



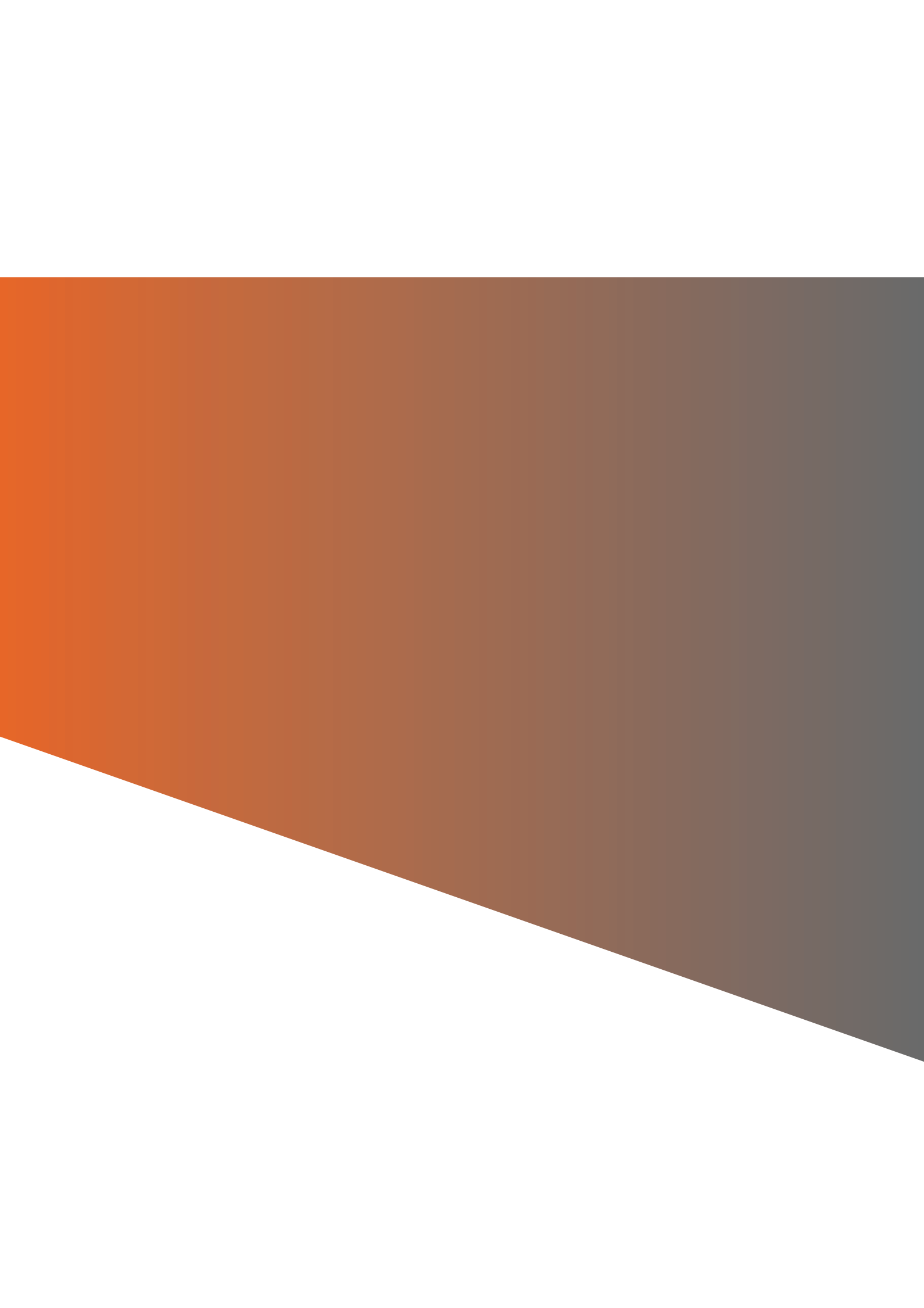
SPRINGBOARD
Building our future

Evaluation of Springboard 2011

First-stage report

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

February 2012
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STAGE





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 25 May 2011, the Minister for Education and Skills launched 'Springboard' as part of the Government's Jobs Initiative. Springboard offered 5,875 free, part-time places in higher education leading to awards at certificate, degree and post-graduate level in seven identified skills areas where there are employment opportunities in Ireland now and in the future. Springboard places were aimed at unemployed people who had lost their jobs as a result of the recession and who would benefit from up-skilling or cross-skilling to get back into sustainable employment.

This first-stage evaluation of Springboard has been completed within three months of Springboard courses getting under way. The evaluation provides initial information on the outputs of the Springboard initiative to-date: the range and type of courses on offer; the numbers and profile of those taking up a Springboard place, feedback from participants, colleges, partner agencies and industry representatives on the experience to-date; strengths and challenges identified from that feedback; and proposals on improvements to the next phase of Springboard in 2012.

Overall, feedback on the initiative has been positive from participants, colleges, partner agencies and industry representatives. Although not all available Springboard places were taken up, over 80% of respondents to a participants survey indicate that they are pleased with their decision to take up a Springboard place.

The next stage of this evaluation will be carried out from July 2012, and at regular intervals thereafter.

1 INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, the Higher Education Authority, on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills, issued a Call for Proposals to public and privately-run higher education providers in Ireland for 'Springboard'. Part of the Government's 2011 Jobs Initiative, Springboard is a labour market activation measure which aims to reach people who have a previous history of employment but who have lost their jobs as a result of the recession. Its primary objective is 'to help unemployed people to remain as close as possible to the labour market by accessing part-time flexible higher education and training opportunities to up-skill or re-skill in areas where sustainable employment opportunities may arise as the economy recovers'. Two additional objectives are to 'enhance collaboration and engagement between the enterprise sector and higher education providers in the design and delivery of higher education programmes'; and 'to increase the skills profile of the labour force in line with the targets and objectives of the National Skills Strategy'.¹

Following the January Call for Proposals, an independent panel with representatives of enterprise and education selected 210 part-time higher education courses to be offered free-of-charge to unemployed jobseekers. Thirty-four higher education colleges - public, private and not-for-profit - around the country would deliver the courses. 5,885 places were made available, with a total contract value of €19.7m. Springboard was formally launched on 25 May 2011 by the Minister for Education and Skills, accompanied by an online application and offers system www.bluebrick.ie/springboard. As of the end of December 2011, 4,305² people are participating in a Springboard course.

Evaluation objectives

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the overall impact and effectiveness of Springboard in supporting unemployed people back into employment. The evaluation will include both formative and summative elements and will be conducted in three stages using both quantitative and qualitative data.

The data sources include feedback and comments from the independent panel which selected courses for approval, and interviews with key stakeholders including the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE) and the Irish Business Employers Confederation (IBEC). Participant views were canvassed through an online survey of the 7,348 people who completed one or more Springboard applications; and a separate online survey of 1,648 people who completed a partial course application. A survey of the 34 Springboard course providers was also carried out, and the findings were discussed at a debriefing meeting with providers which took place in November 2011. The views of the Department of Social Protection, Forfás and the Department of Education and Skills were also incorporated into this final report.

The primary objective of this first stage of the evaluation is to identify process improvements to inform decisions on the future development of the Springboard initiative in 2012. This stage also provides a report on the initial outputs of the programme (including numbers enrolled, profile of participants versus target cohorts, costs), the levels of demand for courses and initial

¹ See Springboard 2011 Call for Proposals, Appendix 2 of the evaluation.

² This figure excludes 331 people who accepted a Springboard place but did not subsequently take it up or who may have begun a course but were not still present at the end of December.

feedback from providers, participants, employers and other stakeholders of their experience of the initiative. With the exception of three courses that ran during the Summer/Autumn of 2011, the majority of Springboard courses commenced in September/October 2011. As a result, employment-related outcomes for participants are not included in this Stage 1 evaluation.

Stage 2 of the evaluation, which will be carried out from July 2012, will provide a more detailed report on the outputs and outcomes available at that point. This will include numbers who completed courses, success rates in examinations, awards granted, costs and information on progression to employment.

The next stage of the evaluation will be undertaken in January 2013 and will include a further review of the outcomes for Springboard 2011 and an initial review of the Springboard 2012 process and outputs.

The document is structured into five sections:

Section 1 provides an overview of Ireland's recent active labour market activation policy in an international context.

Section 2 sets out Springboard's design, the assessment and course-approval process, and the location, volume, skills areas, levels and credits for course offerings.

Section 3 presents outputs to-date, including the numbers and profile who have taken up courses, an analysis of high- and low-demand courses by skills area, level and region, outcomes from surveys of course providers and participants, and employment-related outcomes for courses which have already completed.

Section 4 presents an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Springboard 2011.

Section 5 proposes improvements to be made in the next phase of Springboard course provision, which will get underway in 2012.

2 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT FOR SPRINGBOARD

Over the past five years, in Ireland as well as internationally, there has been an increase in the evaluation of active labour market policies, with many countries reviewing and reforming their approach in supporting unemployed people to get back to work. The role of education and training as part of active labour market policy has been examined in some detail, with numerous reports on different countries' policies and evaluations of the impact of these policies (OECD 2009a; 2009b; 2011; Grubb *et al* 2009; Card *et al* 2010; Kelly *et al* 2011; McGuinness *et al* 2011). The various reports illustrate how, when examining training initiatives used by individual countries, practice varies considerably, and a range of different criteria are used to measure their impact and effectiveness. The initiatives target different groups of unemployed people, have different durations of course delivery and use diverse education and training providers. The infrastructure surrounding such measures differs also, with some countries linking the payment and amount of financial benefits to active participation by the unemployed in training or job search, along with extensive guidance and help for job seekers. Other countries currently opt to be less directional in their policy (Grubb *et al*, 2009; Card *et al*, 2009).

While evidence of the positive impact of education and training as part of active labour market policy is not yet clear-cut, national and international commentators have concluded that initiatives with particular characteristics do show evidence of success. Specifically, education and training which are closely linked to labour market needs seem to be emerging as the most effective investment for a country to make:

Programmes should be focused on re-skilling the jobless for employment in new sectors, and provide them with specific skills which match labour market needs, or with general skills training if their background so requires. (OECD, 2011, p.31)

Training tends to increase employment prospects, but it is important that training be strongly linked to skill demands in the labour market. Even in a slack labour market, training remains important to enable jobseekers to compete for the limited opportunities that do exist and to maintain and develop human capital to enable them to participate in any upturn in the economy and labour market. To ensure that training reflects labour demand, it is crucial that the skill requirements of employers are effectively communicated to training providers on an ongoing basis. (Kelly et al, 2011, p.22)

Furthermore, there is an increasing body of evidence that courses which are also short-term (less than one year) in duration are most effective (Card et al, 2009; Kelly et al, 2011).

It is against this backdrop of review and reform of active labour market policy both in Ireland and abroad that Springboard was introduced in January 2011. Springboard was not the first higher education-related activation initiative; in 2009 the HEA managed a fund which provided 1,753 part-time places for unemployed people at NFQ Levels 6-9 in 22 publicly-funded higher education colleges.³ The following year the Government invested €29.5m in a Labour Market Activation Fund (LMAF) to up-skill particular out-of-work target groups, specifically the low-skilled and those formerly employed in declining sectors such as construction, retail and manufacturing service, with a particular emphasis on the under-35s and long-term unemployed. The LMAF offered 12,629 places on full-time and part-time programmes in 42 public and private colleges. While the majority of places were offered on programmes at Levels 3-5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, there were also 2,138 participants in eleven higher education colleges, working towards awards at Levels 6-8 on the qualifications framework.

Springboard drew on the experience and learning gained from these previous initiatives, and its design also aimed to use the most up-to-date research and evaluation of effective interventions.

3 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SPRINGBOARD 2011

On 25 January 2011 a formal Call for Proposals for Springboard was issued to higher education providers via the HEA's website (see Appendix 2). The Call document set out the objectives of Springboard; the particular groups of unemployed people that Springboard aimed to reach; contextual information on the unemployment challenge in Ireland; information on the tendering and selection processes; and the selection criteria against which proposals would be assessed for funding. A briefing meeting for interested providers was also held on 28 January 2011.

