placement, internships and your progression through your course will help with this, as it will give you a sense of where your skills fit in in the working world. It's important to explore all your options and to research the different areas that are available to you. Once you have done that, you'll be better able to tailor skills and experience to your area of interest. Talk to your careers service and network with others already working in the engineering sector; they will be able to help.

The industry in Ireland

The engineering sector in Ireland has in the region of 61,000 engineers, and at the time of the most recent census, 95% of them were in employment. Last year's Engineers Ireland survey found that that engineers are critical to combating climate change, with 62% of the public citing engineers as a critical element in protecting the environment.

Think international

According to recent gradireland research, 36% of graduates in Ireland are planning to look for their first job abroad. A degree in engineering travels well because technical skills have a universal language. Engineers Ireland is a signatory to both the Washington Accord and the Sydney Accord, which means accredited engineering programmes are recognised internationally by other signatories. These include Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, the USA and the UK. Even if you choose to stay in Ireland, a second language is always an advantage as there are many opportunities for travel as an engineer.

Career progression

According to Engineers Ireland, nearly 50% of its members have obtained postgraduate qualifications. Gaining postgraduate and professional qualifications after your undergrad degree is often something employers will expect and require from their graduate employees in this sector. Having a postgraduate degree can mean more pay, increased responsibility and better promotion and career development opportunities. Almost half of the employers surveyed by Engineers Ireland believe that there was an inadequate supply of engineers entering the sector in the medium term. When asked what kinds of skills they considered important, employers responded that the 'soft skills', such as communication, are just as important as – if not more important than – the core technical competences.

Do your research and give yourself the edge!

Prior to graduation and the job application process, do your research and acquire as much knowledge as possible about engineering employers and what they are looking for from graduate recruits. Before applying for a position, research the company in question extensively and tailor your application for the specific job. Employers can easily identify a generic CV, so make sure yours stands out from the crowd. Along with researching the company, make sure you fully understand the specific role you're applying for and what it entails so you can highlight the required attributes and qualifications on your application and CV.

Knowledge of the company and role you're applying for will help prepare you for interview. Ensure that the employer can see that not only do you have the right skills, but that you are also interested in and enthusiastic about the company, and that you have a willingness to develop within your role. Research will help you to figure out which companies are best suited for you. Decide what you want from your career so you don't waste time applying to companies that don't suit your requirements. Ask yourself what skills you wish to use throughout your career and what type of projects you're interested in, and apply to the companies that can satisfy your goals and make best use of your skills.

How to research

Knowing where to begin with the research process can be daunting and confusing, but the more you can learn about a company, the more of an advantage you'll have over other applicants. At the interview, employers won't want you to simply tell them about their company, but they will want to know how your skills align with their requirements. Investigate the following aspects of a company before application:

- The size of the company
- Its structure (are its offices in Ireland or spread across the globe?)
- The company culture (try to talk to current or past employees, or find information on LinkedIn and blog posts)
- Current projects and past achievements
- The technology employed
- Recent news announcements
- Visit gradireland.com/employers to research all the leading graduate employers.

Research questions

Interviewers will inevitably ask if you have any questions of your own and, having conducted research, will ensure you can satisfy such an enquiry. Assemble a list of questions you might be asked and use your research to find the answers. Such questions might include:

- What are the services and products provided by the company?
- Where is the company located?
- Who are its main competitors?
- Who are its clients?
- What markets does it operate in?
- What graduate roles are available, and what do such roles offer?
- What qualifications/degrees are required for entry?
- What are the hard and soft skills required?
- What is involved in the recruitment process?
- What are the company's aims and values?
- Why do you want to work for this company?

How to get hired in engineering

Make sure you know what engineering recruiters are looking for in your application.

A CV shouldn't run any longer than two pages, so you need to tailor it in a manner that prioritises the skills, attributes and qualifications relevant to the position you're applying for. For more help with this, see our article on page 4 on researching employers.

Make sure your CV is readable by using a clear font and sensible text size. Your personal, academic and career qualifications should be listed in reverse chronological order, and employers will take note of any unexplained gaps in your timeline. When listing your academic achievements, ensure all the details are correct and verifiable. While they may not be relevant at this stage, listing impressive Leaving Cert results will help demonstrate your academic record. More CV writing tips can be found at gradireland.com/careers-advice.

If you include a personal statement, make sure it's of relevance to the position in question. Avoid vague statements like 'Ambitious, highly-qualified student seeks challenging role.' Instead, be more specific about your qualifications and preferred role, for example, 'Civil engineering student in final year, with a particular interest in hydraulic engineering, seeks a graduate position in the construction industry'.

Today, many applications for roles in the engineering industry still take the form of CV and cover letters, but employers are increasingly adopting online application forms. For online application forms, much of the information you need is already in your CV. Take your time when filling out these forms. Be concise and accurate, and take great care in terms of spelling and grammar.

Skills employers are looking for

Your application will be judged primarily on your technical qualifications, so make sure to explain the skills you possess and how they can be applied to the position. If you completed an internship or have any relevant work placement experience, be sure to highlight this. If you have experience in a different sector, highlight any transferable skills (communication, report writing, technical documentation, etc) you may have acquired. The most in-demand skill for engineering applicants is a knowledge of and proficiency in IT. You will be expected to have a competency with standard office applications. Due to the specialised nature of engineering, knowledge of different systems and packages is often required, especially computer aided design (CAD) packages. Other common applications are digital verification packages, project management software and text editing systems.

Be sure to list any second languages you may be fluent in, as employers find this attractive. Mentioning that you possess a driver's licence can also make you stand out.

Soft skills and transferable skills

The engineering industry relies heavily on collaboration and teamwork, so employers are seeking applicants who possess a mix of technical and soft skills. Emotional intelligence, good interpersonal behaviour and the ability to form professional relationships are sought after attributes.

The soft skills demanded by recruiters include:

- Adaptability and resourcefulness
- Initiative and perseverance
- Communication skills: writing, speaking and listening
- The ability to identify and solve problems
- The ability to motivate yourself and others
- Project management and time management skills.

You will likely have developed most of these skills while at university, and the others can be obtained. Joining a college society, volunteering with a charity, travelling and joining a sports team are all ways of honing your soft skills.

