



**We work
for you.**

**FRS RECRUITMENT
MANUFACTURING &
ENGINEERING INSIGHTS
REPORT**

frs
recruitment

2023

Table of Contents

03

Meet The
Team

04

Overview

06

Sector
Analysis

06

Engineering

07

Medical
Device

08

Pharmaceutical

09

Quality/Lab

10

Manufacturing

11

Supply Chain

12

Food
Production

13

Market
Salaries

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Meet The Team

FRS Recruitment is home to one of the largest Manufacturing & Engineering recruitment teams in Ireland. With 11 offices nationwide, we provide temporary, contract and permanent staff to a wide variety of employers within Ireland's manufacturing, engineering & scientific industries. If you are looking to add talent to your workforce, email info@frsrecruitment.com to talk to one of our team today.



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Overview

"We are continually faced by great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems." -Lee Iacocca, Engineer, and Automaker

The FRS Recruitment Technical Engineering division works with employers of all sizes across Ireland to help them secure talent in a wide range of areas. This covers roles in engineering, pharmaceuticals, medical device, supply chain, quality/ laboratory, manufacturing, and food production.

In this document we will provide some insights on each of those individual areas.

Looking at the broader technical engineering picture, there are also some general insights that apply. Vacancies are continuing to arise, as they were throughout 2022, with plenty of demand on the employer side for qualified personnel. However, that is not matched by the number of candidates becoming available or even the level of movement within the market.

In line with the rising cost of living, there has also been a push across the board for higher salaries for candidates. This has been a general trend throughout the entire sector. It is also presenting a challenge to employers.

For smaller companies there is less wiggle room in their budgets to increase salaries. Alternative options such as increased annual leave or more hybrid working are instead being presented as possible solutions. Larger companies, however, have been offering larger salary and benefits packages.

There also tends to be greater wiggle room in the packages provided for more senior roles than those at mid and junior level. This is being driven by the market with employers finding it increasingly difficult to secure the right candidate for these key positions.

There has also been a move by employers to keep their overheads contained by broadening job specs rather than increasing their headcount in some areas. For example, we have seen more admin type responsibilities added to mid-range and junior positions rather than the employer bringing on additional procurement admins or junior planners.



On a geographical basis we're also finding there is more flexibility on salaries in Dublin, while the wages on offer in the Midlands tend to be more limited and less moveable.

The pressure on rising costs and wider uncertainty arising from job losses at some high-profile global companies has also impacted on candidate mindsets not just in this sector but almost across the entire economy. Candidates have become more passive this year when it comes to seeking out their next career step.

Within supply chain and logistics there has been an increased demand for import and export experience within buyer or planner roles. This speaks to the changing demands being placed on businesses and how employers are adapting by ensuring their teams are multidisciplined. In a similar vein there has also been a push for a higher level of system skills in candidates. For example, employers don't just want people who can use Excel, they want their team members to be proficient in Power BI as well.

Then there are the implications of AI on how employment in this sector evolves. Manufacturing & engineering has always been at the forefront of adopting new technologies to enhance production and with AI becoming much more pervasive we can expect to see that has significant ramifications in the months and years ahead.

All of these different developments show how quickly the market can evolve and why it is so important to work with people who are dealing with these issues on a daily basis. At FRS Recruitment we understand the market and we can see how it is evolving in real time.

We know what an employer needs to do to stand out in a crowded field. We know what the right candidates are looking for, both in terms of opportunity and the package to go with it. We also know what your competition is doing and how to stay ahead of them. We even know what you need to do to retain your current team members.

When you face a difficult market, expertise really matters. That is why so many companies and organisations in this sector trust FRS Recruitment's Manufacturing & Engineering team. It is also why we'd be delighted to help you address all your staffing needs.

In the sector of problem solvers, you could consider us the recruitment engineers.



Sector Analysis

Engineering

According to a forecast from *Engineers Ireland, almost 8,000 engineering jobs could be available this year. These are expected to come on stream across multiple different areas.

However, that report also warned about the limited availability of talent. 72% of the members of Engineers Ireland said they were concerned about the shortage of engineers with the correct skills. The talent limitations are also seen by these companies as the main barrier to growth.

The entire economy is driving this demand and there are many high-profile aspects of public policy that are dependent on the availability of engineers. This includes for example the push for more housing, the increased need for renewable energy, especially connected with the planned large offshore windfarm facilities, as well as Ireland's growing prominence as a location for data centres.

At FRS Recruitment we are seeing this strong demand materialise first hand. We have clients seeking engineers to operate in renewables, sustainability, chemical, civil, mechanical, and electrical. There has also been a strong need in the market for qualified personnel who operate in health and safety roles as well as field service engineers.

With demand strongly outstripping supply this has had a significant impact on salaries, with basic packages and benefits packages all increasing as employers compete to capture available talent. This applies all around the country with opportunities available almost everywhere.

