



Evaluation of Springboard

Second-stage report

What is working?
What needs further improvement?

Effort focus in 2013



2
STAGE

February 2013



**Springboard
2013**
a commitment
to on-going
improvement

We aim to ensure that:

- (a) courses offered are relevant to the job market and are high quality and high impact
- (b) access to these programmes is non-bureaucratic and ensures that take up and success rates are maximised.

The findings in this document are drawn from the following data sources:

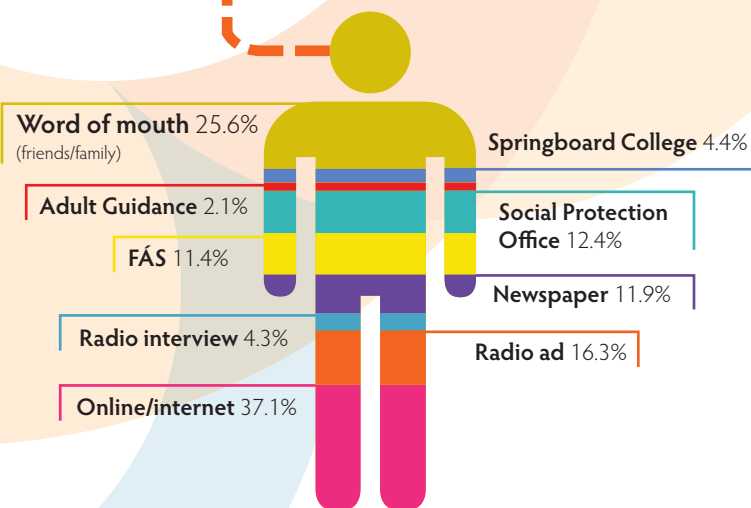
- more than 12,500 online data records
- three separate surveys of Springboard participants and graduates
- ongoing feedback and data returns from participating Springboard colleges
- Live Register data.

Accessing
Springboard:
Participants'
experience
to-date

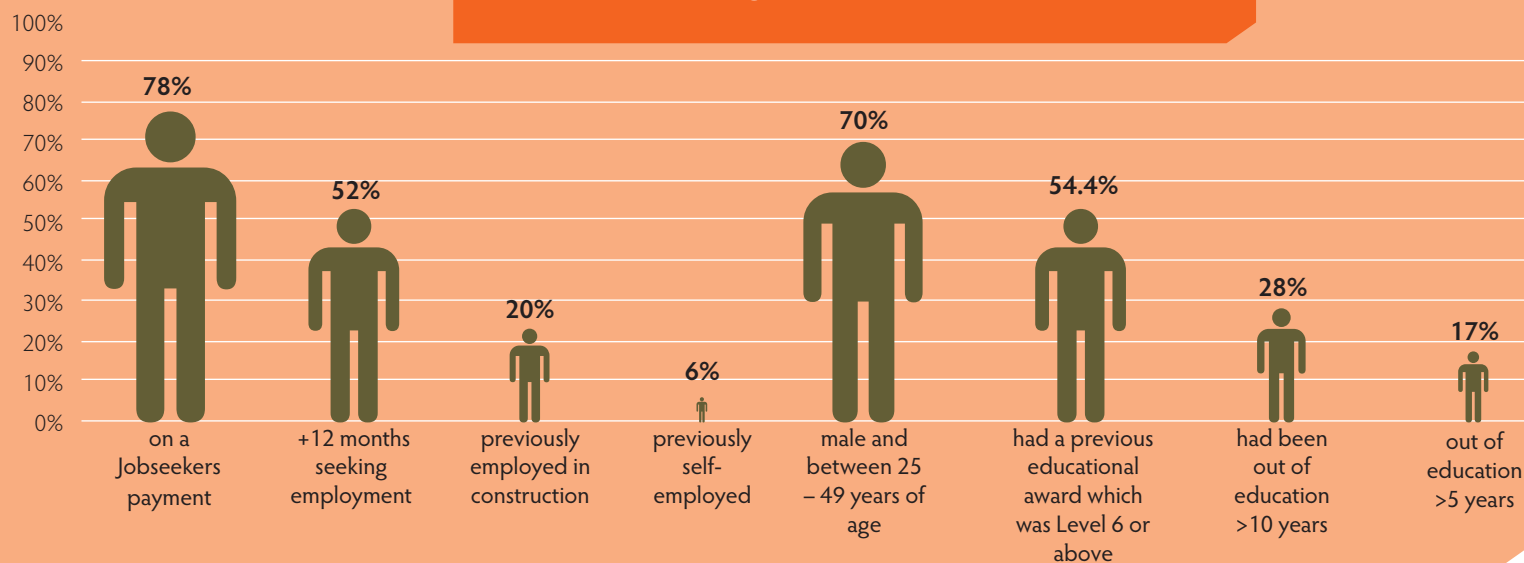
SHAPING OUR 5 SPRINGBOARD GOALS FOR 2013

