

Third level expenditure on Research and Development exceeds €600m for first time - Forfás survey

Forfás has published its initial findings from the *2005-2006 Survey of Research and Development Performance in the Higher Education Sector* which shows that the sector's R&D performance exceeded €600 million for the first time - a growth rate of over 7% p.a. (in real terms) since 2004.

The survey found that:

- Significant growth has enabled Ireland to match the R&D intensity of competitor countries. Ireland's Higher Education R&D spend of 0.4% of GNP is comparable to the OECD average and exceeds that of the EU27.
- The main sources of funding were:
 - Government Expenditure (direct and indirect);
 - EU funding through FP6 and the Research Councils; and
 - Business, individual and philanthropic funds.
- The principal sources of funds were Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Enterprise Ireland, the Higher Education Authority, the Health Research Board (HRB) and the Research Councils.
- Of the University group UCC reported the highest R&D funding income of over €86 million, followed closely by Trinity College Dublin (€60 million), UCD (€53 million) and NUI Galway (€47 million).
- Within the Institutes of Technology group Waterford IT (€9.2 million) and Dublin IT (€6.7 million) reported the highest income.
- The numbers of researchers working in the sector increased by almost 1,150 since the last survey in 2004 to over 10,000. Since many researchers also teach, this equates to approximately 4,670 full-time equivalents (FTE's). In international terms this is equivalent to 2.2 FTE researchers per 1000 in employment, which places Ireland close to the EU27 average but with some way to go to catch the EU leaders where the average is closer to 3.0 FTE researchers per 1,000 in employment.

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheál Martin said, "By passing the €600 million mark investment in R&D in the Higher Education sector this country has reached a milestone which will ensure that we continue to be a location for high quality jobs into the future. The Government is fully committed to continuing investment in this sector. As our third level institutions become major centres of research it is our hope that they will also continue to forge strong links with the private sector."

Commenting on the survey results Martin Cronin, Chief Executive, Forfás said, "Economies at Ireland's stage of development depend heavily on R&D activity, in both the public and private sectors, to enhance their knowledge, human and enterprise capital. The trends identified in this report are very encouraging and with the commitment of Government to expanding funding through the new Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation (including PRTL 4) and NDP commitments we can expect further expansion in the years to come."