Public, privately-run and not-for-profit higher education providers were invited to submit proposals that would lead to an award between Level 6 (Certificate) and Level 9 (Masters) on

³ LMA 2009 was offered in fourteen institutes of technology, seven universities and the National College of Ireland

the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Courses also had to be in areas where there were identified current and future skills needs. The Secretariat to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs compiled a guidance document for providers to summarise the most up-to-date information and research on future skills needs in Ireland; this document was published with the Call for Proposals.

Eligibility for Springboard courses

The eligibility criteria for Springboard was established by the Department of Education and Skills, following consultation with the Department of Social Protection. Springboard participants would be required to have a previous history of employment, and to be in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit (J/B), Jobseekers Allowance (J/A) for at least six months in advance of the start date of their Springboard course. People in receipt of a One Parent Family Allowance and previously-self-employed people who were out of work and signing for social insurance credits would also be eligible to participate. Arrangements were agreed with the Department of Social Protection to confirm the duration of time Springboard applicants were in receipt of an eligible payment. It was also agreed that, as all courses would be delivered on a part-time basis, participants would be eligible to retain their JA/JB payments through the Department of Social Protection Part Time Education Option (PTEO). A new form (UP51b) was generated specifically for Springboard so that personnel in local social protection offices could provide information on the duration of time a person was in receipt of an eligible payment. Participants were required to submit this completed form to course providers who, in turn, were required to ensure that those applicants who were offered a place met the eligibility criteria. Eligibility guidelines as well as a Frequently-Asked-Questions document were drawn up to assist potential participants, college staff and other guidance personnel. An additional education-related criterion was put in place for applicants to Masters level (Level 9) courses, who had to have completed their degree qualification at least three years prior to taking up their Springboard course. The aim of this criterion was to prevent displacement and to prioritise unemployed people who had a history of employment and needed to cross-skill at Masters level.

Springboard online

Developing an online system for Springboard applications and offers was also part of the design process for the initiative. This work was helped by the fact that 'BlueBrick', a flexible learning project funded since 2008 by the HEA through the Strategic Innovation Fund, had already developed an online facility to provide information and an applications system for part-time courses in institutes of technology and some universities. The HEA funded development of a Springboard 'module' on the BlueBrick website, at a cost of €84,000. The objective was that, from the date of the launch of Springboard, visitors to www.bluebrick.ie/springboard would be able to access comprehensive information on every course available. They would also be able to get contact details for co-ordinators in each college, make up to fifteen online applications for courses of their choice, receive one or more offers via their email account, and subsequently accept a course offer. Providers would receive online applications from all potential participants, be able to process these, and fill available places efficiently and with a minimum of paperwork.

Course approval process

By the deadline at the end of March 2011, the HEA had received 475 course proposals from 48 higher education providers. A process auditor was appointed to oversee the course selection process in accordance with the selection criteria published in the Call for Proposals. Following initial checks to ensure that proposals provided for a recognised qualification on the Qualifications Framework, were in the appropriate skills areas and were part-time in duration, there was a preliminary assessment and ranking of the proposals by the HEA. Then, over a

period of four weeks, an independent panel with five representatives of enterprise and education examined all of the proposals and recommended for funding 5,875 places on 210 courses in 34 colleges around the country (see the full list of approved courses in Appendix 2). In making their decision, the panel assessed the relevance of proposed courses to skills needs and links with relevant employers and enterprise. The panel also looked for evidence that providers had a good understanding of the profile and needs of the target groups, including provision to recognise employment experience as well as educational qualifications, and evidence that appropriate student supports were in place to ensure the best possible outcomes for participants. A choice of courses at different qualification levels, in the range of skills areas, and in different parts of the country was also ensured. Value-for-money was also a factor in the decision-making, with the panel drawing on benchmarking available nationally and internationally on course costs within the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

As set out in Tables 3.1 to 3.4 overleaf, the 210 approved courses ranged across the seven areas of skills need as identified by Forfás: the green economy; information and communications technology (ICT); the biopharma-pharmachem industry; international financial services; medical devices; food and beverage; and advanced business/management skills. There was also a range of qualification-level options. 23% of courses would lead to a Certificate level award (NFQ Level 6); 26% to an Ordinary Degree (NFQ Level 7); 32% to an Honours Degree (Level 8) and 20% to post-graduate level (Level 9).

In terms of the geographical location of course providers, the majority were in Dublin (67%); this reflected the large proportion of proposals received from Dublin-based colleges, as well as the population-size of Dublin and its hinterland relative to the rest of the country. The higher concentration of provision in Dublin was also mitigated by the fact that a third of all approved courses provided for partial or full delivery through distance learning.

Regarding course length, 72% of approved courses were to be completed in one year or less, with a further 24% spanning two years, and just 4% of courses three years in length. Similar to the proportions approved by location, the duration of approved courses reflected the fact that the majority of the 475 courses proposed at the outset were to be completed in one year or less.

Table 3.1 Courses by Skills Area

Skills Category	Places Allocated	
ICT	2084	35%
Cross-Enterprise Skills	1486	25%
Green Economy	725	12%
Medical Devices	726	12%
Biopharma-pharmachem	438	7%
Food & Beverage	266	5%
International Financial Services	150	3%
Total	5875	100%

Table 3.2 Courses by Higher Education Provider

Higher Education Provider	Places Allocated	
Institute of Technology	3189	54%
Privately-run provider	1916	33%
University	770	13%
Total	5875	100%

Table 3.3 Courses by NFQ Level

NFQ Level	Places Allocated	
Level 6	1329	23%
Level 7	1519	26%
Level 8	1872	32%
Level 9	1155	20%
Total	5875	100%

Table 3.4 Courses by Region

Region III	Places Allocated	
Border	522	9%
Dublin	3916	67%
Mid West	273	5%
Midlands	16	---
South East	259	4%
South West	665	11%
West	224	4%
Total	5875	100%

Tables 3.5 - 3.7 below provide a broad overview of the costs by provider-type, skills area and qualification level, as well as average costs per level in public- and privately-run colleges. The largest proportion of funding was allocated to institutes of technology, which offered the largest number of Springboard courses and course places, followed by privately-run colleges and the universities. The majority of funding for Level 6 courses was allocated to the institutes of technology, with the majority of funding for Level 9 in the universities. The largest amount of funding was allocated for courses leading to a Level 8 award. Costs per course varied according to the number of credits to be awarded, duration, qualification level, the skills area, and by provider-type.

Table 3.5 Funding Approved by Provider Type and Qualification Level

Qualification Level	Institute of Technology	Private	University	Total
Level 6	€3,248,773	€368,740	€35,000	€3,652,513
Level 7	€2,352,562	€2,081,620	€87,500	€4,521,682
Level 8	€2,982,149	€3,065,650	€790,600	€6,838,399
Level 9	€1,671,006	€865,950	€1,801,734	€4,338,690
Total	10,254,490	6,381,960	2,714,834	19,351,284

Table 3.6 Funding Approved by Skills Category and Qualification Level

	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Total
Biopharma-Pharmachem	€582,830	€622,720	€510,700	€97,034	€1,813,284
Cross-Enterprise Skills	€397,891	€1,790,760	€2,139,338	€800,309	€5,128,298
Food & Beverage	€84,220	€153,000	€202,476	€219,962	€659,658
ICT (Information & Communications Technology)	€1,056,373	€627,248	€2,670,954	€1,951,698	€6,306,273
International Financial Services		€201,812	€289,938	€52,500	€544,250
Medical Devices	€639,302	€717,218	€738,999	€621,632	€2,717,151
The Green Economy	€891,897	€408,924	€285,994	€595,555	€2,182,370
Total	€3,652,513	€4,521,682	€6,838,399	€4,338,690	€19,351,284

Table 3.7 below presents information on the average cost of a Springboard course by level and by course provider. This is calculated with reference to the average cost for ten credits of any particular course. Credits form part of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) which is a European-wide system for quantifying the content and scope of a higher education and training course. The majority of Springboard courses provided between thirty and sixty ECTS credits. The Table also presents the cost data with reference to the qualification level of each course, from Level 6 to Level 9.

Table 3.7 Average Cost per Student per 10-Credits

Provider	NFQ Level	Average
Institute of Technology	Level 6	€693
	Level 7	€788
	Level 8	€786
	Level 9	€865
Institute of Technology Average		€772
Private Provider	Level 6	€582
	Level 7	€943
	Level 8	€791
	Level 9	€1,021
Private Provider Average		€842
University	Level 6	€233
	Level 7	€875
	Level 8	€660
	Level 9	€1,029
University Average		€853
Total		€794

Launch of Springboard 2011

Following the recommendations of the independent panel, contracts were agreed with each approved course provider and, on 25 May 2011, Springboard online was launched by the Minister for Education and Skills as part of the Government's Jobs Initiative. The www.bluebrick.ie/springboard website included information on each course on offer, as well as a facility for people to apply for courses and to upload any documentation required by a college, such as evidence of previous experience or education qualifications. There were over 10,000 unique visitors to the Springboard website in the first week and within eight weeks the first Springboard course was under way. Between June and the end of December 2011, the website got more than 310,000 unique visitors, and 7,608 people submitted one or more course applications. The HEA held a further briefing session in late June to update Springboard providers on progress and to discuss further collaborative steps on marketing the initiative; this briefing was supplemented by regular email correspondence during July-December. Throughout the summer months, both the HEA and the Department received representations from people in receipt of social protection payments which were not deemed eligible for participation in Springboard. These included people on Disability Allowance, Carer's Allowance and also certain categories of previously-self-employed people. Following consideration of these representations two separate amendments were made to the eligibility criteria for participants. The first change, notified on 17 June 2011, provided that time spent in receipt of Disability Allowance; Back-to-Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA); Back to Education Allowance (BTEA); VTOS training allowance; or a FÁS Training Allowance would count towards the minimum 6-month waiting period, provided the person was in receipt of a Jobseekers payment when the course commenced. The second amendment, introduced on 2 September 2011, waived the 6-month waiting period on Jobseekers Allowance or Jobseekers Benefit. It was also decided that should any further phases of Springboard be offered in the future, the eligibility criteria for the initiative would be revisited.

The online system also enabled the HEA to monitor demand for courses and overall progress in implementing the initiative. This information helped to steer the local and national marketing and awareness-raising campaigns, and led to a number of additional marketing interventions in July and August, including an extended radio ad campaign, a TV ad campaign, and bi-weekly press releases. Access to up-to-date data also enabled resources to be re-allocated quickly where there was particularly high demand for a course and individual providers were able to accommodate more students. By the end of November 2011, the HEA had agreed to 21 individual amendments to the allocation of places and resources to meet participant demand, a facility which also helped to maximise use of the available funds.

4

OUTPUTS TO-DATE FROM SPRINGBOARD 2011

As set out above, Springboard 2011 offered 5,875 free part-time course places in higher education, with course delivery getting under way from July 2011. By the end of December, 7,608 people had made a total of 18,305 applications to Springboard, an average of 2.2 applications each. 4,644 people accepted a Springboard place, with 4,305 participants confirmed as ongoing students in December 2011. This section of the evaluation presents information on the profile of participants, course demand and take-up.

Participant profile

The target groups for Springboard were quite specific: unemployed people with a previous history of employment, who had previous education qualifications at NFQ Level 5 or above, or equivalent, and who would benefit from cross-skilling or up-skilling in their efforts to regain sustainable employment. The requirement that applicants would be at least six months

unemployed before the start date of their course was a further step to try and reach those who had been out of work for some time.

As part of their application to Springboard, potential participants were asked a range of questions on their background. The analysis of enrolled participants in Tables 4.1 to 4.5 below provides a profile of the people who ultimately took up a Springboard place. In terms of age, 77% of enrolled participants are between 25-49 years of age, and 8% are over 50 years of age. 72% of participants are male, with the remaining 28% female; the proportions mirror the higher number of men in the ranks of unemployed, particularly due to the collapse of the male-dominated industry of construction.

Table 4.1 Age of Springboard Participants

Age	
16-19	0.3%
20-24	6.0%
25-29	16.4%
30-34	19.4%
35-39	17.2%
40-44	15.5%
45-49	9.0%
50-54	5.0%
55+	3.4%
Unknown	7.6%
Total	100%

Table 4.2 Gender of Enrolled Participants

Gender	
Male	72%
Female	28%
Total	100%

Regarding the employment profile of participants, 60% stated that they had been unemployed for between 1-5 years and almost a third of all applicants had been out of work for more than two years. At just under 20% of the total, people previously employed in the construction sector accounted for the largest single group of participants, followed by 9% who were previously employed in information and communications, 7.5% were previously employed in manufacturing, and 7% in the wholesale and retail sectors.