1. Employment rates for Springboard graduates will continue to rise. Springboard is recognised as a successful, effective initiative to support people back into sustainable employment
2. Springboard graduates are an increasingly sought-after group among employers; added to their job readiness from previous employment, they have cutting edge skills and knowledge for their industry sector
3. Springboard graduates continue to be confident, motivated self-starters, with the capacity to think critically and to pursue their own personal and career goals
4. Springboard colleges will provide an outstanding upskilling experience to Springboard graduates, before, during and on completion of their course
5. Springboard continues to positively influence the ongoing process of reform and development of higher education in Ireland

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT SPRINGBOARD?



Profile of Springboard 2012 participants



2012
Freephone
guidance line
handled
4,259 calls



SPRINGBOARD ROUTE TO SKILLS ENHANCEMENT, INNOVATIVE LEARNING AND EMPLOYABILITY

DELIVERING EMPLOYMENT

- Within 6 weeks of courses completing, 30% were back in work; within 6 months average 40% back in work (Sources: Participant surveys; online data returns from colleges; Live Register data)
- Over 500 links have been created between individual employers, enterprise representatives and Springboard colleges
- Industry is proactively contributing to overall design and content of Springboard; shaping individual Springboard courses; promoting Springboard in the media and among partner companies; hiring graduates
- Job readiness training and careers supports considered essential among participants – feedback from participants indicates that this area needs further attention in 2013
- Practical inputs from employers during a course highly valued by participants – examples included presentations on job vacancies, on working in a particular sector, on key skills sought by employers
- New section for employers added to springboardcourses.ie
- Dedicated job fairs hosted by Department of Social Protection in Galway Cork and Dublin

GUIDANCE

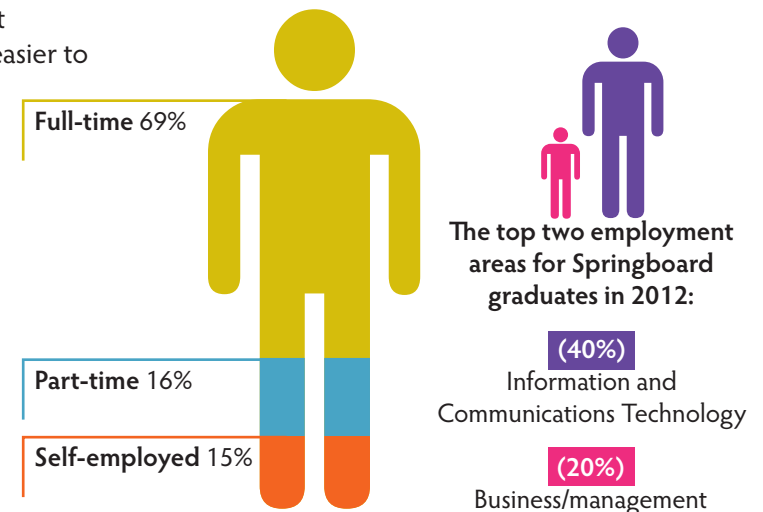
- 53% of participants did not receive any guidance in selecting their course
- Absence of guidance a contributory factor in drop out rates, with some participants reporting that they had made wrong course choices
- Mixed picture on guidance available in Springboard colleges – from excellent to 'not available' at key periods
- 200+ local Department of Social Protection (DSP) staff briefed on Springboard in 2012, however participants still reporting lack of knowledge of Springboard in their DSP office
- Eligibility for Springboard the most common Helpline query – most signalled that this process was easier to navigate in 2012