Work experience

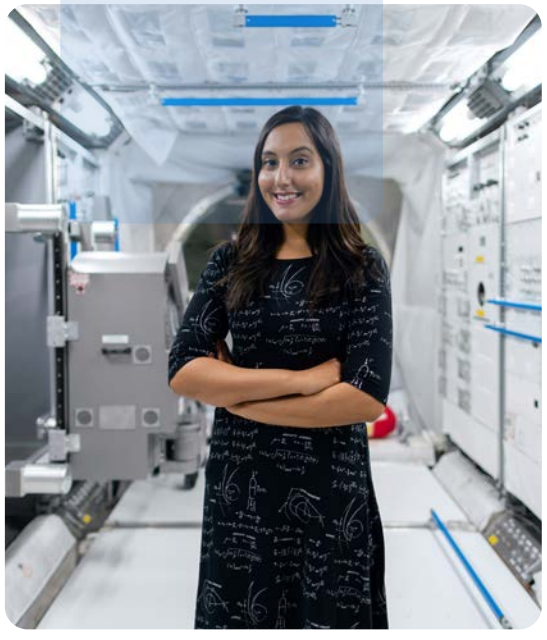
Practical, on-the-job experience is valued by engineering employers. While your experience doesn't have to be directly related to the role you are applying for, any knowledge of the sector you can demonstrate will be appreciated. Your university course may offer industry experience; if not, seek out a work placement with a suitable firm. Your college's careers advisory service should be able to help you with this, and you can visit gradireland.com/careers-advice/internships for more information. At gradireland.com/careers-advice/engineering you can see what day-to-day work in the engineering sector and its related areas involves.

Interviews and assessment centres

Just as with other areas like finance and IT, engineering recruiters use assessment centres in their process of selecting applicants for graduate schemes. These centres are designed to test the core competencies of candidates, both technical skills and soft skills. The process usually includes interviews and group activities, and applicants may be required to make a presentation.

Visit gradireland.com/careers-advice/interviews-and-assessment-centres for advice on negotiating assessment centres, and read the relevant section of the **gradireland Directory**.

Prior to the formal interview process, engineering firms are increasingly screening candidates through phone and video interviews. Depending on the size of the firm, you may be required to complete up to three interviews. The recruiter will use these interviews to assess the level of your technical and soft skills. You will be questioned on what you studied for your degree, so be sure to revise the subjects and areas you studied. When it comes to technical questions, there aren't always 'right' or 'wrong' answers, and the interviewer will often just wish to see if you possess an understanding of basic engineering concepts and technical principles and how confident you are in applying them. Remember, that due to the collaborative nature of engineering, an interviewer will also be assessing your soft skills, particularly your ability to relate to people and communicate effectively.



Get experience in engineering with an internship

Gaining industry experience is essential for engineering students. An internship allows you to employ the skills you've been taught in a practical working environment and will prepare you for what to expect from a position in the industry. It also shows you have commitment and will make you more attractive to potential employers.

An internship will help you decide on the specific role you wish to seek in the engineering sector, and which area suits you best. It provides opportunities to network with industry professionals who can give you insights into the topics covered in your college course.

Many engineering degrees will offer work placement, sometimes as an additional year. If yours doesn't provide a placement, seek one out yourself. Opportunities for internships can be found through your college's careers service, on company websites, and on gradireland.com's company profiles and work experience sections. If you display genuine enthusiasm, friendliness and pleasant persistence, opportunities will present themselves.

Why take an internship?

An internship allows you to get a feel for your future career before committing to a permanent position. It offers a chance to decide on the specific role you wish to pursue and the type of company you want to work for.

Performing well on your placement can catch the attention of potential employers. Many graduate employers hire students who impress during placements, and they may even sponsor you for further study. Your employer may offer you a position on completion of your internship. If you haven't completed your degree, you may be fast-tracked through the selection process for a graduate programme.

Even if your internship doesn't lead directly to employment, you will have acquired valuable skills.

Think ahead

Summer and year-long internships can set deadlines as early as December, with most ending in February. Throughout the year you can find internships on gradireland.com.

Some employers may advertise 'open deadlines' or extend their deadlines due to a lack of applications, but it's wise to get your application in as early as possible.

Start on the right foot

At the beginning of your internship, you may feel nervous in an unfamiliar environment. Here are some tips to help you get the most from your placement:

- Be polite and punctual
- Show enthusiasm and a willingness to learn by asking questions
- Take notes so you don't have to ask for a second explanation
- Accept any criticism you may receive and use it as an opportunity to learn and improve
- Don't be afraid to ask colleagues for feedback
- At the end of your internship, ask for a reference from your employer and keep in touch; maintaining a positive relationship could lead to further opportunities.

Manufacturing and industry

Industrial manufacturing and industry is the biggest employment area for engineering graduates. In a manufacturing environment, engineers are responsible for the safe and efficient planning, management and maintenance of production methods and processes, often working as part of a multidisciplinary team.

The most common backgrounds are mechanical and electrical/ electronic engineering, but there is a huge overlap and mobility between disciplines. There are also some primary degrees that specialise in manufacturing engineering.

Where could I work?

Within manufacturing in Ireland, there are two distinct categories of activity: direct engineering-related products and services; and all other industrial manufacturing enterprises. The engineering sector itself is made up of a wide range of companies providing a diverse range of products and services. The three main categories are: aerospace/ aviation, agricultural machinery, and process engineering and instrumentation.

Aerospace/aviation

Aerospace is a high-tech industry with opportunities to work in multidisciplinary teams. Engineers will deal with structural design, software engineering and aerodynamics. Systems and electronic engineering are also key disciplines.

Other engineering activities include: specialist restoration of engines, manufacture of products, specialist aviation software and telecommunications.

Agricultural machinery

Ireland has a small but strong agricultural machinery sector. Several Irish manufacturers are world leaders in specialised niche areas such as manufacturing mixer and feeder wagons for cattle or producing baling and wrapping systems. The market is almost entirely agricultural but also caters for amenity areas such as golfing. Products include grass balers, feed systems, cattle grids and dairy equipment.