Table 4.3 Duration Unemployed

Duration Unemployed	
0-6 months	16.4%
6-12 months	21.8%
1-2 years	28.1%
2-5 years	25.8%
5+ years	5.0%
NULL	3.0%
Total	100.0%

Table 4.4 Previous Employment Sector

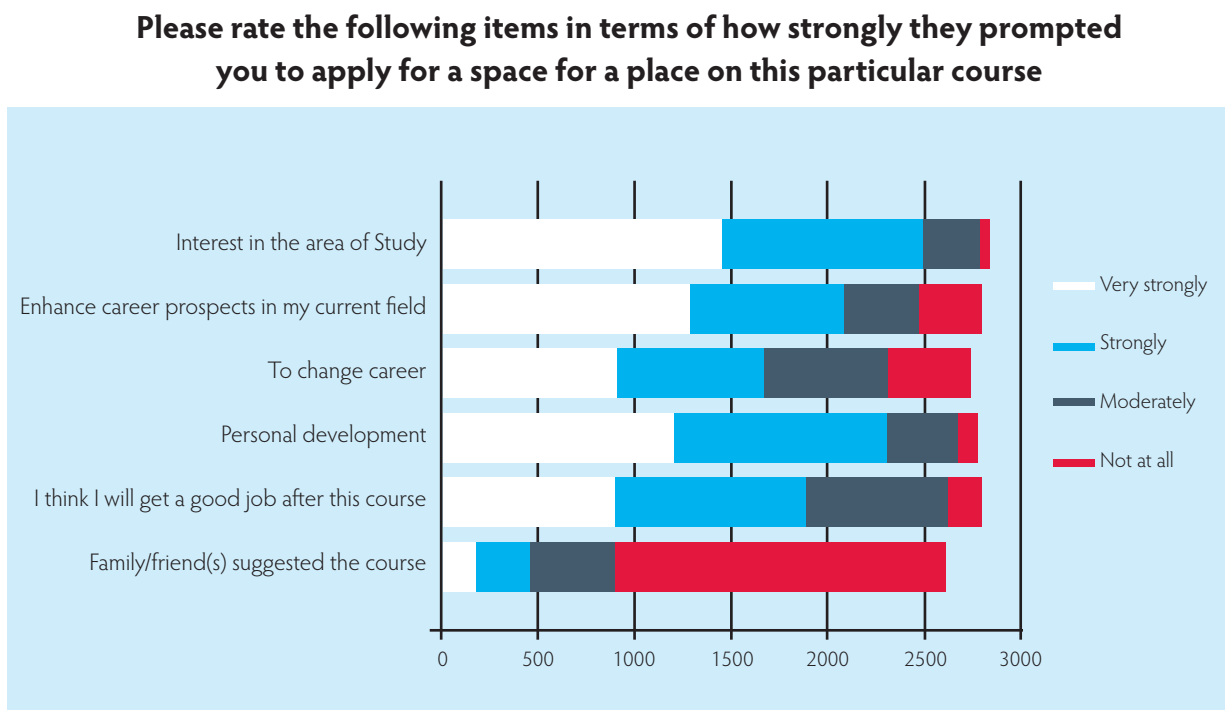
Employment Sector	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.9%
Industry	7.4%
Construction	19.8%
Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles & motorcycles	7.0%
Transportation and storage	2.4%
Accommodation and food service activities	3.6%
Information and communication (including ICT)	8.5%
Financial, insurance & real estate activities	5.7%
Professional, scientific & technical activities	6.0%
Administrative & support service activities	3.8%
Public administration and defence	1.8%
Education	4.1%
Human health & social work activities	2.3%
Other	26.5%
Total	100%

Table 4.5 Benefit Type

Benefit Type	
Jobseekers Allowance	52.9%
Jobseekers Benefit	33.0%
One Parent Family Payment	3.2%
Signing For Credits	5.0%
None	2.0%
Other	3.9%
Total	100%

When participants were asked why they chose a Springboard course, interest in the area (51.3%) and enhancing career prospects (46.3%) were the most significant reasons cited, as presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Reason for applying for a Springboard course



Analysis of previous education qualifications of participants shows that a third had a second-level or further education qualification, with 5% of this group from an apprenticeship background. 36.5% had either an ordinary level or honours degree, and almost 17% had a post-graduate qualification.

Table 4.6 Highest Level of Education

Highest level of education	
Junior Certificate	2.7%
Leaving Certificate	14.2%
FETAC/NCVA	18%
Apprenticeship	5.2%
Higher Certificate	2.7%
Ordinary Degree	13%
Honours Degree	23.5%
Post Graduate	16.6%
Other	4.1%
Total	100%

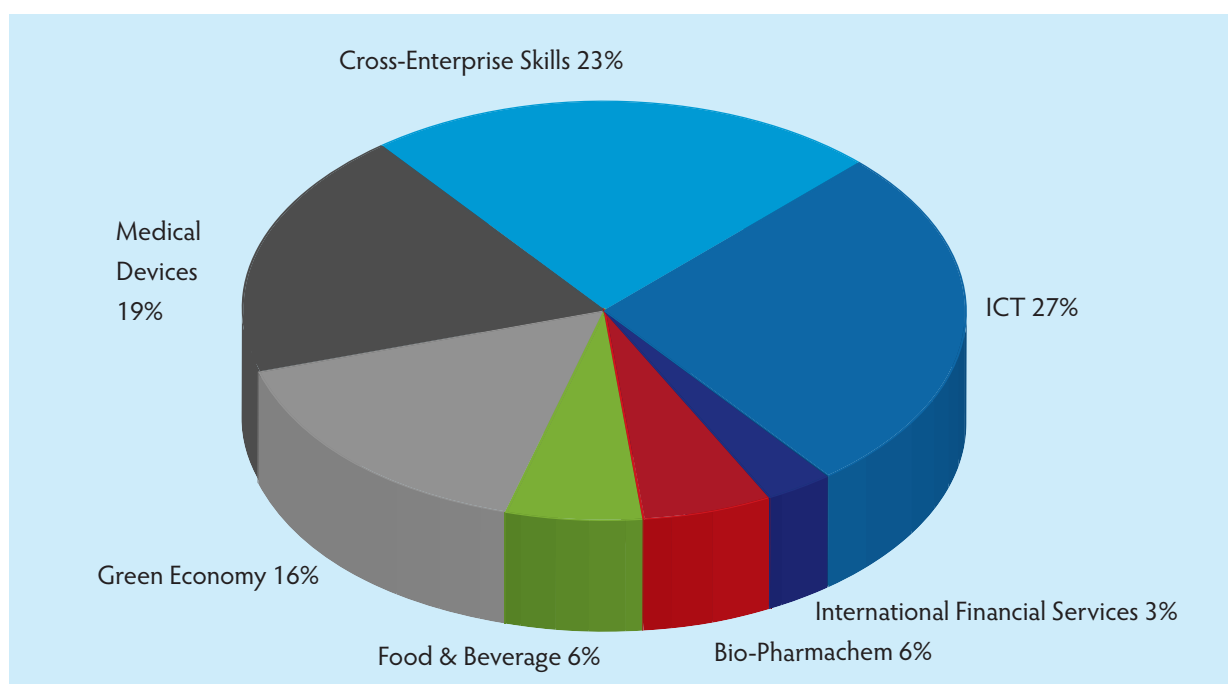
Participants were also asked how it had been since they were last enrolled in formal education. Table 4.8 shows respondents' feedback on this question. 28% stated that they had been out of education for more than ten years, with a further 17% out of education for more than five years.

Table 4.7 How long since Participants were last Enrolled in Formal Education

	Response %
12 months or less	22.0%
1-2 years	11.1%
2-3 years	8.4%
3-4 years	6.5%
4-5 years	7.3%
5-10 years	16.7%
10-20 years	17.7%
20+ years	10.3%

Demand for and take-up of Springboard courses

As is to be expected with the large number of courses on offer in locations all around the country, there were variations in the demand for and ultimate take-up of Springboard courses. The pie chart below shows that, based on the numbers of applications received, the most popular courses were in the information and communications technology category, followed by business/management, medical devices, and the green economy. In many of the high-demand courses, providers were able to increase their participant numbers, with one college doubling its planned intake onto a management course from 20 to 40, another increasing its numbers from 120 to 180 and another tripling its intake on an ICT course from 60 to 180.

Figure 2 Applications by Skills Area

Looking at the take-up of courses by level (Table 4.10 below), 86% of Level 6 course places were filled. At Level 7 there was a 67% take-up of places and at Level 8, there was a 72% take-up of places. At Level 9, there was a 51% take-up of these places. In the case of Level 9 courses, follow-up with the colleges involved suggest that the 3-year requirement prevented some interested applicants from taking up a place.

Table 4.8 Demand for and Take-up of Courses

Uptake by target enrolment and application			
NFQ Level	Enrolments as % of target enrolment	Enrolments as % of applications	Applications as % of target
6	86%	33%	261%
7	67%	23%	287%
8	72%	21%	349%
9	51%	15%	334%
Total	70%	23%	310%

Seventeen of the 210 approved Springboard courses did not go ahead. The list of cancelled courses (Table 4.11 below) does not reveal any particular trend in terms of skills area, location or duration, with the exception of engineering-related courses, which are in the majority. As a result of the cancellations, 344 potential Springboard places were not filled. Feedback from the colleges involved indicate that, in contrast to other courses on offer in each college, there was a lack of sufficient applications to these courses for them to be viable. Regarding the Level 9 course in internationalisation and innovation, offered by a Dublin-based provider, the college's application records and associated queries indicate that the requirement for applicants to have completed their Level 8 award at least three years beforehand eliminated a significant proportion of applicants, and ultimately led to the course being cancelled.

Table 4.9 Courses that did not Run

Region	Course Title	Years	Level	ECTS
South West	Certificate in Advanced Industrial Automation	1	Level 8	30
South West	Certificate in Embedded Systems Engineering	1	Level 9	30
Dublin	Certificate in Internationalisation & Innovation	1	Level 9	45
Dublin	CPD Diploma Development in Cloud Computing (Designing & Building A Private Cloud)	2	Level 7	40
Dublin	CPD Diploma in Cloud Computing (Application Development)	2	Level 8	45
West Region	Bachelor of Engineering (Ordinary) Energy Engineering	2	Level 7	60
West Region	Higher Certificate in Business Studies & Enterprise Development	2	Level 6	120
Dublin	Certificate in Mobile Software Development (iOS)	1	Level 8	10
Dublin	BSc (Honours) in Entrepreneurship	2	Level 8	60
Dublin	Languages for the Export Market (Level 2)	1	Level 6	10
Dublin	Post-graduate Diploma in Science & Technology Entrepreneurship	2	Level 9	60
Border	BSc (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Science	2	Level 8	60
Dublin	Diploma in Cloud Computing (Cloud Application Development)	2	Level 7	40
South West	Certificate in Engineering Enterprise Management	1	Level 8	30
Mid West Region	Specialist Diploma in Security, Cryptography & Digital Forensics	1	Level 9	30
Mid West Region	Higher Certificate in Good Manufacturing Practice	3	Level 6	120
South East	BEng (Honours) in Sustainable Civil Engineering	3	Level 8	120

Employment-related outcomes to-date

As most Springboard courses are still under way, it would be premature to assess employment outcomes at this point (February 2012). An initial analysis is available, however, on outcomes to-date for 86 participants who completed one of the four short courses during July-September 2011. The literature on active labour market measures in training states that 1-year after training is considered short-term, so the outcomes below could be described as 'immediate-term'. It would be important also to have regard to other causal factors. Nonetheless, as well as reporting on outcomes, the exercise also provides an opportunity to explore how best to gather longitudinal information on the impact of Springboard for the jobseekers it seeks to assist.