ELIGIBILITY AND EASE OF ACCESS

- Over 90% found the 2012 one-stop online applications system informative and easy to use
- Positive response from participants and colleges to expanded eligibility criteria - included the previously self-employed, and those with unemployed status were immediately eligible
- Colleges found process to verify participants' eligibility much simpler in 2012
- Springboard courses with distance and blended e-learning popular
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – experience among participants mixed – some colleges still have over-emphasis on previous academic qualifications – others have developed successful new approaches that recognise job-based experience and other informal learning



WHAT TYPE OF JOBS HAVE SPRINGBOARD GRADUATES GOT?



IN-COLLEGE EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS 2012

- 2,400 people completed a Springboard course in 2012 with a 63% rate of successful course completion
- Graduation rates were highest on courses delivering cross-enterprise skills and in the area of Food and Beverage (both 65%); on courses in universities (73%) and amongst people aged over 50 (71%)
- Highest withdrawal rates were from three-year courses (53%) and by people under-25 on one-year courses (54%)
- 89% of 2012 participants satisfied with their Springboard course and decision to make the commitment to reskill. Compares to 81% satisfaction in 2011
- Participants still dropping out because of lack of broader support arrangements, in particular childcare, travel and study costs
- Not all colleges seem to be identifying students experiencing difficulties, resulting in a higher drop out rate in those colleges
- 81% finding in-college supports excellent (46%) or quite good (45%), compared to 75% in 2011
- Negative feedback centres on five main issues: 'chopping and changing' of schedules and lecturers; poor communication; lack of access to services available to other students; perceptions of poor quality course content; an ill-judged workload for participants
- Work placement highly valued by participants as a component of Springboard courses (60% of courses with work placement in 2012, up from 48% in 2011)
- 92% of survey respondents affirmed the broader positive impact of doing a Springboard course – a more hopeful outlook in their lives; restored confidence and motivation; a belief (and sense of relief) that they would get their lives back on track again



“Phenomenal - a life changing experience - excellent supports - have gone from the lowest point in my life to some of the greatest achievements of my life in a very short space of time. My confidence is at its highest for years” (Springboard participant 2012)

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN SPRINGBOARD

- For colleges: new, 2012 online course proposal system SpringboardDirect judged a big improvement on the previous, paper-based system
- Marketing campaign to cover the local and national developed – included radio, TV, print media, case studies of successful graduates; promotional material circulated to all local employment offices and DSP offices
- Two dedicated national roadshows for potential participants held in mid-August (Dublin/Cork) with strong enterprise involvement as well as Springboard colleges, career advice and social protection advice – drew 9000+ people to online applications website springboardcourses.ie
- Feedback from participants: Opportunity to meet Springboard college staff face to face at roadshows and other open events organised by colleges was invaluable



HARNESSING THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS – EFFORT FOCUS 2013



Online: Further improvements to springboardcourses.ie make the website an exemplar of public service technology.

Student experience: 2013 Call for proposals will reward colleges who can demonstrate (i) strong employment and related outcomes for graduates to-date; and (ii) that they have embraced the concept of being 'easy to do business with', recognising that the Springboard cohort need active support and full inclusion in the experience of being at college.

Guidance: Freephone guidance line will be further developed in 2013 in partnership with Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed. Enhanced guidance services also provided by Springboard colleges, Department of Social Protection and local employment services.

Marketing and awareness of Springboard: 3-4 national roadshows will take place, with active involvement from colleges, employers, career and Department of Social Protection services in region. Effective local and national

marketing with key focus on success to-date of Springboard graduates, with 'upbeat' student stories embedded in the media to ensure that this 'route to success' becomes more widely known. Further partnership work with DSP to ensure guidance available on Springboard in all local offices

RPL: All Springboard colleges will have expanded their use of Recognition of Prior Learning with Springboard applicants, with a particular focus on 'capacity to succeed'. Good examples of practice are disseminated.