Process engineering and instrumentation

Ireland has a highly developed process engineering sector with an excellent international reputation. This area is engineering at its most precise, refined and technologically advanced level. Activities include the design, testing, installation and maintenance of automated systems, gas analysis/detection systems and test instrumentation. An important specialism is stainless steel fabrication: storage and process vessels with large capacities are custom designed, as well as heating, cooling, mixing and pressure vessels. Another highly specialised area is the production of pipes, valves and fittings. Major clients include the fine chemicals/ pharmaceuticals and food and drink sectors, among them top global companies. Other clients include the computer, electronics and automobile sectors. The presence of these international companies has been helped because the Irish process engineering sector has state-of-the-art manufacturing technology and stringent quality control practices.

Industrial manufacturing and production

Industrial manufacturing falls into three main categories: food and drink; chemicals, pharmaceuticals and plastics; and electrical/electronic/ microelectronic and precision instruments. The strongest growth areas continue to be in the chemicals/ pharmaceuticals sector (see page 9).

Opportunities for engineers range from the design of automated systems, rooted in electronics and software disciplines, to traditional chemical engineering roles. The jobs are continuing to develop and evolve, with growth areas including biomedical product manufacture and plastics/polymers. The current focus on research and development is set to boost the manufacturing industry, and new careers are becoming available, particularly for electronic, mechanical and production engineering disciplines.

Industrial and manufacturing engineering offers many areas to specialise in. These include:

- Tool design
- Robotics
- Industry management
- Material process.

Pharmaceutical, chemical and medical device technologies

The pharmaceutical, chemical and medical device technologies sectors are a vital part of our economy. The Republic of Ireland remains a location of choice for international companies, and most of the top pharmaceutical organisations worldwide have operations here.

Every day, engineers play a vital part in the business of saving lives. They help to shape the health services through the products and processes they develop. Engineers work in many roles ranging from the research and development of new processes and products to the design, construction and management of industrial plants. Essentially, they are engaged in the process of changing raw materials into finished products, often with life-saving and health-enhancing consequences.

Where could I work?

Chemical and pharmaceutical

The chemicals industry develops and manufactures the chemicals we need in everyday life in a safe, environmentally-friendly and economical way. It's a diverse industry ranging from pharmaceuticals to biotechnology. Other companies in this sector produce finished products such as adhesives, sealants, paints, fertilisers and resins. The pharmaceutical industry is about the discovery and manufacture of effective medicines and is a significant employment sector in ROI due to the large number of multinational companies based in the country. Many of the world's top-selling drugs are produced in Ireland. Along with research and development, there are opportunities in process development and production management.

Engineers working in pharmaceuticals and chemicals can find themselves engaged in a wide range of activities, including:

- Developing and implementing processes to produce drugs and medicines, food and drinks.
- Producing new, cleaner fuels from natural resources.
- Designing pollution prevention technologies to protect the environment and human health.
- Research and development: collaborating with scientists and other disciplines in the design and implementation of new products and production techniques.
- Design and construction of chemical and pharmaceutical plants from start to finish.
- Consultancy: providing engineering services to manufacturing companies.
- Manufacturing: working in production, troubleshooting and adapting and optimising production processes.

Medical devices and medical technologies

The Republic of Ireland is a globally established medical technology manufacturing location. The medical devices and healthcare sectors are fundamental to Ireland's future as a leading producer and seller of high value exports. Ireland has the highest number of people in Europe, per capita, working in the medical technology sector, which is worth €30 billion in exports and €6 billion in imports to the Irish economy. The core work of an engineer in this field is the design and development of medical instruments and equipment. Products cover a broad range, including cardiac surgical implants, dialysis equipment, radiotherapy technologies, and many more. Engineers working in the medical devices and technologies sector can be employed in many possible areas, including:

- Biomaterials: researching appropriate materials for implantations in the human body, such as coronary stents, pacemakers and hip and knee replacements.
- Biomechanics: applying mechanics to biological or medical problems to develop artificial human functions, such as artificial hearts and joint replacements.
- Rehabilitation engineering: designing and developing prosthetics and assistive technologies to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.
- Clinical engineering: the determination and assessment of life cycles and capabilities of medical equipment technologies, through to their decommissioning and disposal.

As well as working with medical device manufacturers, engineers can also find career opportunities in other areas, such as:

- Government
- Hospitals
- Research centres.

Electronics, computing and telecommunications

These sectors have a well-established presence in the Irish economy. They are responsible for the provision of a huge range of high-demand products worldwide: software, hardware and telecommunications.

Where could I work?

The electronics, ICT and telecommunications areas are rapidly developing, with new innovations impacting every aspect of daily life, from healthcare to computers to transport. Each innovation brings the possibility of entirely new product developments. These are robust and exciting sectors to work in, with new specialisms constantly emerging.

ICT and telecoms

Engineers working in the computer and software field, design and develop state-of-the-art computer hardware, software and information systems. As well as industry, other potential employment areas include the Civil Service, product design and development and consultancy.

Areas of activity divide into distinctive but linked areas:

- Hardware (network engineering): designing networks, linking computers together, designing new types of chips, processors and computers.
- Software: designing, writing and testing software.
- Information systems: designing, configuring, implementing and installing complete computer systems.
- Telecommunications: designing and developing technologies for broadcast, mobile and optical communications, such as mobile phones and podcasting.

Telecommunications is one of the fastest-moving sectors in the world: telecoms providers need to innovate continually in order to remain competitive. There is a wide variety of jobs for graduates, ranging from research and project management to software development. This is a fast-paced environment which will appeal to people who thrive on challenge and change.

The work of software engineers depends on their age and experience: a junior might write basic code, while more senior people are involved in designing and developing large-scale systems and applications. You will usually work at one end of the process, either creating the software or helping to test it.

Network engineers have one of the most technically demanding jobs in IT: setting up, administering, maintaining and upgrading networks. The work will vary depending on the type of company you work for and what its network requirements are.

Electronics

This is a fast-paced, forward-looking industry, offering the opportunity to work on the latest technology.

Electronics are everywhere in the modern world, so this industry encompasses many areas, including consumer goods, medical and communications equipment. There are two types of organisation: component manufacturers, who make integrated circuits and semiconductors; and original equipment manufacturers, who produce equipment such as televisions, mobile devices and other personal electronics.

Control systems and automation is another area within the electronics sector. Engineers develop equipment to aid transport and the control of automated systems in industry, including robots, navigational control systems and radars.

