

Independent evaluation highlights positive outcomes from JobBridge Scheme

Minister Burton – “Over half of JobBridge ‘finishers’ are in paid employment”

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, today (*Monday, 22nd October, 2012*) published the interim evaluation of JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme by Indecon International Economic Consultants.

Minister Burton said: **“The Indecon report contains a number of very positive findings for JobBridge. The most significant is that 52% of JobBridge ‘finishers’ are currently in paid employment since finishing their internship. This is one of the best outcomes in Europe for work placement programmes.”**

The Minister continued: **“JobBridge was a pillar of the Government’s Jobs Initiative. It’s goal is to help people seeking employment to gain valuable work experience and enhance their prospects of getting a job. I am delighted that an independent review of the scheme has found that this goal is being achieved.”** On a general note it is significant that the take-up of the scheme has been particularly strong in the SME sector with this sector accounting for 6,481 or 58% of all placements to-date.

Other key findings of the report include:

- **51.6% of non-graduate interns have secured employment**, demonstrating that the scheme is working very effectively across all skill and education levels.
- Among the main benefits of JobBridge for interns are that the scheme provides new job skills and the opportunity for participants to gain quality work experience, while a high proportion of interns also consider that the scheme improves their chances of gaining employment. **89.3% of interns felt JobBridge had given them new skills.**
- Other benefits include that the Scheme helps boost participant’s self-confidence, assists in identifying job opportunities suitable to their

abilities, keeps them close to the job market, and helps participants to establish contacts/networks.

- The Programme has had positive effects on subsequent employment chances for participants who in the absence of the Programme would not have secured employment. The findings suggest that the Programme has been an effective labour market intervention in achieving movement off the Live Register.

Minister Burton also thanked the members of the JobBridge Steering Group for their work on the scheme. The Group is chaired by Martin Murphy, Managing Director of HP Ireland, who commented on the evaluation: **“The Report is further evidence that JobBridge is exceeding its stated objectives by creating sustainable jobs. The positive feedback received by both interns and the companies participating in the scheme, combined with the report’s findings demonstrate the continued need for innovative approaches which will assist in tackling the current jobs crisis to keep our talented and skilled individuals in this country.**

I encourage every employer to consider bringing an intern into the workplace under the JobBridge scheme and for anyone on the Live Register to consider JobBridge as a genuine pathway to employment.”

Sean O Driscoll, Chief Executive of Glen Dimplex and member of the Steering Group added: **“Ireland, like many other countries worldwide has a jobs crisis. We need to create jobs of all types and cannot afford to be selective. The tremendous success of JobBridge demonstrates that we can and will get unemployed people back to work in Ireland.”**

Minister Burton concluded: **“Earlier this year, I widened the eligibility criteria for the JobBridge scheme to include lone parents and disabled people and increased the number of places to 6,000. Further analysis is currently underway to examine any refinements that could further enhance the scheme; this will be published by the end of the year in the final evaluation report..**

Indecon’s Interim Evaluation of JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme is available on www.welfare.ie

Notes for Editors

JobBridge statistics

The number of interns who have participated in the JobBridge scheme since it commenced in July 2011 now stands at 11,246 while there are 5,145 people currently participating in the scheme and over 2,100 JobBridge places are currently advertised on www.jobbridge.ie.

Indecon International Economic Consultant's Interim Evaluation of JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme

Background

This report was submitted to the Department of Social Protection, on 5th October 2012 by Indecon International Economic Consultants. The report represents an interim update on Indecon's independent evaluation of JobBridge. A final report will be available by end 2012.

Primary Research

A combination of e-mail, SMS/text and post were used to distribute the questionnaires to interns and host organisations. An exceptionally high level of response was achieved on both survey streams (48.7% response rate from Interns, 47.9% response rate from Host Organisations)

Key Findings

- 1.** There has been a high level of interest in JobBridge among both interns and host organisations.
- 2.** Overall, the survey analysis suggests that above half or approximately 52% of JobBridge interns surveyed have secured employment since finishing their internships. For those individuals who undertook their internships in private sector organisations, 54.1% have secured employment, while 49.9% of those who had their internship in public sector organisations have secured employment.
- 3.** The extent of employment among JobBridge participants is also seen to rise as the length of time since internship completion increases, with the evidence indicating a 62.9% employment rate among participants who completed their internships over five months ago, compared to a 36.2% rate of employment among those who completed less than one month ago.
- 4.** There are a high proportion of graduates among JobBridge interns, but the scheme is wider than this and 34.5% of interns are non-graduates. This latter feature is important, as labour market evidence suggests that those with lower levels of education have poorer labour market experience. Of note is that 51.6% of non-graduate interns secured employment, which was similar to the overall result of 52.3% among all participants.
- 5.** 66.9% of participants were unemployed for over six months prior to commencing their JobBridge internship. 38.1% of interns had been unemployed for over a year and given that the long-term unemployed have particular difficulties in securing employment, this is an important aspect.
- 6.** There have been a relatively high proportion of interns not completing their internships. By September 2012, 2,295 or 41% of internships were completed in full, while 3,297 or 59% were ended before their scheduled timeframe. While this was of initial concern to Indecon, on

more detailed examination it is evident that the main reason for early completion, cited by 66.3% of respondents to Indecon's survey of interns, was that they secured employment. However, one-third of participants cited dissatisfaction with their placement as a reason for early completion.

- 7.** JobBridge, like any labour market intervention, is likely to have had some displacement and deadweight impacts. Preliminary evidence suggests displacement is likely to be very small, but there is some deadweight. In terms of the views of host organisations, a very tiny minority (3%) indicated that JobBridge placements replaced jobs held by previous employees, although this is difficult to verify. Overall, 22.3% of all interns surveyed felt that they would have got a job if they had not undertaken their internship. 27.2% of employers indicated that they would have considered employing interns without the Programme. A further 6.3% indicated that they would have taken on a paid employee in the absence of the Programme. The balance of 66% indicated that they **would not** have filled the positions in the absence of JobBridge. Whether interns would actually have secured these jobs is inevitably uncertain and even for these participants there are potential benefits for most interns in terms of skills enhancement.
- 8.** Among the main benefits of JobBridge for interns are that the scheme provides new job skills and the opportunity for participants to gain quality work experience, while a high proportion of interns also consider that the scheme improves their chances of gaining employment. 89.3% of interns felt JobBridge had given them new skills.

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