One-year courses: All Springboard 2013 courses will be twelve-months or less in duration

Job readiness training: Will be a required element of all Springboard courses in 2013. Access to career support post-completion to be explored with the Department of Social Protection, to reverse the 2012 response that 75% had no access to this key service after completing their course

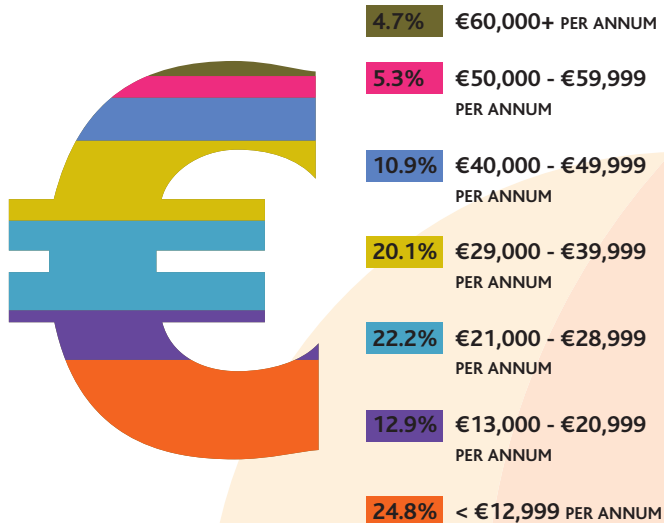
Work Placement: Objective that >75% of Springboard 2013 courses have a work placement or internship available for participants

Industry: Support and promotion strategy will be agreed with key networks of employers and employer representatives. Links promoted with industry, Springboard ambassadors

Employment: HEA will work further with Department of Social Protection to enhance post-completion guidance and support, including recruitment database for use by employers, sector-specific job fairs. Employers will be encouraged to communicate outcomes of their planning to fill current and future skills gaps in their companies

Implementation and evaluation: There will be continuous improvement of the process of implementation and evaluation of Springboard, drawing on feedback from participants, colleges and other key stakeholders.

SPRINGBOARD GRADUATE SALARY BAND SURVEY 2013





SPRINGBOARD
Building our future

Springboard success stories



Carl worked as an industrial electrician for eight years before becoming unemployed in 2011. He heard an ad about Springboard on the radio and applied through www.springboardcourses.ie to do an Industrial Automation course. He has successfully returned to work for a company who install and manage industrial automation systems in Ireland.

Elaine is a graduate who worked in business but found herself unemployed for almost a year. Elaine says she wanted to use the opportunity to build on her information technology and marketing experience. She applied to do a Digital Marketing course. Within four months of starting the course Elaine found employment as a project manager with a global software company. Elaine says *"Having been unemployed for a year, I found it very beneficial to have a Springboard course on my CV. The subjects I studied are very relevant to the industry and really helped my career progression"*.

Brendan worked for a courier company and when he lost his job in 2010 he decided he wanted to create his own opportunities and so enrolled on a Springboard course in Entrepreneurship. He has set up his own business with the skills learned on his course and plans to continue his studies. He says *"If you'd asked me if I had the confidence to set up my own business, I'd have said no. Now, I am very confident about making my business a success."*

Carl a buyer and supply chain manager with 25 years experience, was made redundant twice, once in 2010 and again in 2011. Seeing that the market had really slowed down he applied to do an upskilling course for the pharmaceutical and medical devices industry. Within three months of starting his course Carl got a job as a procurement engineer in a company specialising in tidal energy systems.

Ronan is an experienced finance professional with a career spanning over 25 years. Following redundancy in 2010, Ronan applied to do a Business Innovation course. While he was still on his course Ronan was successful in gaining employment in a financial services company. In his job Ronan is developing new business opportunities in Ireland and in continental Europe in the area of treasury services.

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Springboard is a key Government initiative to ensure that people out of work have access to skills enhancement as a means of getting back into sustainable employment