*Engineers Ireland forecasts almost 8000 sectoral jobs for 2023 - Engineers Ireland, February 2023





Medical Device

Ireland is a major player in the global medical device industry, with more than 300 significant companies located in this country. The sector is also continuing to grow with expansion announcements in multiple different sites across Ireland including Jabil, Steris, Phibro, J&J, AbbVie, Abbot and more.

The size of this sector meant there was already significant pressure on talent needs and that pressure continues to grow as the sector expands. However, the availability of talent has yet to expand at the same rate, meaning that while medical device hiring opportunities are strong, the time to fill roles has slowed down.

At FRS Recruitment we are particularly noticing a demand for personnel in maintenance tech, equipment tech, quality engineering and R&D engineering roles.

Given the timings required to find talent at present, employers are putting an extra emphasis on their hiring practices, ensuring there is no lost time or distribution during the recruitment process.

While there was major pressure on salaries towards the end of 2022, within the medical device sector salary bands have now plateaued with little room for negotiation. There is also a strong interest in regional roles as candidates seek to live outside of urban areas to reduce the cost of living and improve work life balance.

Pharmaceutical

The pharmaceutical sector is a highly regulated and specialised industry that requires a very highly skilled workforce. Like the medical device sector, it continues to grow in this country, with expansions of existing sites and additional locations coming on stream. There have been announcements along these lines from Gilead, MeiraGTx, Eli Lilly, Pfizer, and others in recent times. The growth is being driven by the ever-increasing demand for new and innovative drugs and therapies.

Given the regulatory environment around pharmaceuticals there has been a specific push for talent to handle roles such as validation, quality, and regulatory affairs as well as drug development.

Specific roles in demand include validation engineers, quality engineers, automation engineers and R&D engineers. The demand has also been at a strong level throughout 2022 and has continued since.

Many of the issues that apply to the medical device sector are also true in the pharmaceutical sector. These issues include availability of talent and the time it takes to hire new talent. Again like in the medical device sector, there is a strong focus on streamlining the recruitment process ensuring there is no lost time.

Salary bands also plateaued in 2023 with little room for negotiation but this is on the back of significant salary rises in late 2022. A key motivator for talent in this sector is work life balance. Employers are now having to make more regional based roles and/ or hybrid work increasingly appealing for potential candidates.



Quality/Laboratory

There are now more than 50 FDA approved pharma and biopharma plants operating in Ireland, including nineteen of the world's top 20 biopharma companies. This has been driven by increasing investment from both domestic and international companies seeking to set up laboratories or expand their existing facilities.

Following the fallout of Brexit, many companies have chosen Ireland as a strategic location for their operations, which has been further incentivised by Government grants and tax benefits as well as the highly skilled workforce in this country.

All this has meant that the quality and laboratory sector is thriving in this country. There is a major demand for highly skilled professionals. At FRS Recruitment we are particularly noticing significant openings coming on stream this year for senior and leadership level roles. There is also high demand for bio-analytical scientists, chemists as well as QA/ QC analysts. Employers are prioritising hiring people with technical skills and/ or people management experience.

The surge in demand is also impacting salaries. There has been an increase of approximately €5k for most roles being offered compared to this time last year. While strong benefits are also being added to further motivate candidates, these can include healthcare, retirement plans, stock options and more.

Higher salaries have been offered more frequently in Dublin and Leinster compared with other parts of the country.

This is partially due to the impact the accommodation issues are having on the hiring environment. Candidates have declined to discuss roles and are even turning down strong offers, having gone through the interview and selection process, due to housing challenges.

The housing situation is also seeing qualified personnel leaving the market and moving to countries like Australia, New Zealand, and Canada in search of better options.

Thankfully for employers, there has also been an ongoing stream of EU candidates entering the Irish market, bringing high level of qualifications and valuable industry experience with them in recent times.



Manufacturing

Although output from Irish manufacturing contracted slightly in early 2023, due to weakening foreign orders, headcount within manufacturing has remained strong. In fact, employment levels within Irish manufacturing grew for the five months in a row at time of writing (CSO), indicating the robust strength within this sector.

Employers are adapting their businesses to address challenges and opportunities in the marketplace. For example, there have been significant levels of shift pattern changes as companies seek to optimise energy use.

There have also been significant moves towards automation and the digitisation. This is likely to become potentially even more disruptive in the wake of the surge of AI use. Manufacturing has been at the forefront of robotics and AI for a long time and it is likely that there will be significant moves to embrace these technologies in the period ahead.

The green agenda is another opportunity for the sector as manufacturing moves from plans, to action and compliance with regulations and customer expectations.

There has been a real increase in recruitment from manufacturers working in electronics, plastics, timber and heavy engineering. At FRS Recruitment we are also seeing a rise in the number of roles coming on stream for maintenance staff (fitters, electricians, welders) as well as sustainability and energy/ environmental engineers. There is also a significant level of demand for highly skilled roles in general.