The three providers offering the courses were asked for available follow-up data. For 25 participants on one Lean Six Sigma course, five reported being successful in getting a job, and a further sixteen reported that their course was helping them in their search for work. Five out of 35 participants on a short course in multimedia and gaming have progressed to further study. Of the seventeen participants who completed either a Cloud Computing and Web 2.0. course or a Business Intelligence and Decision Support course, three are now in employment and two are starting up their own business. During the coming months, the HEA will also work with the Department of Social Protection to verify the Live Register status of Springboard participants.

Participant experience on Springboard courses to-date

The survey of participants on Springboard courses which was completed in October-November 2011 indicated a high overall level of satisfaction among 2,950 respondents with their Springboard course and their college experience. In response to the question 'So far, how well is Springboard measuring up to your expectations', 84% responded that they were very satisfied or quite satisfied. 86% of respondents reported that the level of support they had received from their college to-date was either 'excellent' or 'quite good'. In addition to the tick-box options in the surveys, there was also an opportunity for respondents to supply more feedback and detail in text entries. These responses were mostly positive, as illustrated in these sample quotes:

I thought the whole process was excellent. The course and college is excellent. The level of service is very high in my view and I'm enjoying this course a lot.

From personal experience, everything has worked very well for me, from the day I first went onto the Springboard website, through to enrolment in college and starting the course.

There was also less positive commentary in the survey, with references to difficulties some participants had in making contact with personnel in colleges or in getting a response to their queries. There were also some complaints about what was considered to be an overly bureaucratic approach by some colleges to the recruitment process. As well as the survey feedback, some participants got in contact with either the HEA or the Department of Education and Skills to highlight particular difficulties they were experiencing and which they had not been able to resolve with their college. In these cases the HEA worked with participants and colleges involved to resolve the issues arising. The HEA also contacted all Springboard colleges, alerting them that the survey had provided a rich source of feedback from participants to-date and offering to compile and send on the relevant survey commentary to each college. Another participant survey is planned for July 2012; this will provide further opportunity to gather feedback on Springboard participants' experience and will complement the evaluations done by individual Springboard providers.

5 STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR SPRINGBOARD 2011

The key objective of this first stage evaluation is to use Springboard 2011 as a learning opportunity, leading to improvements in 2012. In this section, a summary of emerging strengths and challenges for Springboard 2011 is presented.

Springboard strengths

Four particular strengths emerge from the Springboard initiative to-date. As the ultimate strength – the extent to which Springboard assisted people in getting back into sustainable employment – will not be measurable for some months, this section of the evaluation will be revisited as part of the Stage 2 and subsequent evaluation phases.

Strength: The significant number of unemployed people now participating in streamlined, relevant courses, up-skilling or cross-skilling in areas where there are job opportunities

As a result of Springboard, 4,305 unemployed people are now completing a focused course of study, leading to a qualification that aims to help them get back into sustainable employment. The approach taken through Springboard - where all courses are in areas where there are identified skills needs in Ireland, with strong links to employers and industry, and the majority of short duration (70% of Springboard courses are 1-year or less) - fits with the most up-to-date analysis of effective activation measures.

Strength: Participants' feedback indicating that they believe Springboard is a positive initiative to help them out of their current difficulties

Feedback from jobseekers participating in a Springboard course or otherwise engaging with the initiative is an important measure of its strength, and, as set out in the outcomes section above, feedback to-date from 3,242 who responded to one of the two participant surveys is mostly positive. In addition to a large volume of text replies giving details of positive experiences and hope for the future, 84% overall of survey respondents feel that Springboard is measuring up to their expectations and 86% were pleased with the level of support they had received from their college to-date.

Strength: Feedback from external stakeholders that Springboard is considered a positive labour market initiative

In addition to being able to identify positive features in the design and characteristics of Springboard from the most up-to-date literature on national and international labour market policies, the approach taken and characteristics of Springboard courses also received positive comment from agencies representing unemployed people and employers:

The INOU welcomed the development of Springboard and the opportunity it provided unemployed people to enhance their future employment prospects through specific education and training courses. The INOU was happy to highlight this initiative through our information dissemination work. (INOU)

In our view, the main strength of Springboard was its strong linkages to industry and enterprise. Advice from the Expert Group for Future Skills Needs was closely heeded, and the course approvals process ensured that Springboard offered education and training in areas of identified skills need, with good employer-involvement in the design and content of courses as well as work placement opportunities. (IBEC)

Strength: Online system enabling a comprehensive, user-friendly system for applicants, as well as a flexible response to requests for allocation of places, overview of progress and vital evaluation of the initiative

For potential Springboard participants, the online system proved to be a significant strength, as illustrated in responses to the participant survey. 87% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the online system was user-friendly. And the text commentary further supports this feedback:

I found the website very easy to use and very informative. It also made it very easy to apply for the course and to manage my applications.

The system was simple to use, completing the application once, and using it to apply for multiple courses and colleges was great.

The online system also enabled the HEA to review course-demand and to respond to requests for re-allocation of funding from low-demand to high-demand courses.

Challenges for Springboard

The evaluation process identified five particular issues, which are set out below.

For colleges, the online system was not fully fit-for-purpose

Between February-May 2011, the BlueBrick team spent as much time as possible developing the part of www.bluebrick.ie/springboard that applicants would use, and with good results. However, there was less time for the dimensions of the system that connected applications and people to the IT systems in Springboard colleges, and in practice, the system struggled to cope with the volume of applications that subsequently came in. In addition, the Springboard system was not integrated with colleges' individual systems and this added to the administrative workload. It is planned that significant improvements as well as all necessary integration work will be effected for Springboard 2012.

Mixed response to interaction with the social protection system

As outlined in Section 2 of this document, arrangements to verify the social protection status of Springboard applicants and the application process for the Part Time Education Option (PTEO) were agreed in advance between the Departments of Social Protection, Education and Skills, and the HEA. These arrangements included development of a new form UP51b which Springboard applicants were required to have completed in their local social protection office. The applicant would then submit the form to their course provider who would then confirm a place on a Springboard course. As Springboard participants are all jobseekers, and in receipt of one of a number of social protection payments or signing for credits, there was a necessary connection between the education and social protection systems in order to make Springboard work. Three circulars were sent by the Department of Social Protection to all local DSP offices, informing staff about Springboard and the arrangements for completion of form UP51b. Feedback from both participants and course providers highlighted, however, mixed experiences with this process.

While some local offices were praised for their proactive, informative approach, in other instances there appeared to be a lack of awareness of what Springboard was, how it worked, or what the role of the office was in verifying social protection status. The majority of colleges reported difficulties with getting the UP51b completed, or completed correctly, and there were also reports of confusion in some local offices regarding which education support (PTEO or Back to Education Allowance) Springboard participants should apply for.

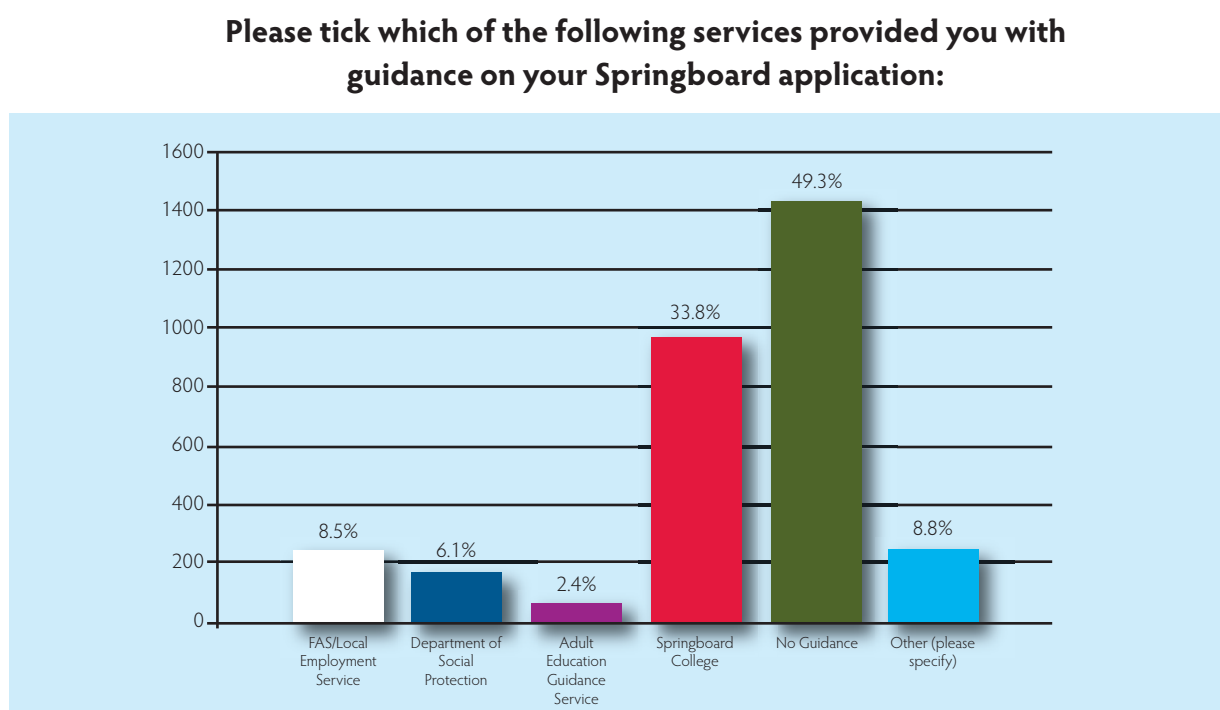
Changes to the eligibility criteria mid-stream

A further issue which arose as part of Springboard 2011, as identified by both colleges and participants, were the two changes to eligibility criteria for Springboard applicants. While both changes were welcomed as positive steps that would make Springboard more accessible, there was a downside for those participants who had self-eliminated themselves or been refused while the original requirements were still in place. Course providers expressed a view that, in the case of the 6-month change in particular, while they understood the objective of the original approach i.e. to reach those longest out of work, and from the time of the announcement they made every effort possible to advertise the waived rule, and contacted as many potential applicants as possible, the approach inevitably led to confusion and also quite likely a lower demand for course places. At the debriefing meeting with providers in November there was a general consensus that, if at all possible, such changes to eligibility should be avoided in the future.

Lack of availability of guidance for potential Springboard participants and of a mechanism for Springboard providers to target potential students

The lack of access to guidance for potential Springboard participants also emerged as a challenge. The figure below which summarises responses to the participant survey shows that almost half of applicants did not receive any guidance in making their decision to apply for Springboard, and many of the text replies in the survey drew attention to the difficulty in getting good information and guidance on options available to unemployed people. As many unemployed people will have to change career in order to re-enter employment, it is important that they have access to appropriate, independent (provider-neutral) advice on the best education or training option to pursue.

Springboard providers also commented on the difficulty of targeting eligible students, in particular where they wished to promote courses at different levels. Examples included a Level 7 course in the area of medical devices that required participants with an engineering qualification or experience, or a post-graduate qualification in business innovation that required participants to have experience and/or qualifications in particular professional fields.

Figure 3 Guidance for Springboard Applicants

Less-than-optimum marketing and awareness-raising for Springboard

One of the clearest lessons from 2011 is the need for a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign for an initiative with the scale and target audience of Springboard. This was not in place from the start, and although additional steps were taken locally and nationally after the launch in late May, there was a consensus among Springboard course providers as well as a range of external commentators that many people had not heard about Springboard even by early September. The views were that more should have been done, in particular using a comprehensive campaign plan and allocation of adequate resources in advance of the launch. In addition, the web address for Springboard - www.bluebrick.ie/springboard - was confusing and needed to be simplified.

6

IMPROVEMENTS TO SPRINGBOARD 2012

As part of the 2012 Budget, it was announced that €10m would be provided to support a further roll-out of Springboard in 2012. Based on the findings of this stage of the evaluation, it is proposed that the changes set out below should be considered as part of the design and implementation of Springboard 2012.

Springboard online – ‘Mark 2’

- 1 Adequate integration should be effected between the Springboard online system and the data systems in higher education colleges.
- 2 An advisory group of representatives from Springboard 2011 course providers should be formed to work with the technical team on practical improvements to the website. It is important that there is adequate time for testing, feedback and training on the improved systems in advance of the system going live for 2012.