You are likely to be working on projects in a multidisciplinary team, developing new products using the latest technological advances. Project lengths vary depending on your role: a designer may spend a year creating a final product, but an applications engineer supports that product for its entire life, which may be ten or more years. Applications engineering tends to involve more travel, while designers are usually office-based. In a product development role, you are likely to work on one project at a time, while in a support role you could work on several projects a day.

Construction and civil engineering

Civil engineers and building services engineers work for large construction companies, engineering contractors, consulting engineers and, in the public sector, for local authorities. They are involved in the design and supervision of a wide range of infrastructure projects.

There are also opportunities for graduates with companies providing engineering services to the construction industry, for example, in the production of plants, tools and equipment or in servicing specialist areas such as quarrying or waste management.

Where could I work?

Civil engineering

Civil engineers design and supervise the construction of a huge range of projects including buildings, roads, railways, tunnels, bridges, power stations, dams, water supply and sewerage systems. Civil engineering offers graduates a high-tech career with the chance to travel and work outdoors, and to work on projects that involve multidisciplinary teams including architects, quantity surveyors and building services engineers.

Civil engineers can work for a wide variety of companies including firms of consulting engineers, engineering contractors, construction companies and local authorities. They are also employed by property developers, transport infrastructure companies and government departments.

Generally speaking, the work of civil and structural engineers will combine site and design work. However, consulting engineers tend to focus more on design, while contracting engineers will spend more time on-site.

Consulting engineers are responsible for working with clients to design, plan, manage and supervise the construction of projects. Their work involves carrying out site investigations and feasibility studies; developing detailed designs; liaising with other professionals such as architects, building services engineers and quantity surveyors; and ensuring the smooth running of projects and completion within budget and on time.

Contracting civil engineers turn the plans of designers into reality. They liaise with the design team and oversee the actual construction on-site. Their work involves organising manpower and materials; observing safety standards; negotiating modifications with the designers; scheduling work; and supervising construction, including the work of subcontractors. They use specialist equipment to survey sites to ensure that the construction work is being carried out in the right place and that the structure is safe.

This career area is open to any engineering graduate, although a civil or structural background is advantageous. Numeracy is essential, as are communication skills.

Building services engineering

Building services engineers ensure that the buildings we live and work in are comfortable, safe and energy efficient. They do this by designing building services systems and supervising their installation and operation. Typically, 30–40 per cent of the total construction costs in commercial and industrial buildings are associated with the provision of services such as lighting, heating, air conditioning, power, data communications, public health systems and lifts.

The work involves advising clients and architects; designing suitable systems (using computer-aided design) and supervising their installation; and liaising with structural engineers, construction managers, builders and surveyors.

Building services engineers are employed by consultancies, contractors, local authorities, the public health and healthcare sector, universities and the manufacturing industry. You will need to demonstrate strong technical competence, design skills and commercial awareness. Communication skills are essential for liaising with other professionals, as is the ability to work in a team. A good level of numeracy is needed to make complex calculations and estimates for clients.

Environmental issues are the drivers for change in this sector, particularly in the area of renewable energy.

Utilities, energy and renewables

Engineering is primarily about problem-solving, and these skills can be used in many different areas, particularly as new areas of work develop. New degree subjects such as energy engineering reflect the growing interest in fields including environmental engineering and renewable energy.

Environmental engineering

Climate change and the urgent need for sustainable living and development at all levels have underpinned the rapid need for skilled and specialist environmental engineers. Environmental engineering currently remains within the category of civil engineering, but focuses on projects related to natural resources rather than man-made projects. It prioritises environmental protection and conservation in design and development projects. Environmental engineers can work on a wide range of projects. These could include:

- designing and developing water purification, waste-water treatment, waste management and air-control systems
- environmental impact assessment of current and future development projects
- recycling
- sustainability
- renewable energy resources.

Employers include engineering and environmental consultancies; local authorities; state and semi-state bodies, such as the Environmental Protection Agencies; and research organisations.

Utilities

This sector operates, maintains and manages the facilities and networks that supply and distribute utilities: electricity, gas, water and telecommunications. Companies in this sector aim to minimise losses and to offer customers a low-cost, high-quality service. Areas of activity include energy generation, wholesale trading, transmission and distribution, and water treatment.

The industry offers opportunities for graduates from a wide range of disciplines. You could work in operational or project management roles, or become a specialist engineer.

Power

Power generation and energy supply are about converting a wide variety of energy sources, for example, oil, nuclear, wind, into energy products used by consumers (predominantly electricity).

Environmental issues are the drivers for change in this sector, particularly in the area of renewable energy. Energy engineers are involved in the research, design and implementation of new energy systems, such as wave energy, tidal energy and wind power. Much of the work is at research stage: as technological breakthroughs develop, more defined roles will emerge.

Employers include third-level and commercial research institutes and companies involved in power generation.

Clean technology

Ireland is a location of choice for this rapidly evolving sector, both nationally and internationally. Government bodies, including Enterprise Ireland, are promoting and investing in Ireland's indigenous clean-tech industry with the goal of establishing the island of Ireland as a global centre for green technology in niche areas, encompassing engineering, electronics, environment, construction and ICT. In fact, many Irish companies are already considered market leaders in specialist areas such as renewable energy.

Cork Institute of Technology operates a Clean Technology Centre (CTC), which has been providing innovative and effective resource efficiency solutions since 1992. The CTC is widely accepted as the leading waste prevention-focused organisation in Ireland as well as being the longest-established. It works with local authorities, researchers, businesses and healthcare professionals for innovative solutions in this area.

PEOPLE AT WORK

Adam Lalor

Design Engineer at Kingspan

What does a typical day look like for you?

A typical day for me would involve a lot of computer modeling. I work in the Kingspan data on flooring division and my role would be to design air containment systems that separate hot and cold air in data halls. This essentially makes their air-cooling systems more efficient. I would also be responsible for the coordination of these systems using BIM and this is to make sure that the systems do not have any clashes on site. Towards the end of our project, I would also get the opportunity to travel to these sites and these sites would be across Europe so it's a great opportunity.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

My main advice for a student or graduate looking to pursue this career would be to just have some faith in yourself. Starting your first job out of college can be a very daunting experience and I know I struggled a bit to adapt to working life. However, at Kingspan they're very good at kind of easing you into your daily tasks and eventually you do realise that you are there for a reason. They've hired you because you're good at what you do.