The demand for personnel, which broadly applies across the sector, means that basic salaries have been on the rise and bonuses are also increasing. Demand for talent in the Midlands would seem to be growing compared to 2022, while we are also seeing a major need for manufacturing talent to staff the medical device and pharma clusters in areas like Galway.

Effectively the skills shortage nationwide will continue to influence the recruitment market in manufacturing for quite some time to come.



Supply Chain

Within the supply chain sector, there continues to be a strong demand for qualified talent. While there are variations from industry to industry – some industries like medical device and pharmaceutical are still grappling with the supply shortages and the implications those are having on their specific business environment – broadly speaking supply chain talent is very much in demand and challenging to find.

Employers are finding it especially difficult to find high level candidates such as supply chain managers, analysts, and planners. There is also a real push to secure more buyers, but employers are concentrating on finding procurement personnel with import/ export experience.

When it comes to attracting talent, hybrid working is a massive draw within this sector. All the candidates want it, but fewer companies are willing to offer it. This is creating an opportunity for certain employers who can incorporate hybrid working into the job spec and overall work environment. Annual leave is also a key consideration for candidates.

From a salary perspective, employers have been offering greater flexibility for senior roles, along with stronger benefits including share options, healthcare, pensions etc. Benefit packages also tend to be more comprehensive in Dublin given the level of competition. There also seems to be greater flexibility on benefits in Munster and Connacht compared with the Midlands.



Food Production

The business environment in the food production sector has been more challenging in recent times. Inflation, supply chain issues, energy costs and labour retention have all made an impact. However, it is noticeable that confidence is returning to the sector.

Food production businesses have recognised that staff shortages are a key threat, and they are acting to ensure they have sufficient talent. That means there has been a continuing demand for food production personnel this year. Employers in the meat industry, along with dairy, horticulture and pig farmers, for example, are already looking beyond the EU to find suitable candidates for vacant roles

This has been particularly notable in the sectors which have been performing well – dairy, meat, beverage, flavours and additives. At FRS Recruitment, we've seen an increased level of activity from employers seeking to secure fitters, electricians, quality personnel, health & safety personnel as well as production managers.

Unlike the other sectors within manufacturing & engineering, senior positions are easier to source in food production. Instead, employers face greater challenges sourcing mid-level and graduate hires. Regionally there have also been some difficulties in finding sufficient numbers of personnel in the west of the country and west Cork.

Cost of living is also driving salary pressure in the food production sector, while hybrid working conditions (where possible) are also increasingly being sought by candidates.



Market Salaries

Manufacturing & Engineering Salaries 2023	1+ Years (junior)	3+ Years (mid-level)	5+ years (senior)
Engineering			
Fitter	€38k	€50k	€58k
Maintenance Electrician	€38k	€50k	€58k
Welder	€35k	€38K	€45k
Buyer - Engineering	€35-40k	€45-55k	€55-65k
E + I Technician	€40k	€50k	€58-60
Maintenance Technician	€35k	€40-45k	€45-55k
Maintenance Engineer	€40k	€50k	€65k
Maintenance Manager	€50k	€60k	€85-90k
Electrical Engineering	€45k	€55k	€65k
Electronic Engineer	€40k	€55-65k	€65-85k
Engineering Manager	€55k	€65k	€80-90k
Automation Engineer	€35-40k	€45-55k	€60-75k
Manufacturing Engineer	€35-40k	€45-50k	€55-65k
Mechanical Design Engineer	€35k	€45-60k	€65-90k
Process Engineer	€35-40k	€60-70k	€70-90k
EHS Officer/Engineering Supervisor	€45k	€50k	€60-65k
EHS Specialist	€60k	€65k	€70k

Market Salaries

Manufacturing & Engineering Salaries 2023	1+ Years (junior)	3+ Years (mid-level)	5+ years (senior)
Supply Chain/Procurement			
Procurement Manager	€48k	€50-55k	€60-70k
Supply Chain Manager	€50k	€55-60k	€65-75k
Planner (production/demand)	€35k	€40-50k	€55-65k
Logistics/Transport Coordinator	€35-40k	€40-45k	€45-50k
Procurement Administrator	€30-35k	€35-40k	€40-45k
Supply Chain Coordinator	€35-40k	€40-45k	€45-50k
Laboratory/Quality			
Microbiologist	€35k	€40-50k	€50-60k
Analytical Chemist	€35k	€40-50k	€50-60k
Lab Instrument Technician	€38-45k	€45-50k	€50-60k
Quality Engineer	€35-40k	€50-55k	€60-80k
Quality Systems Manager	€45k	€55k	€65-75k
Logistics			
Warehouse Manager	€37-40k	€40-45k	€50-55k
Warehouse Operations Manager	€40k	€50-55k	€55-65k
Warehouse Supervisor	€32-35k	€35-40k	€40-45k
Warehouse Operative	€25-28k	€28-30k	€30-35k

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