Better access to guidance for potential participants

- 3 Options to improve the availability of guidance to prospective Springboard 2012 applicants should be examined, including negotiating further use of existing services, and/or providing access to other services.

Further work on social protection dimension of Springboard

- 4 A plan for additional briefings for local and regional offices and networks should be agreed in partnership with colleagues in the Department for Social Protection.
- 5 Eligibility criteria should be reviewed.
- 6 A more streamlined, centralised system to verify eligibility of Springboard participants should be explored.
- 7 Opportunities are explored on how to identify potential participants with the right experience and/or qualifications for the full range of Springboard courses.

Promoting Springboard 2012

- 8 The website address for Springboard should be amended to www.springboardcourses.ie, with the existing logo and branding built upon and developed, and the resources for Springboard 2012 should include provision for development of an effective local and national awareness-raising campaign, with guidance available to Springboard course providers on the best approach for their region and the courses on offer.
- 9 Springboard 2012 enhances proactive, joined-up involvement and support from employers and enterprise

The independent panel with education and enterprise representatives should be convened early in 2012 to advise on the next Call for Proposals

- 10 Prospective Springboard course providers should be encouraged to start dialogue with relevant employers and enterprises in their region/nationally in advance of the Call for Proposals being issued, in particular with a view to agreeing work placements or internships as part of Springboard provision
- 11 Springboard 2012 connects with other national labour market activation initiatives
Further synergies between Springboard and the JobBridge internship scheme should be explored.
- 12 Links with other training activation initiatives are explored, including those offered in 2012 by further education and training providers, as announced also as part of the recent Budget.

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Appendix 1: Springboard Data Sources

Appendix 2: Call for Proposals for Springboard – January 2011

Appendix 3: Springboard 2011 Courses Approved

Appendix 4: Springboard Panel Members

Appendix 5: Provider Survey Questions

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APPENDIX 1: SPRINGBOARD DATA SOURCES

The evaluation draws on a range of data sources as follows:

1. BlueBrick.ie online registration and application system.

The online system provides quantitative 'real-time' data on the:

- number of individuals making application(s)
- number of courses applied for (applicants have multiple course options)
- offers made by providers
- acceptances and enrolments of offers by applicants
- levels of demand for particular programmes
- trends in application phases

This data is available by course title, award, provider, and at regional and national level.

The online system also provides anonymised data on the profile and background of Springboard applicants, including educational attainment, previous employment history, demographic variables and information on Department of Social Protection client status.

It is also possible to profile people who started the application process but did not ultimately enrol on a programme.

Based on this data, a report on the demand for and initial outputs of Springboard will form part of the first phase of the evaluation.

All Springboard providers are obliged to maintain and provide to the HEA information on the status of learners enrolled in courses, including ongoing participation rates, course completion data and examination data. Through the learner account on BlueBrick, participating institutions will over time upload this information onto the BlueBrick system. With this output data, the HEA will be able to monitor progress of the Springboard cohort from an early stage following course commencement (majority of programmes get underway in September 2011) to completion.

2. HEA Student Records System

Subject to availability for Stage 1 of the evaluation, a supplementary source of data will come from the HEA Student Records System (SRS), which has been updated to fully integrate Springboard learners, and institutions uploading data to the SRS are now required to report Springboard numbers within the system. Learners on Springboard courses will be tagged separately to existing learners on previous LMA initiatives. This will establish a core data source managed by the HEA to support monitoring and evaluation of Springboard outputs over the next three years. Many of the privately-run colleges offering Springboard courses are not linked to the HEA SRS. However, the BlueBrick data reporting infrastructure as outlined will fulfil this reporting function.

3. Surveys of Springboard participants

The third source of evaluation data will be follow-up survey(s) with participants, which will be managed through the BlueBrick online system. The first of these surveys (issued on 02 November 2011) contains a range of questions aimed at gathering the views of applicants on all aspects of the Springboard application process as well as building the profile of Springboard participants. The second survey, also issued on 02 November, was sent to 1,648 people who

began but did not complete a Springboard application. Further surveys will be conducted at intervals to assess outcomes for participants.

4. Surveys of providers

A questionnaire was issued to all providers on 14 October requesting initial views on all aspects of the Springboard process. By 01 November, 29 of the 34 providers had responded. A compilation of this feedback as well as formative proposals to improve any future iteration of Springboard are being presented at a debriefing meeting for the colleges on 11 November, and the outcomes from this meeting will contribute to the overall evaluation data.

5. Input from key stakeholders

Feedback from key stakeholders will also be gathered. For stage 1 of the evaluation this will include members of the selection panel, the Department of Social Protection, FÁS/Solas, the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed, AONTAS, Forfás, the Irish Business and Employers Federation, ICT Ireland, American Chambers of Commerce, and the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association.

6. Department of Social Protection records

All applications by Springboard participants to the Department of Social Protection (DSP) for the Part Time Education Option (PTEO) have been flagged within the DSP records. This will enable the DSP to report at intervals on the current client status of the participants. While this will contribute to the information on the outcomes for Springboard participants, it will not necessarily tell us whether they have re-entered employment. Further follow-up surveys with participants can be carried out. However, a potentially more reliable and efficient approach would be to cross-check data with the Revenue Commissioners. The feasibility of doing this will be explored as part of the process.

Springboard management records

Records and analysis from both the HEA and BlueBrick, who together managed Springboard, will be added into the data set. This will include unit cost data from provider applications, contractual agreements with the HEA and subsequent allocations of funding.

APPENDIX 2: CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR SPRINGBOARD – JANUARY 2011



Multi-annual fund for higher education
and training to support unemployed
people

Phase 1 – January 2011

Call for Proposals

Important Notice

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is making this document available to providers submitting a proposal for higher education and training courses under the Springboard Fund. The document must not be used for any other purpose.

The HEA has taken all reasonable care to ensure that the material set out in this Call for Proposals is true and accurate in all material respects as at the time of publication. However, no warranty or representation is given as to the accuracy or completeness of this material. The Higher Education Authority does not accept any liability or responsibility for the accuracy, adequacy or completeness of the information set out herein.

The Higher Education Authority will not be liable or responsible for any opinion, statement or conclusion contained in, or any omission from this document, or for any other written or oral communication made available during the course of the Call process. No representation or warranty is made in respect of such statements, opinions or conclusions.

The Higher Education Authority reserves the right to amend these documents and any information contained herein at any time by notice in writing to the candidates.

None of the information set out herein will constitute a contract, or part of a contract, or an offer to enter into a contract, between the Higher Education Authority and any provider. Nothing in these documents is, nor shall be relied upon as, a promise or representation as to the Higher Education Authority's ultimate decision in relation to the award of the contract for the services.

However, the Higher Education Authority reserves the right to take such steps as it considers appropriate, including but not limited to: changing the basis of, or the procedures (including the timetable) relating to, the Call process; rejecting any, or all, of the proposals; abandoning the competition (or any part of it) at any time prior to a formal written contract being executed by and on behalf of the Higher Education Authority; procuring the services by alternative means if it appears that the services can be more advantageously procured.

No legal relationship or other obligation shall arise between any applicant and the Higher Education Authority unless and until a contract has been entered into.

Each applicant's acceptance of delivery of the Call for Proposals constitutes its agreement to, and acceptance of, its terms.

Under no circumstances will the Higher Education Authority be liable for any costs, charges or expenses incurred by candidates as a result of participating in this Call process, however caused. Any costs associated with the submission of a proposal are the sole responsibility of the candidate and will not be reimbursed.

Statutory Requirements

All providers making a proposal(s) for programmes to be supported through the new Fund must confirm compliance with statutory requirements regarding their financial and legal status, and be prepared to furnish any additional supporting documents as requested by the HEA.

Springboard 2011

Introduction

In December 2010 the Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills announced the introduction of a new €20m multi-annual higher education Fund. The Fund, entitled Springboard, which is being managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills, is one of a number of State initiatives providing education and training opportunities to support unemployed people. The HEA is now requesting proposals from higher education providers for the first phase of funding. The total amount of funding available in the first phase is €5m.

Providers submitting a proposal must use the Call for Proposals template included with this document. All proposals must be submitted as set out in the section below entitled 'Submission of Proposals'. The deadline for submission of proposals is **5pm on Friday 18 March 2011**. The HEA will not be able to consider proposals received after this time.

Information to assist providers in making proposals

1. Objectives of Springboard

The primary objective of Springboard is to help unemployed people to remain as close as possible to the labour market by accessing part-time flexible higher education and training opportunities to up-skill or re-skill in areas where sustainable employment opportunities may arise as the economy recovers.

The Fund also aims to:

- enhance collaboration and engagement between the enterprise sector and higher education providers in the design and delivery of higher education programmes, thereby meeting the ongoing and future demand for qualified employees;
- increase the skills profile of the labour force in line with the targets and objectives of the National Skills Strategy.

2. Labour market trends and target groups for support through Springboard

2.1 Labour market trends

According to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office (Quarterly National Household Survey, Quarter 3 2010), there are 1,851,500 persons in employment in Ireland and 299,000 persons unemployed, comprising a total labour force of 2,150,500. This represents an unemployment rate of 13.9% compared to 12.7% for the same period the previous year. Males account for more than two-thirds of those who are unemployed with an unemployment rate of 16.8%, compared to 10.2% for females. While the rate of increase in unemployment has slowed, a very significant drift into long-term unemployment is now evident.¹ The latest figures show that 140,400 people or 47% of all unemployed persons are now more than twelve months unemployed. At 6.5% of the labour force, this represents a doubling of the long-term unemployment rate in the space of twelve months and an increase of over 110,000 in the three years since 2007, when it was considered that there was full employment in the economy.

¹ The long-term unemployment rate is the share of unemployed persons for twelve months or more in the total number of active persons in the labour market. Active persons are those who are either employed or unemployed. Source: European Commission Regulation (EC) No 1897/2000.

2.2 Educational attainment

Table 1 overleaf shows that there continues to be a strong correlation between educational attainment and levels of employment and unemployment, with unemployment rates highest for those with the lowest levels of qualifications. However, the improving educational profile of the Irish labour force over recent years is also evident among those who are losing their jobs. While unemployment rates have increased for people at all levels of educational attainment over the period since 2007, in absolute terms the largest number of people, 132,900 or 41% of the total who are now unemployed, are those with Leaving Certificate or PLC level qualifications. This compares with 39,300 unemployed persons with these levels of educational attainment in 2007. Some 20% of this cohort was classified as long-term unemployed in 2007. In 2010 the number of people with Leaving Certificate or PLC level qualifications who were more than twelve months unemployed was 60,600, or 45% of the cohort.

Table 1 Numbers unemployed and unemployment rates by educational attainment

	Q3 2007	Q3 2009	Q3 2010
	000s (UR)	000s (UR)	000s (UR)
Primary or below	15.7 (8.2%)	26.9 (18.4%)	26.1 (20.3%)
Lower Secondary	23.4 (6.8%)	56.0 (19.2%)	64.1 (23.3%)
Leaving Cert	29.8 (4.9%)	74.4 (13.5%)	84.6 (15.2%)
Post Leaving Cert	9.5 4.0%)	46.5 (16.5%)	48.3 (19.2%)
Third level non degree	7.4 (3.1%)	30.4 (8.6%)	30.3 (9.1%)
Third level degree	13.1 (2.7%)	35.5 (7.6%)	35.8 (7.1%)
Other	4.1	9.7	9.0
Total	103.3	279.4	298.2

Source: Central Statistics Office, Quarterly National Household Survey

While people with a third level qualification account for the smallest proportion of those unemployed, at 66,100, or 22% of the total, this represents an increase of more than 300% in the space of three years. Graduates are also experiencing a drift into long-term unemployment with 23,000 or 35% now classified as being long-term unemployed.

People with lower second level or below as their highest level of education attainment education now account for 30% or 90,200 of total unemployed persons. This compares with 38% or 39,100 of the 103,300 persons who were unemployed in 2007. More than half (57%) of the 90,200 people who were unemployed in 2010 at these levels of educational attainment were unemployed for more than twelve months. This compares to 39% in 2007.