What do you love most about your job?

The programme is all about developing the graduates in a professional sense and they do this through various online and in person modules. These modules are all focused on improving your skills as a professional. They also help you in a personal sense as well.

In the graduate programme there's also lots of travel opportunities. I was able to travel to Lyon and Budapest for in person modules and every year they go to different countries all across the world. It is a really great opportunity for graduates.

You can watch Adam's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

Cleo Byrne

Senior Full Stack Engineer, Fidelity Investments

What does a typical day look like for you?

A typical day for me can vary. I typically spend around 70 percent of my day on heads down development work. I work in a very collaborative environment, so I meet with my team quite regularly. Depending on the day there's also different events and activities. We focus a lot on communities, initiatives and employee resource groups. I get the opportunity to take part in them and sometimes even lead them. Fidelity also focuses on career development for associates. At the end of each sprint, we get to have a day dedicated to learning.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

A piece of advice that I'd give to someone who's starting out in software engineering would be to utilise the people around you and really try to absorb all their knowledge and experience.

What do you love most about your job?

I love the flexibility in my job. I love that, whether it be the different technology, the teams or getting to work with many different people and initiatives and communities that are outside your normal day-to-day.

You can watch Cleo's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

Divya Shree Srinivas

Digital Engineer at Jacobs Engineering

What does a typical day look like for you?

Our job is to automate work to reduce manual effort. That involves creating dashboards to automate reporting and help the company move on from Excel and PowerPoint reporting. We create dashboards using Power BI which automatically refresh the data. We also explore different technologies which can be used to increase efficiency by reducing manual efforts.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

First, I would say understand the data. It's very important to have an understanding of the data you're trying to interpret. For example if you're working with data related to mechanical engineering, understanding the basics of mechanical engineering will help you analyse and visualise the data better.

Secondly, I would advise graduates to develop their communication skills. In engineering, there are frequent instances where you need to explain technical aspects to non-technical people. So good communication is very important.

Finally, I would encourage getting hands-on experience in a few of the platforms that you are interested in. In my case that was data visualisation. So, hands on experience on Power BI is helpful.

What do you love most about your job?

What I love most about my job is my teammates because they have my back whenever I need help with a task. We help each other on a daily basis. I also like that I have ownership over my tasks. They really push you to take the initiative and do things.

You can watch Divya's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

You can watch Cian's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

Cian Fitzgibbon

Electrical Engineer Graduate at ESB

What does a typical day look like for you?

No two days are the same at ESB. Being able to adapt is an essential part of the job. You could be sorting out an issue for a customer one minute and then on the phone to a contractor organising a meeting, and then designing a phase of a project. Adaptation is a big part of the role but the day-to-day life of a graduate engineer with ESB is really enjoyable.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

I would definitely say ask as many questions as you can. Asking questions is a good way to quickly learn a lot. There's people around you that have years upon years of experience so if the person you ask the question to doesn't have the answer for you they can definitely point you in the right direction.

What do you love most about your job?

If I had to pick one thing about my job that I love the most it would definitely be site visits. At site visits you can see the work you did in the office come to life, which gives you a sense of satisfaction.

You can come across people that took completely different career paths to yourself and years of experience and they're glad to share the knowledge that they've gained over the years. They can really bring you along in your career that way.

> I think the best piece of advice I could give is for graduates to be flexible and open-minded.

Seán Hussey

Graduate Engineer at EirGrid

What does a typical day look like for you?

I currently sit in the network projects team with EirGrid. We're responsible for delivering the critical infrastructure needed to meet increased electricity demand and to facilitate Ireland in achieving its goal of reaching 80 percent renewable electricity by 2030. So, you're constantly faced with challenges and problems that you have to solve. One of my favourite things about the job is going on the site visits. This would involve you going out to maybe a substation or going on a cable route drive with a contractor and you'd see the problems that you might have to solve in your work. I think every engineer will attest to this; on these site visits is where you do most of your learning.

What advice would you give to a new graduate?

I think the best piece of advice I could give is for graduates to be flexible and open-minded. I'm coming from an engineering background, but I'd currently be called a project manager. So, I would originally have been used to looking at problems in detail but now I look at projects from a high-level. That's probably something I wouldn't have considered doing up until I started working in EirGrid. That's the great thing about the graduate programme, you're exposed to every side of the business and then at the end you can choose what you like best.

What do you love most about your job?

The people I work with are my favourite part of the job. The great thing about the graduate programme is you're also in a network of people that are in the exact same position as you starting off. I think that along with our collaborative workplace environment made the transition from college to work really smooth.

You can watch Seán's full interview on the gradireland YouTube channel.

Engineering sector salaries

Engineering is an industry with well-defined progression routes in terms of roles and salaries, so let's see what the average remuneration is, and what salaries are on offer in the sector.

On average, graduate recruits in engineering, earn around €36,500 in their first graduate job in 2024, according to gradireland research. This has gone up significantly from 2022's figure of €31,954. No matter what sector of engineering you hope to focus on in your career, salaries increase as you gather experience.

Like most other professions, graduate jobs start out with plenty of scope for development, improvement and subsequent salary increases as you develop your career and gain more specialised expertise in engineering.

For certain roles in the engineering industry, a postgraduate qualification is a specific requirement. When it comes to these roles, having completed a PhD or master's degree will have an impact on your earning potential.

Below is a selection of engineering salary data from a survey by industry specialists Engineers Ireland.

- Average salary for an engineer with 1–2 years' experience: €38,000
- 79% of engineers received a salary increase last year, with 38% receiving an increase of more than 5%.
- Engineers in the public sector had the highest percentage of increases, with 92% reporting a rise in pay. 82% of electric and electronic engineers reported a pay rise, along with 81% of energy and utilities engineers.
- Chartered engineers can expect to earn €5,000-€10,000 more than those without professional titles.
- Graduate engineers with 11-15 years of experience can expect to earn an average of €65,000.