2.3 Previous employment sectors

Table 2 overleaf shows available information on the total number of persons unemployed by reference to their previous broad sector of employment and the highest level of education attained. While almost 40% of unemployed people who were previously employed in the construction sector have less than second level education, over half of those who have lost their jobs have at least a Leaving Certificate or PLC level of qualification. These are likely to include a significant number of unemployed craftspersons. The educational profile of people previously employed in industry, which includes manufacturing, is

higher with over two-thirds of those who have lost their jobs having at least a Leaving Certificate qualification. In the broad services sector more than three-quarters of those who have become unemployed have at least Leaving Certificate levels of qualification, while just under 33% have a third level qualification.

Table 2 Unemployment ('000s) by educational attainment and previous sector

	NACE* A. Agric etc	NACE B-E Industry	NACE F. Construction	NACE G-U Services	Not stated	Total
	000s	000s	000s	000s	000s	
Less than second level	2.0	11.5	32.2	30.1	14.4	90.2
Leaving Cert	.6	10.8	21.9	35.6	15.7	84.6
PLC	.4	6.2	19.5	18.6	3.6	48.3
Third level	.2	8.1	5.1	41.9	10.8	66.1
Not stated	.3	1.6	2.5	3.6	1.2	8.9
Total	3.5	38.2	81.2	129.8	45.7	298.4

Source: CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), Quarter 3 2010 supplementary data

**NACE stands for Nomenclature des Activités Economiques, a common statistical classification of economic activities in Europe, used in QNHS.*

2.4 Target cohorts

Based on this data and analysis, the two priority groups identified for support through Springboard are:

- Unemployed people who already hold a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award at Level 5 or a FETAC award at NFQ Level 6 or equivalent, with a previous history of employment in construction, manufacturing or other sectors of the economy where employment levels are unlikely to recover to pre-recession levels. While such people are likely to have good workforce skills they may have to change career to re-enter employment and may have to compete with younger, more highly-qualified people for job opportunities that arise as the economy recovers.
- Unemployed people with a previous history of employment who already hold a higher level qualification at NFQ Levels 6 to 9, who may also require additional up-skilling or re-skilling in order to re-enter employment.

2.5 Participant eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a place on one of the programmes to be supported under the Fund a person must be unemployed. As funding will only be available for part-time programmes, participants will not be eligible for support under the Department of Education and Skills Higher Education Grants Scheme or the Department of Social Protection Back to Education Allowance Scheme.

Participation on a programme supported through the Fund will not confer any entitlement to an income support payment from the Department of Social Protection. Potential participants on programmes who are in receipt of a Department of Social Protection income support payment may be able to retain such supports under that Department's Part Time Education Option (PTEO).

Under the Jobseekers Allowance/Jobseekers Benefit (JA/JB) Part Time Education Option (PTEO), jobseekers who wish to pursue a part-time day or evening course of education may retain their JA/JB payments while an entitlement exists to such a payment and while they continue to meet the conditions attached to Jobseekers payments, including being available and genuinely seeking work on an ongoing basis. If a Jobseeker payment is due to cease prior to the end of a course, payment cannot be extended past the due cessation date. There are no specific eligibility criteria for the PTEO. The scheme does not involve any special payment. Signing-on arrangements continue to apply for PTEO claimants. Attendance on part-time courses is allowed on the clear understanding that availability for and genuinely seeking work opportunities must take precedence over course attendance, should a conflict arise.

It is important that proposed attendance patterns for programmes facilitate these requirements. Information on attendance patterns should be included in proposals to enable full clarification that they meet the requirements of the PTEO scheme prior to the announcement of successful proposals.

Unemployed people who are not in receipt of a Jobseekers payment from the Department of Social Protection may also be eligible to apply for a place, provided that they meet the other selection criteria for participation. Further information on participant eligibility will be published at the time that approved programmes are being announced.

3 Type of programmes which will be supported by Springboard

3.1 Current and future skills needs

Proposed programmes should seek to address a current or future skills need that has been identified locally, regionally or nationally. Programmes may focus on development or conversion of relevant technical skills and knowledge, and seek to develop generic/transferrable skills. All proposals should include a concise labour market rationale.

Proposals should also draw on up-to-date regional/national information on current and future skills needs. Information sources may include employers, local Chambers of Commerce, local offices of ISME, IBEC, enterprise development agencies, relevant local/national surveys and analyses. To assist potential providers, the national enterprise advisory agency Forfás has summarised specific skills shortages identified by enterprise in the main reports of the Expert Group on Future Skills and other relevant research. This summary is set out in the document *Guidance for higher education providers on current and future skills needs of enterprise*, the document that accompanies this Call for Proposals.

3.2 Eligible NFQ award types, levels, credits and design

The Fund will support **part-time programmes** provided by public, private and not-for-profit higher education providers. Eligible programmes must either:

(a) Lead to a higher education and training award that is included in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) at Levels 6 to 9, which is made by one of the following Irish awarding bodies:

- Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
- Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), *including approved combinations of modules from HETAC validated major awards*
- Institutes of Technology with delegated authority to make awards
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- Universities

or

(b) Lead to a higher education and training award that is aligned with the Irish National Framework of Qualifications at Levels 6-9. These awards must be aligned with the Irish NFQ as at 01 January 2011.

Collaborative proposals from a group of providers will be eligible for funding through Springboard. However, a lead provider must be clearly identified as part of the proposal and the proposal must adhere to all requirements regarding quality assurance and the making of awards.

Full-time programmes of study which provide 60 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits or equivalent per annum will not be eligible for funding under this Call.

Proposals which lead to an award of less than ten ECTS credits or equivalent per annum will also not be eligible for funding.

For the purposes of this Call, the term *part-time* is intended to cover all forms of flexible delivery including those offered partially during the day or in the evenings or those with an online and/or distance component. Proposals for programmes involving intensive attendance over a short duration may also be considered, for example 10-20 contact hours per week for a specified number of weeks.

Proposals should outline the teaching, learning and assessment methodologies that will be used to meet learner needs, for example flexible approaches, study skills/return to learning components and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for entry and towards achievement of an award. Available academic and pastoral supports should be referenced, including for example careers advisory services or work placement supports. Information will also be required on progression opportunities that are available for participants on completion of a programme.

4 Supporting participants who re-enter employment to complete programmes

As one of the objectives of the Fund is to support up-skilling of the labour force, participants who succeed in re-entering employment before completion of a programme should be facilitated to gain the programme award. In planning programmes, providers should ensure that participants who return to employment have a reasonable opportunity to complete the programme on a flexible, part-time basis. For programmes of less than one year's duration such participants will not be required to pay fees. For subsequent years (if applicable), providers are asked to have a flexible policy in place regarding fees and course delivery.

5 Costs and fees

Providers are requested to submit details of all costs associated with the delivery of proposals in the format outlined in part B3 of the Call for Proposals. Funding to successful providers will be on the basis of the estimated cost per student by reference to the number of credits to be provided. Funding will be released in a number of tranches depending on the programme duration. It is intended that the first tranche of funding will be released on the basis of student acceptances to a programme.

Providers will make Springboard programmes available free of charge to participants.

6 Data requirements and evaluation

Programme providers will be required to return data to the HEA on programme activity and outcomes, and co-operate with an ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanism which will be determined by the HEA in consultation with the Department of Education and Skills. Requirements will include maintaining a student record for each Springboard participant, linking input data (eg. education, employment history) with outcomes data (eg. completion, award, employment by sector). Further details will be supplied as part of contract terms. Ongoing funding of programmes will be conditional on co-operation with the evaluation process and timely return of data.

Subject to demand and take-up of individual programme places, the HEA may agree to re-allocate unfilled places to other Springboard programmes.

7 Online system for users of Springboard

The website www.bluebrick.ie is being developed to manage Springboard. In addition to providing a user-friendly and efficient administrative process, it will also enable a comprehensive and streamlined information and application system for participants. All providers of programmes funded through Springboard will be required to use BlueBrick to manage course information, applications and acceptances.

8 Selection process and criteria

Decisions on proposals for funding will be made by an expert panel with an independent Chairperson, supported by the HEA. The membership of this panel will be published on the HEA website as soon as it is finalised. An independent process auditor will also be appointed to oversee the assessment and selection process.

Programme proposals will be assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in sections B1-B3 and the associated marking scheme as set out in the Call. Programmes that fail to score a minimum of 50% of the marks available for each section will not be considered for approval. It is intended that the first phase of Springboard will support a mix of programmes at different NQF levels and of varying duration, and having regard to the educational attainment levels of the priority participant groups. The final decision on programmes approved through the Fund will also take into consideration the overall mix of programmes by level, type and duration, as well as geographical spread. Further information on the process followed for programme approval will be published when successful programmes are being announced.

It is planned that notification of approved programmes will be sent to providers during the week of 18-22 April 2011. Contracts will be agreed between providers and the HEA, and planning and marketing of programmes will begin; uploading information on approved programmes to the Springboard section of www.bluebrick.ie will be an important part of this process.

Submission of Proposals

The Call for Proposals is issuing on 26 January 2011, with a briefing for providers to follow. Support documents include *Guidance for higher education providers on current and future skills needs of enterprise* and a summary of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for providers. The Call and supporting documentation are available on the HEA website www.heai.ie.

- (i) Six hard copies of the completed Call for Proposals template document should be sent by registered post or recorded delivery to

Justin Sinnott

Higher Education Authority

Brooklawn House

Shelbourne Road

Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

One electronic copy of the document should be emailed to Springboard@hea.ie.

- (ii) The words 'Springboard Proposal' and name and address of the applicant should be clearly legible on the front of the envelope, which should be sealed.
- (iii) The closing date for receipt of the completed Call for Proposals template document (both hard-copy and electronic formats) is **5pm on Friday 18 March 2011**. Proposals that are received after this time will not be considered and will be returned unopened to the applicant. Faxed applications will not be accepted.
- (iv) Any queries with regard to this document should be emailed to Springboard@hea.ie. Telephone queries cannot be accommodated. Relevant queries and the answers provided will be published on the HEA website as part of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

Indicative timetable 2011

Call for Proposals issues	26 January 2011
Briefing on the new Fund	28 January
Deadline for submission of proposals	18 March
Providers notified of approved programmes	18-22 April
Contracts agreed with HEA, planning and recruitment for Springboard programmes gets underway Providers upload information for applicants to Springboard section of www.bluebrick.ie	April-May
Official launch of Springboard that includes fully operational online application system via www.bluebrick.ie	May
Springboard Phase 1 programmes underway	May-June 2011 onwards



Multi-annual Higher Education Fund January 2011

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Template document

This template must be used to make programme proposals. On completion it should be submitted to HEA as set out in the attached supporting information.

A separate proposal must be completed for each programme proposed.

Name of provider:

Title of programme:

Level:

Short description of programme:

Parts A and B must be completed in full for **each** programme proposed. Part C need only be completed once.