Your engineering career planner

Non-finalists

2025

AUTUMN

- Start applying for summer internships or placements for 2026. Deadlines can be set before your Christmas break, but employers may not wait until the deadline to start filling their positions, so don't wait to apply.
- Get involved with clubs or societies in your university or college, and try to take on a leadership role. This will help you develop invaluable transferable skills and will look good on your CV when applying to jobs and internships.

2026

WINTER

- Keep an eye out for any remaining internships with later application dates.
- If you haven't found an internship, start thinking of other engineering-focused activities you can do during the summer break. Look into shadowing opportunities at a local engineering firm, or volunteer abroad working on a construction project.
- If you can't find an engineering role during the summer, look for part-time work. Any position will help you develop transferable skills.

SPRING

- Look into what employers might interest you, and what kind of projects they work on. If you have options for modules in your next academic year, consider what modules suit the employers you like.
- Start research for graduate jobs or internships that might interest you ahead of applying in Autumn.

SUMMER

- If you have secured an internship, or have taken on a job or voluntary role, keep a record of what skills and practices you are learning. This will help with further interviews and applications.
- If you have an internship, ask for a reference when you are finished to use in future applications. Enquire if the company has a graduate programme and if your time there could help with the application when you get to final year.
- If you haven't secured a placement, work on your own engineering project like developing an app, website or energy-saving household item.

Final-year students

AUTUMN

- Start applying for graduate jobs as early as you can. Some employers will start assessment centres as early as November. Even if deadlines are as late as Christmas, employers may not wait until the deadline to start filling positions.
- If you are looking into postgraduate study, starting applications in Autumn is ideal. Popular courses will fill up quickly and often you will need to have applied for a course before you can apply for funding.

WINTER

- Keep applying for graduate jobs and schemes. Some applications will be accepted into the new year.
- Finish off any remaining applications for postgraduate courses and funding.
- Ensure you make time for interviews and assessment centres alongside your university or college work.

SPRING

- Focus on your studies and preparation for exams. A 2.1 degree will be eligible for a lot more positions than a 2.2 degree.
- Keep an eye out for any schemes or graduate jobs that have not yet closed their applications.

SUMMER

- Look out for vacancies in smaller firms that don't run graduate programmes.
- Find graduate jobs on gradireland.com.
- Keep a look out for openings in graduate jobs from companies who struggled to fill places or who had graduates drop out last minute.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training and career development

A career in engineering offers valuable long-term job prospects along with professional qualifications.

The long-term opportunities provided by an engineering career are excellent. It's not uncommon for graduates to find themselves in managerial roles in their first decade after qualifying, and those who possess initiative and strong communication, teamwork and project-management skills will be rewarded with promotions. A willingness to continue your education and professional development is important.

No matter the specific field of your degree, you can expect flexibility in your career. An engineer's core skill is problem-solving, which enables you to move between engineering sectors. Acquiring managerial experience will equip you with the transferable skills required to pursue a career away from engineering if you so desire.

Professional qualifications

Achieving accredited chartered engineer status (CEng) should be your aim as a graduate engineer, as this will give you a recognised and valued level of competencies, skills and standards. Possessing a chartered engineer status increases your employability and gives you professional recognition.

Graduates seeking to develop their careers should seek out employers that run graduate programmes accredited with either Engineers Ireland or the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

Such graded graduate programmes allow graduates to achieve chartered engineer status within a few years of qualifying. In the Republic of Ireland, there are three basic requirements for chartered status: graduates must hold a masters degree; have a four year working/training period (Initial Professional Development); and must submit practice reports and written essays. Along with fulfilling the requirements of your employer-run graduate programme, you will be required to take various training courses covering the following topics: financial awareness, legislation, IT skills, managerial leadership and personal development/communication skills. Visit **engineersireland.com** for more information and also gradireland.com/engineering.

The criteria are very similar in Northern Ireland. The ideal scenario would see you employed by an accredited employer with an Initial Professional Development Scheme that will allow you to attain the skills and competencies required by the Institution of Engineering and Technology. At least two years work must be completed, and, in consultation with your line manager, you will need to produce a development action plan. You will need to keep records of your competencies and learning. When you feel capable, you can consult with your mentor, sponsor and management with regards to applying to register as a chartered engineer. A qualifying report on professional development (QRPD) must be prepared, and you will be required to take part in an hour-long professional review interview.

Continuous professional development for graduates

The Engineers Ireland Future Professionals Series offers structured advancement to graduates through two strands of intense and challenging professional development. Both the CPD Certificate in Professional Engineering and CPD Diploma in Professional Engineering are accredited by Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) as Level 9 programmes on the National Qualifications Framework.

CPD Certificate in Professional Engineering

Transitioning from university or college to a professional work environment requires serious application and attention from graduates. In collaboration with leading employers, Engineers Ireland have designed their CPD Certificate in Professional Engineering to give recent graduates (up to 12 months since graduating) the opportunity to become quickly accustomed to the professional standards expected from members of engineering-led teams and organisations. The course will familiarise you with what is expected of you and how you should behave in a professional setting.

The learning objectives of the Certificate include:

- Teaching the expected approaches and behaviours of new recruits to engineering
- Ensuring participants can deliver their work on time
- Developing recruits' ability to accept and learn from criticism, and to seek constructive feedback
- Providing frameworks for dealing with possible issues, asking the right questions and identifying the appropriate solutions for specific problems
- Developing teamwork skills, including working with clients and on projects managed by your colleagues
- Providing a suitable environment for participants to develop and improve their communication, analytical and technical writing skills
- Optimising Excel as a valuable engineering aid
- Creating an awareness of how engineering recruits are expected to behave

CPD Diploma in Professional Engineering

The Future Professionals Series' second strand is suitable for engineers who boast between three- and six-years' experience, and who display a commitment to developing their professional abilities. The aim of the course is for participants to develop their skill sets to a level that allows them to make a valuable contribution to the workplace and become respected engineering professionals. The diploma is designed to meet the requirements of the Irish engineering industry and those businesses seeking engineering professionals with expanded knowledge, skills and proficiency. The diploma's learning objectives aim to provide graduates with:

- A broad and up-to-date awareness of the wider skills an engineering professional requires
- The analytical and theoretical skills needed to anticipate and cope with the requirements of engineering organisations, including project management, risk management and statistical analysis
- An understanding of the importance and nature of engineering's financial side, including handling claims and resolving contract disputes
- The ability to predict possible issues, ask appropriate questions and identify the correct solution for specific problems
- An ability to work as part of a team or alongside clients, and contribute to other colleagues' projects
- The necessary skills and tools for analysing problems, along with leadership, advanced knowledge management and negotiation skills
- An understanding of current developments in Lean Principles and Sustainability in the increasingly global environment of engineering
- An awareness of the competencies required to become a Chartered Engineer.

For more on these programmes visit **www.engineersireland.ie**.

Postgraduate study

While a postgraduate qualification may not guarantee you an easy entry into an engineering career, statistics show that postgraduates have superior employment prospects.

Recent years have seen a growth in the number of engineering graduates who choose to pursue further study in the field, ranging from year-long postgraduate diplomas and master's programmes to research based MPhils and PhDs. Conversion courses in engineering can also be taken, though they often require a primary degree from a relevant discipline. You can find funded master's and PhDs advertised in the national press and on institution websites. An up-to-date list of courses can be found on our course database at gradireland.com/careers-advice/postgraduate-study.

It's common for engineering graduates to take postgraduate diplomas or master's in business, finance and project management to apply for business and engineering-related positions upon graduation.

Both the Republic and Northern Ireland have seen heavy investment in Research and Development (R&D) in recent years, with both governments investing in collaborations with academia and industry to boost growth. Institutions are increasingly collaborating with industry to provide courses that combine theory and study with practical experience.

The following is a list of departments and institutions currently offering postgraduate courses in engineering:

- Dundalk Institute of Technology, School of Engineering – **www.dkit.ie/engineering**
- South East Technological University - **www.setu.ie/courses**
- Technological University Dublin, College of Engineering and Built Environment – **www.dit.ie/colleges/collegeofengineeringbuiltenvironment**
- Trinity College Dublin, School of Engineering – **www.tcd.ie/engineering**
- University College Cork, College of Science, Engineering and Food Science – **www.ucc.ie/en/sefs**
- University College Dublin, School of Engineering and Architecture – **www.ucd.ie/eacollege/study/graduateschool**
- University of Galway, College of Engineering and Informatics – **www.nuigalway.ie/engineering**
- University of Limerick, Faculty of Science and Engineering – **www.ul.ie/scieng**
- University of Ulster, Faculty of Computing and Engineering – **www.compeng.ulster.ac.uk**
- Queen's University Belfast, School of Electrical Engineering – **www.qub.ac.uk/schools/eeecs**
- Queen's University Belfast, School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering – **www.qub.ac.uk/schools/NBE**

A comprehensive, searchable course database, supplied by Qualifax.ie, can be found at gradireland.com/careersadvice/postgraduate-study.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Top employers in engineering

Every year, we carry out a survey of students to decide the most popular graduate employers in the country. The **Cibyl Ireland Graduate Survey** is the largest annual career survey in Ireland and the votes decide the winners of the **gradireland Graduate Recruitment Awards** and the composition of **Ireland's 100 leading graduate employers**. Here is the winner and shortlist for engineering.

2025	Employer	2024
1	Intel	1 →
2	Jaguar Land Rover	2 →
3	Arup	3 →
4	General Motors	4 →
5	Sisk	11 ↑
6	Analog Devices	7 ↑
7	John Paul Contruction	6 ↓
8	Jones Engineering Group	13 ↑
9	Jacobs Engineering	5 ↓
10	BAM Ireland	18 ↑

A–Z of employers

Remember to quote **gradireland Engineering** on your job application.

EMPLOYERS

Deloitte.

Type of work • accountancy and financial management • banking, insurance, and financial services • engineering • fund management/ administration and investment banking • IT and telecoms • law, legal services, and patents • management consulting • management, business, administration • marketing, advertising, and PR

Salary • competitive with a comprehensive benefits package

Benefits • life assurance • pension scheme with company contributions • 21 days holiday (increasing with length of service) • The complete list is available on the website.

Number of vacancies 300+ annually

Degrees sought • all disciplines

Work experience • yes • summer, 9–12 weeks • all year • placements, up to 12 months

Number of placements • 150+ annually

Locations • Republic of Ireland • Northern Ireland

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Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin D02 AY28
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Future Leaders Academy – An Exceptional Graduate Experience

As the leading choice for Ireland's graduates and winner of gradireland's most popular Graduate Recruiter in Accountancy/Professional Services for 6 years in a row, Deloitte's Future Leaders Academy develops the next generation of leaders, builds world-class capabilities, and consistently delivers an exceptional growth experience for graduates.

Our People

We believe that our people are impressive individually, but together they're inspirational - this philosophy starts with the Future Leaders Academy. The programme is designed to encourage graduates to be curious, share their individual perspectives, find new ways to face complex challenges, and discover their personal purpose. It sets the foundations for a career that inspires and energises and allows for continuous growth both professionally and personally.

Your Growth is our Growth

Your expertise is our capability. Through our graduate programme, we empower future leaders by offering opportunities and support, enabling our people to lead at every level. In addition to gaining recognised professional qualifications, you will develop both soft and hard skills that will benefit you wherever your journey takes you. Whether it's through our diverse and impactful work with high-profile clients or connecting with brilliant minds worldwide, you'll encounter growth at every turn.

Innovation & Technology is essential to every business, and it holds a crucial position within our firm. Deloitte's Technology and Transformation team unites a vast pool of industry experts, renowned for their contributions to shaping some of the world's most prominent brands. We work diligently to advise and support both global and local technology firms, enabling them to overcome business challenges and succeed in the digital era. The expansion of our Technology Consulting, Cloud Cyber Security, and Data Insight services, along with the transformation of our Audit, Advisory, and Tax services, has opened up significant career opportunities within our firm. We have assembled a dedicated team of experts operating across all our service areas, encompassing Tax, Audit & Advisory, Technology & Transformation, Corporate Finance, Sustainability, and Risk Advisory, all driven by the goal of innovating for better business outcomes.

Innovation is now a necessity, not a choice. To maintain a competitive edge, organisations are pursuing exponential innovation – the ability to harness disruption for strategic benefit. We work together to tackle intricate business obstacles, driving daily disruption and delivering solutions that empower businesses to unlock potential and navigate complexities.