Part A Programme Details

- 1 Title of Programme:
- 2 Level and type of NFQ award the programme will lead to:
- 3 Awarding Body:
- 4 Number of ECTS or equivalent credits attached to the award:
- 5 Entry requirements (qualifications/relevant experience) for the programme:
- 6 Indicate delivery components of the proposed programme:
 Online/distance component
 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as option for eligible participants
 Range of teaching and learning methodologies
 Range of learning supports available
 Other (specify):
- 7 Contact hours
 Duration of programme in weeks per annum:
 Number of proposed contact (on campus) hours per week:
 Period(s) during which contact hours take place:
 Daytime ()
 Evening ()
 Weekends
- 8 Target enrolment numbers in 2011:
- 9 Details of learner recruitment strategy:
- 10 Details of system to be used by the provider to gather required information on learner participation, completion, employment outcomes, progression to further study:
- 11 If this programme is being currently being offered as part of general provision, state the current tuition fee:

Part B**B1 Programme links with Labour Market Opportunities – 40 marks****Please confine each answer to no more than 200 words**

12 Set out how the proposed programme will address current/future skills needs:

15 marks

13 Outline the level and nature of collaboration between your organisation and employers/industry representatives in the region that have the skills need. Include references to the extent (if any) of the input of employers into the programme content and the extent of any commitments from employers regarding job opportunities or other responses (e.g. work placement) for programme participants:

15 marks

14 Explain how the content of the programme will enhance job opportunities in the skills area for the target unemployed groups, to include transferable as well as technical skills and knowledge:

10 marks

B2 Programme approach and progression opportunities – 40 marks**Please confine each answer to no more than 200 words**

15 Outline your understanding and analysis of the learner cohort you aim to recruit, including age group, level and type of qualifications typically attained and/or nature of work experience to date and in what sector(s):

10 marks

16 Describe the teaching, learning and assessment methodologies that will be used in the programme and how these will meet learner needs (e.g. flexible approaches, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)):

10 marks

17 Outline the measures that will be used to monitor and support student participation and completion (e.g. academic and pastoral supports, career advisory service):

10 marks

18 Set out the benefits and opportunities for participants on successful completion of the programme, in terms of personal benefit, and progression opportunities either to the labour market or to further study at undergraduate and postgraduate level:

10 marks

B3 Cost and value for money – 20 marks

- 19 **a: Total cost of delivering programme (€):**
- b: Enrolment target for programme:**
- c: Number of ECTS credits awarded:**
- d: Cost per student (€):**
(Divide a / b)
- e: Conversion factor for 10-credit equivalence**
(Divide c / 10)
- Cost per student per 10 ECTS credits (€):**
(Divide d / e)

Part C: Provider Details and Declarations**Name of Provider:**

(This will be used for all documentation, tax clearance and invoice payments, and must be the legal name of the provider)

Business Address:

Name of Contact Person:

Contact Email:

Contact Telephone:

Declaration of Eligibility

The Higher Education Authority may exclude from participation any where that provider:

- (a) is bankrupt or is being wound up, where his affairs are being administered by the court, where he has entered into an arrangement with creditors, where he has suspended business activities or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national laws and regulations;
- (b) is the subject of proceedings for a declaration of bankruptcy, of an order for compulsory winding up or administration by the court or of an arrangement with creditors or of any other similar proceedings under national laws and regulations;
- (c) has been convicted by a judgement, which has the force of res judicata in accordance with the legal provisions of the country of any offence concerning his professional conduct;
- (d) has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means, which the contracting authorities can demonstrate;

- (e) has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which he is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority;
- (f) has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which he is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority;
- (g) is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying the information required under this section or has not supplied such information.

Declaration of Eligibility

I hereby declare that none of the grounds for exclusion listed above applies to our organisation. I declare that I have taken all reasonable measures to confirm that the information provided in this Declaration is true and accurate as of this date.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(To be signed by Head of Organisation)

Overall Declaration

We acknowledge that we have read and accept the conditions set out in the Higher Education Authority Springboard Fund Call for Proposals.

We confirm that our Proposal(s) remain(s) valid for a period of six months from the Proposal return date.

We confirm that the answers to the questions above are true and accurate and valid as to their contents. We understand that the provision of false or misleading information could result in our exclusion from the procurement process or the rejection of our proposal(s).

We confirm that we are in possession of appropriate copyright/licences/permits for all computer software or other applications required for the programme(s).

We confirm that we will adhere to all Higher Education Authority policies and procedures pertaining to this Call for Proposals.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(To be signed by Head of Organisation)

Appendix 3: Springboard 2011 Courses Approved

Provider	Programme Title	NFQ	ECTS	Years
Athlone Institute of Technology	Certificate in Renewable Heating Systems	Level 6	60	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Computer Networking	Level 6	35	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Introduction to Sustainable Energy	Level 6	10	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Science in GMP & Technology	Level 6	120	3
Cork Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Science in Industrial Measurement & Control	Level 6	120	3
Cork Institute of Technology	BSc in GMP and Technology	Level 7	60	2
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Automation & Control Systems	Level 7	15	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Biomedical Device Manufacturing	Level 7	10	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Entrepreneurship & Business	Level 7	35	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Lean 6 Sigma Green Belt	Level 7	10	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Sustainable Energy	Level 7	15	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Advanced Industrial Automation	Level 8	30	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Chemical & Bio-Pharmaceutical Engineering	Level 8	60	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Environmental & Energy Engineering	Level 8	30	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Diploma in Lean 6 Sigma Black Belt	Level 8	30	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Grad Dip in Software Development	Level 8	60	2
Cork Institute of Technology	Certificate in Embedded Systems Engineering	Level 9	30	1
Cork Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Diploma in Civil Eng (Environment & Energy)	Level 9	60	2
Cork Institute of Technology	Post-Graduate Diploma in Embedded Systems Engineering	Level 9	60	1
Digital Skills Academy	WebElevate programme (Professional Development Programme in Digital Media)	Level 8	60	2
DPS Education & Training Ltd	CPD Certificate in e-(Bio)PharmaChem	Level 7	15	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Fundamentals in Networking & Cloud Technologies	Level 6	20	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Fundamentals of Database & Cloud Technologies	Level 6	30	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Export Marketing & Enterprise Development	Level 7	50	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Financial Services	Level 7	40	1
Dublin Business School	Advanced Certificate in Project Management for ICT Professional	Level 8	24	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Advanced Networking & Cloud Technologies	Level 8	34	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Database Development and Cloud Technologies	Level 8	36	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Funding & Treasury	Level 8	58	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in International Business for Sales Professionals	Level 8	36	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Project Management for ICT Professionals	Level 8	24	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Software & Cloud Technologies	Level 8	24	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Internationalisation & Innovation	Level 9	45	1
Dublin Business School	Certificate in Risk & Financial Analysis	Level 9	45	1
Dublin City University	Business Innovation Programme	Level 8	40	1
Dublin City University	Grad Certificate in Corporate Treasury	Level 9	30	1
Dublin City University	Grad Diploma in Information Technology	Level 9	60	2
Dublin City University	MBS in Strategic Procurement	Level 9	90	2
Dublin City University	MEng in Computer Aided Mechanical &	Level 9	90	2

	Manufacturing Eng			
Dublin City University	MEng in Electronic Systems	Level 9	90	2
Dublin City University	MEng in Telecommunications Engineering	Level 9	90	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	Certificate in Computer Programming & Applications Development	Level 6	60	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Food Product Development (Stage I)	Level 6	45	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Systems Administration	Level 6	50	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Computing	Level 6	120	
Dublin Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Electrical Services Engineering	Level 6	30	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Mathematics (II)	Level 6	60	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Science & Technology	Level 6	120	
Dublin Institute of Technology	BEng Technology in Electrical Services Engineering	Level 7	30	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	BSc (Ordinary) in Information Systems & IT	Level 7	60	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Certificate in Ethical Hacking	Level 7	10	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Certificate in i-phone/Android Application Development	Level 7	10	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma Development in Cloud Computing (Designing & Building A Private Cloud)	Level 7	40	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Computer Games & Ludology	Level 7	50	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Fundamental Cell & Molecular Biology	Level 7	60	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Software Testing	Level 7	40	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Roof Construction Design & Energy Efficiency	Level 7	40	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Biopharmaceuticals Conversion Course	Level 8	60	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	BSc (Honours) in Information Systems & IT	Level 8	60	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	BSc in Electrical Services Engineering & Energy Management	Level 8	30	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	BSc in Medical Device Innovation	Level 8	55	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Accessible Web Design	Level 8	40	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Building Geographic Information Systems	Level 8	45	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Cloud Computing (Application Development)	Level 8	45	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Financial Mathematics & Analytics	Level 8	45	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Logistics in Supply Chain Management	Level 8	40	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Statistics and Operation Research	Level 8	30	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Digital Imaging Skills for Multi-media & Gaming	Level 8	10	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Honours Degree in Mathematical Studies	Level 8	60	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Honours Degree in Maths	Level 8	60	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	CPD Diploma in Computing	Level 9	30	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Executive Masters in Supply Chain Management	Level 9	90	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	MSc in Computing	Level 9	90	3
Dublin Institute of Technology	MSc in Energy Management	Level 9	90	3
Dublin Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Certificate in Applied Mathematics & Theoretical Physics	Level 9	30	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Certificate in Engineering Simulation & Modelling	Level 9	30	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Certificate in Mechanical Engineering	Level 9	30	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Certificate in Software Development	Level 9	30	1

Dublin Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Diploma in Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics	Level 9	60	2
Dublin Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Certificate in Digital Energy Analysis and Buildings Retrofit	Level 9	30	1
Dublin Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Certificate in Applied Computing for Technologists	Level 9	30	1
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Home Energy Consultancy	Level 6	30	
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Sustainable Plumbing & Heating Installation	Level 6	15	
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Bio-Process Engineering	Level 7	35	1
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Agri-Waste & Management	Level 8	25	
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Food Supply Chain Management	Level 8	20	
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Technology Entrepreneurship	Level 8	40	1
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Hdip in Science & Computing	Level 8	60	
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Bio-Energy	Level 9	16	1
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Solar Energy	Level 9	23	
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Certificate in Wind Energy	Level 9	23	1
Financial Services Ireland (FSI)	FSI Career Plus	Level 7	90	2
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Business in Computer Applications	Level 6	120	2
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Business Studies & Enterprise Development	Level 6	120	2
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Bachelor of Engineering (Ordinary) Energy Engineering	Level 7	60	
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	BSc (Ordinary) in Computing (Software Development)	Level 7	60	2
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) Degree in Energy Engineering	Level 8	60	
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) Mechanical Engineering	Level 8	60	
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	BSc (Honours) Bio-Pharmaceutical & Healthcare Science (Distance)	Level 8	60	2
Griffith College Dublin	Special Purpose Award in SME Management	Level 7	10	1
Griffith College Dublin	Certificate in Computing Science	Level 8	60	1
Griffith College Dublin	Higher Diploma in Computing	Level 8	60	1
Independent College Dublin	Certificate in Business Research & Enterprise Development	Level 8	20	1
Innopharma Labs Ltd	Upskilling for the Pharmaceutical & Medical Device Industry	Level 8	50	1
Institute of Art, Design & Technology	Certificate in Online Business Trading	Level 7	10	1
	Institute of Art, Design & Technology Bachelor of Business in Entrepreneurship	Level 8	60	1
Institute of Art, Design & Technology	Certificate in Enterprise Development	Level 8	10	1
Institute of Art, Design & Technology	Certificate in Human-Computer Interaction	Level 8	10	1
Institute of Art, Design & Technology	Certificate in Mobile Software Development (Android)	Level 8	10	1
Institute of Art, Design & Technology	Certificate in Mobile Software Development (iOS)	Level 8	10	1
Institute of Public Administration	MSc in Business & Management	Level 9	90	2
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Certificate in Creative Web Communication	Level 6	30	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Certificate in Energy Efficient Domestic Retrofit Technology	Level 6	25	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Certificate in Energy Efficient Heating Systems	Level 6	20	1
	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown Certificate in PC Maintenance & Networking with Cisco Certified Network Associate	Level 6	40	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Computer Security incl COMTIA security & CCNA security	Level 6	20	1

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Higher Certificate in Sustainable Electrical Technology	Level 6	60	2
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Languages for the Export Market (Level 1)	Level 6	10	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown Languages for the Export Market (Level 2)	Level 6	10	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	BEng in Mechatronic Engineering	Level 7	60	2
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	BSc in Information Technology (Information Security & Digital Forensics)	Level 7	60	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	BSc (Honours) in Entrepreneurship	Level 8	60	2
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Hdip in Science & Computing	Level 8	60	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Minor Award Certificate in CAD & Manufacturing	Level 8	15	1
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	Post-graduate Diploma in Science & Technology Entrepreneurship	Level 9	60	2
Institute of Technology Carlow	Certificate in Computer Systems	Level 6	60	1
Institute of Technology Carlow	Certificate in Mechanical Engineering	Level 6	60	1
Institute of Technology Carlow	BSc in Management (Energy)	Level 7	60	1
Institute of Technology Carlow	Hdip in Business (Supply Chain Management)	Level 8	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	Certificate in Automation & Instrumentation/ Certificate in Electronics	Level 6	35	1
Institute of Technology Sligo	Higher Certificate in Environmental Management	Level 6	120	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering	Level 7	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronics	Level 7	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	BEng in Polymer Processing	Level 7	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	BSc in Construction Management	Level 7	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	BSc in Environmental Management	Level 7	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	BSc in Manufacturing Management	Level 7	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	Certificate in Lean Sigma Quality	Level 7	15	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	BEng (Honours) in Electronic Engineering	Level 8	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	BSc (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Science	Level 8	60	2
Institute of Technology Sligo	Post-graduate Diploma in Environmental Protection	Level 9	60	2
Institute of Technology Tallaght	Certificate in Bio-Processing & Clean Room Management	Level 6	35	1
Institute of Technology Tallaght	HC/BSC/BSC (Honours) in Computing IT Management	Level 6	120	3
Institute of Technology Tallaght	Certificate in Engineering Technologies	Level 7	40	1
Institute of Technology Tallaght	Certificate in Network Design & Implementation	Level 7	35	1
Institute of Technology Tallaght	Diploma in Cloud Computing (Designing & Building a Private Cloud)	Level 7	35	2
Institute of Technology Tallaght	Diploma in Cloud Computing (Cloud Application Development)	Level 8	40	1
Institute of Technology Tallaght	Diploma in Enterprise Innovation	Level 8	60	1
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Applied Biology & Chemistry	Level 6	30	1
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Energy Management	Level 6	30	1
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Engineering Technology	Level 6	30	1
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Environmental Science	Level 6	30	1
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Tourism Entrepreneurship	Level 6	30	1
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Social Media & Web Analytics	Level 7	30	1

Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Engineering Enterprise and Management	Level 8	30	1
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)				
Institute of Technology Tralee (Shannon Consortium)	MSc in Educational Technologies	Level 9	60	2
Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management	Certificate in Purchasing Fundamentals	Level 6	30	1
Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management	Certificate in Warehousing & Supply	Level 6	30	1
Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management	Higher Certificate in Business Procurement	Level 6	120	2
Irish Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management	BBS Procurement & Supply Management	Level 7	60	1
Irish Management Institute (IMI)	Certified Module in Business Intelligence & Decision Support	Level 9	10	1
Irish Management Institute (IMI)	Certified Module in Business Model Innovation	Level 9	10	1
Irish Management Institute (IMI)	Certified Module in Cloud Computing & Web 2.0	Level 9	10	1
Irish Management Institute (IMI)	IMI Diploma in Strategy and Innovation (Standard Cycle)	Level 9	30	1
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Science (Pharmacy Technician)	Level 6	120	2
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Higher Certificate in Wind Energy Technology	Level 6	90	2
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Higher Diploma in Arts in Financial Services Technology	Level 8	60	1
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Higher Diploma in Computing (Conversion Course into Computing)	Level 8	60	1
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Post-graduate Diploma in Accounting	Level 9	60	1
Limerick Institute of Technology (Shannon Consortium)	Building CAD using Revit Architecture	Level 6	10	1
Limerick Institute of Technology (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Healthcare Science	Level 6	30	1
Limerick Institute of Technology (Shannon Consortium)	Sustainable Mechanical Engineering	Level 6	20	1
Limerick Institute of Technology (Shannon Consortium)	Special Purpose Award in Industrial s Electrical System	Level 7	30	1
Limerick Institute of Technology (Shannon Consortium)	Special Purpose in Manufacturing Maintenance Systems	Level 7	30	1
Limerick Institute of Technology (Shannon Consortium)	Specialist Diploma in Security, Cryptography & Digital Forensics	Level 9	30	1
National College of Ireland	Certificate in Web Development	Level 6	30	1
National College of Ireland	Certificate in Science in Web Technologies	Level 8	30	1
National College of Ireland	Certificate in Cloud Computing	Level 9	30	1
National College of Ireland	Post-graduate Diploma in Science in Management	Level 9	60	1
National College of Ireland	Post-graduate Certificate in Cloud Computing	Level 9	60	2
National Institute of Bioprocessing, Research & Training (NIBRT)	Education Programme in Pharmaceutical Technology - Bioprocessing & Healthcare	Level 7	40	

National University of Ireland, Galway	Foundation Course in Science Technology & Engineering	Level 6	30	1
National University of Ireland, Galway	Specialist Diploma in Environmental Sustainability	Level 8	30	1
National University of Ireland, Galway	Specialist Diploma in Lean & Quality Systems	Level 8	30	1
National University of Ireland, Galway	Specialist Diploma in Medical Device Science	Level 8	30	1
National University of Ireland, Galway	Diploma in Innovation Management	Level 9	30	1
National University of Ireland, Galway	Diploma in Technology Commercialisation	Level 9	30	1
Open University	Discovering Mathematics	Level 7	15	
Open University	My Digital Life	Level 7	30	1
Oscail	BSc in Information Technology	Level 8	120	3
Oscail	Diploma in Information Technology	Level 8	120	3
SQT Training Ltd	Sigma Green Belt in Process Engineering	Level 6	10	1
Tipperary Institute (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Domestic Sustainable Energy	Level 6	20	1
Tipperary Institute (Shannon Consortium)	Certificate in Renewable Energy Development	Level 6	20	1
Tipperary Institute (Shannon Consortium)	Higher Certificate in Good Manufacturing Practice	Level 6	120	
University College Cork	Certificate in Supply Chain Management	Level 7	30	1
University College Cork	Certificate in Creative Digital Marketing	Level 8	30	1
University College Dublin	Certificate/Graduate Certificate in ICT	Level 9	30	1
University College Dublin	Graduate Certificate in Bio-Pharmaceutical & Pharmaceutical Sciences by Negotiable Learning	Level 9	30	2
University of Limerick (Shannon Consortium)	Diploma in Project Management	Level 7	60	1
University of Limerick (Shannon Consortium)	Science & Engineering (Minor Award)	Level 8	54	1
University of Limerick (Shannon Consortium)	Specialist Diploma in Quality Management Lean Systems	Level 9	36	1
University of Limerick (Shannon Consortium)	Specialist Diploma in Six Sigma	Level 9	36	1
Waterford Institute of Technology	Waterford Institute of Technology Higher Certificate in Good Manufacturing Practice and Technology	Level 6	120	2
Waterford Institute of Technology	Bachelor of Arts in Financial Services	Level 7	60	2
Waterford Institute of Technology	BEng (Honours) in Sustainable Civil Engineering	Level 8	120	3
Waterford Institute of Technology	BSc (Honours) Applied Biology with Quality Management	Level 8	60	1
Waterford Institute of Technology	MSc in Innovative Technology Engineering	Level 9	90	2
Waterford Institute of Technology	MSc in Sustainable Energy Engineering	Level 9	90	2

Appendix 4: Springboard Panel Members 2011

Springboard 2011 Expert Panel

Feargal Quinn, Chairperson	Businessman; founder of Superquinn; independent member of Seanad Éireann
Martin Cronin	Former Chief Executive, Forfás; board member, Irish Academy of Engineering
Charles Dolan	Senior Personnel Representative, Eli Lilly; Chairman of Education and Skills Group at the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC); incoming President, Irish Science Teachers Association
Una Halligan	Chairwoman of Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
Niamh Mernagh	Educationalist, former Senior Inspector for Guidance (Post-Primary) in the Department of Education and Skills

Feedback Questions Springboard Process 2011

Process

- ## Online System

- ## Promotion

5. What, in your view, had the most effective impact on promoting Springboard awareness and applications nationally (TV ads, radio ads, supplement)?
6. What promotional activities undertaken by your organisation to promote Springboard locally and/or regionally did you feel were most successful?

State System and Springboard Participants

7. Can you outline your experience with the State support for jobseekers (e.g. local social welfare offices, FÁS, adult guidance)?
8. From your experience, what are the key barriers facing unemployed people in taking up and completing up-skilling programmes?

General Comments

9. What would be done differently if there was a Springboard 2012?
10. **Any other comments:**

Appendix 6: Participant Survey Questions

Feedback Questions Springboard Participants 2011

Hi, our records show that you are currently participating in a Springboard course. We ask you to take a few minutes to answer the questions below and return online to us by **Friday 04 November 2011**. Your response will help us identify what is working well so far and what is in need of improvement. Your response is anonymous as it is not connected to your name, address or PPSN, and it will be treated confidentially. Thank you from the National Access Office, HEA.

1. How did you hear about Springboard?

- ☐ Radio ad
- ☐ Radio interview
- ☐ TV ad
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ FÁS
- ☐ Social Welfare Office
- ☐ Springboard provider
- ☐ Word of mouth (friends/family)

Other, please state briefly: _____

2. How long has it been since your last experience with formal education?

- ☐ 12 months or less
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10-20 years
- ☐ 20+ years

3. Please rate the following items in terms of how strongly they prompted you to apply for a place on this particular course:
- a. Interest in the area of study:
 - i. Very strongly
 - ii. Strongly
 - iii. Moderately
 - iv. Weakly
 - v. Not at all
 - b. Enhance career prospects in my current field:
 - i. Very strongly
 - ii. Strongly
 - iii. Moderately
 - iv. Weakly
 - v. Not at all
 - c. To change career:
 - i. Very strongly
 - ii. Strongly
 - iii. Moderately
 - iv. Weakly
 - v. Not at all
 - d. Personal development:
 - i. Very strongly
 - ii. Strongly
 - iii. Moderately
 - iv. Weakly
 - v. Not at all
 - e. I think I will get a good job after this course:
 - i. Very strongly
 - ii. Strongly
 - iii. Moderately
 - iv. Weakly
 - v. Not at all
 - f. Family/friend(s) suggested the course:
 - i. Very strongly
 - ii. Strongly
 - iii. Moderately
 - iv. Weakly
 - v. Not at all
 - g. Other: State reason:
4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with this statement: The online application system for Springboard was user-friendly.
- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree

Please briefly explain your answer:

5. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with this statement:

The quality of the information on the Springboard website was excellent.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Please briefly explain your answer:

6. How would you rate the speed and efficiency of the response you got from the college(s) you applied to?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

7. Was your application processed:

- ☐ Within one week
- ☐ Within two weeks
- ☐ Within four weeks
- ☐ Longer than four weeks

8. What part of the Springboard application process could be most improved, and how?

9. Please rate the service you received throughout the process (e.g. from the college(s), BlueBrick team, Springboard team):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Quite good
- ☐ Okay
- ☐ Poor

Please explain your answer (briefly):

10. Please tick which of the following services provided you with guidance on your

Springboard application:

FÁS/Local Employment Service

Department of Social Protection

Adult Education Guidance Service

Springboard College

No Guidance

Other (please specify):

11. Please rate your experience with your local social welfare office on Springboard, particularly in completing the required forms:

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Quite good
- ☐ Okay
- ☐ Poor

Please explain your answer:

12. Will your Springboard course give you a more advanced qualification than the qualification(s) you currently hold?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. So far, how well is your Springboard course measuring up to your expectations?

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Quite good
- ☐ Okay
- ☐ Not great
- ☐ Quite dissatisfied

Please briefly explain your answer:

14. Now that your course is under way, how would you rate the level of support you have received from your college?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Quite good
- ☐ Not great
- ☐ Quite dissatisfied

Please explain your answer:

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with this statement:

Springboard has had a positive impact on my life so far (e.g. financially, experience of returning to higher education, work placement, contact with employers, managing study, home life and responsibilities):

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please explain your answer:

16. Since becoming unemployed, have you completed any other training/education programmes e.g. FÁS training course, FÁS work placement programme/JobBridge, further education/VEC course, Community Employment programme, other?

If yes, please specify, including the course title, duration and award obtained, as appropriate.

If no, please skip to Q 19.

17. If you answered yes to Q 16, how long has it been since you completed this course?

- ☐ 6 months or less
- ☐ 6-12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 5+ years

- 18. If you answered yes to Q 16, pick one statement from the list below that you believe most accurately reflects your job-search experience after completing the course:**
- ☐ The course greatly helped me achieve employment
 - ☐ The course somewhat helped me achieve employment
 - ☐ The course neither helped nor hindered me in achieving employment
 - ☐ The course was not helpful, and may have hindered me in achieving employment
 - ☐ Not applicable (e.g. didn't find employment)
- 19. What, in your view, is the best feature(s) of your Springboard course?**
- 20. What, in your view, is the worst feature(s) of your Springboard course?**
- 21. Would you recommend Springboard to others who are unemployed?**
- Yes, definitely
- On balance, yes
- Probably not
- No
- 22. Please rate the service you received throughout the process (e.g. from the college(s), BlueBrick team, Springboard team):**
- Excellent
- Quite good
- Okay
- Poor

Please briefly explain your answer:

The National Access Office, HEA, thanks you for your time - your feedback is much appreciated.



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