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Energy for generations

Type of work • engineering – electrical, mechanical, civil, quantity surveying • IT • commercial • finance • human resources

Salary • competitive

Benefits • pension plan with a competitive employer contribution • reduced rate on electricity with Electric Ireland • flexible and hybrid working • work life balance – sports & social activities such as Tag Rugby, GAA, cricket & soccer • health and wellbeing supports • paid time off to attend conferring ceremony • volunteering time & charity contribution matching • employee referral scheme • wide variety of generous life and career leave • access to ESB insurance schemes • commuter saver schemes (including Cycle to work and Easi travel) • education leave & support • professional training & development • paid professional membership • 23 days annual leave and 2 company days • (benefits may vary with role)

Work experience • yes, 2 years

Locations • Republic of Ireland • Northern Ireland • UK

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Who we are

At ESB, we're not just powering homes and businesses, we're powering change. As Ireland's leading energy company since 1927, we've been at the heart of innovation, community, and sustainability. Today, we're on a mission to achieve Net Zero by 2040 through delivering clean and sustainable electricity.

This is your chance to be part of something bigger. We're investing in cutting-edge technology and in the next generation of talent, people like you. Whether you're passionate about sustainability, innovation, or making a real impact, ESB offers a platform to grow, challenge yourself, and help shape a cleaner, brighter energy future.

Why ESB

At ESB, being a graduate means becoming part of an engaging, supportive community that extends far beyond your day-to-day role. No matter which area of the business you join, we're committed to making your experience rewarding and inclusive.

Our graduates regularly take part in a wide range of sports and social events from sponsored runs and tag rugby to summer BBQs and our much-loved GAA tournament. These activities are a great way to connect with colleagues, build friendships, and enjoy life outside of work.

Giving back is deeply embedded in our culture. ESB allocates over €1 million annually to support organisations tackling critical issues such as suicide prevention, homelessness, and educational disadvantage. We also actively support local community groups and encourage staff to get involved in initiatives like the Time to Read and Time to Count programmes, helping young students in nearby schools.

Joining ESB as a graduate means joining a company that values community, connection, and contribution, inside and outside the workplace.

Accelerate Your Career with ESB's Graduate Development Programme

At ESB, our Graduate Development Programme is designed to set you on a fast-paced trajectory toward professional success. Joining us means more than just starting a job, it's the beginning of a dynamic career shaped by meaningful work, continuous learning, and a supportive network.

Our programme is built on key pillars that ensure a well-rounded and impactful experience:

- Structured Rotations: Gain broad exposure across different teams and functions, helping you discover your strengths and interests.
- Challenging Assignments: Work on real-world projects that stretch your capabilities and contribute to ESB's mission.
- Supportive Graduate Network: Connect with peers across the organisation, sharing experiences and building lasting relationships.
- Competitive Salary & Benefits: Enjoy a comprehensive package that reflects the value you bring to our team.
- Robust Learning & Development: Access tailored training, workshops, and resources to support your growth.
- Major Project Experience: Collaborate on high-impact initiatives that shape the future of energy and infrastructure.
- Cross-Business Exposure: Understand the breadth of ESB's operations through placements in diverse areas of the business.
- Dedicated Mentorship: Receive guidance and support from experienced professionals committed to your success.

We're offering exciting opportunities for ambitious graduates to join our Engineering Graduate Development Programme, launching in September 2026. Whether you're passionate about Electrical, Mechanical, Civil Engineering, or Quantity Surveying, this is your chance to dive into real-world projects, learn from industry experts, and build a career that makes a difference.

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Our Graduate Programmes

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  Audits are fundamental to effective capital markets. At EY, Core Audit and Assurance involves providing clients with confidence in their financial statements, enabling them to meet regulatory requirements and attract investors. Our services enhance the credibility of financial information, fostering trust in the marketplace. You will collaborate with leaders across industries to deliver assessments that empower organisations to navigate risks and uphold standards.
- **Consulting Graduate Programmes**
  In Consulting, we transform businesses through people, technology, and innovation. We help clients realise long-term value through transformations that place humans at the centre and deploy technology at speed. Joining our Consulting team is an opportunity to think differently about solving complex problems and shape the future with confidence. As a new graduate, you will gain essential skills to advise organisations on navigating today's challenges and preparing for tomorrow's risks.
- **Strategy & Transactions Programmes**
  Our Strategy & Transactions programme focuses on advising clients on buying, selling, or merging companies to enhance growth. The team provides essential data, highlights risks, and guides clients through complex transactions. If you are curious and a team player, this may be the right fit for you.
- **Tax & Law Graduate Programme**
  Our Tax & Law programme trains trusted advisors who help clients navigate complex tax and regulatory changes. As a member of our Tax & Law team, you will help clients manage their assets effectively. If you have a hunger for knowledge and a talent for spotting trends, a career in Tax & Law could be for you.

Choose your graduate programme at EY and bring your fresh perspectives to our collaborative culture. Apply now to join our acclaimed graduate programmes starting in September 2026 or learn more about our upcoming internships.

ey.com/iecareers

Ireland's 100

WINNER

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Your ultimate graduate careers hub

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Head to our site for career advice, internships, jobs, networking opportunities, courses and more!

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Build a personalised feed

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Connect with top employers

Get direct messages from employers looking for people with your skills and experience.

Get real career insights with GradSims

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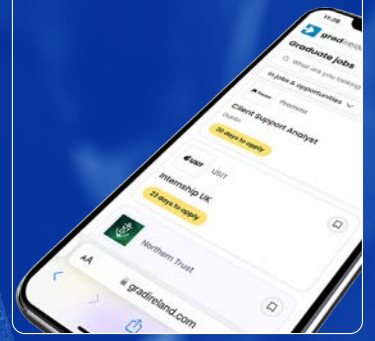
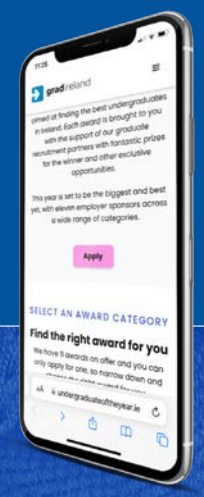


Get career advice

Discover career paths and top tips to help you apply with confidence and land that role.



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