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European Software Skills Alliance.

Case Study

Improving career readiness of ICT graduates

Presented by: Ericsson and Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet

Industry: Information and Communication Technology

Location: Stockholm, Sweden

Size: +250 employees

Challenges:

- Provision of industry-specific skills in the ICT sector
- Career readiness of new ICT graduates
- Need for companies to fill specific ICT professional vacancies

Solution:

Jointly designed by **Ericsson** and **Athlone Technological University of the Shannon**, the [Master's in Applied Software Engineering](#) offers students a free, one-year, full-time programme fully covering the software development lifecycle. It includes a **three-month paid internship** and a **permanent job as a software engineer** at Ericsson upon successful completion.

The wannabe software engineers develop technical, profession-related, and soft skills as they work in teams on **assignments that mirror the type of activities and projects they will experience in their future roles** at Ericsson. Students have direct contact with the company staff who provides real insights into the organisation's work and the technologies they use. Eventually, fresh graduates are qualified to take a software engineer role and able to be productive from day one on the job.

It all started with Ericsson calling on **Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet** to identify the company's needs and define relevant key areas to form the curriculum, including its hands-on components like the internship. A **tender was launched to find an academic partner**. Then, the winning institution, Athlone Institute of



Technology, and Ericsson jointly designed the content of the yearly programme, ensuring it complies with **Master's level (EQF 8) academic requirements** and is **relevant for the company**. As technology and practices change, the programme can be updated.

Results:

From 2011 to 2020, **532 students participated** in the programme. Among them, **359 have been hired** by Ericsson.

In 2021, there was an intake of 42 students who are currently participating in the programme and will graduate in 2022.

Key benefits:

- A complete programme for learners: academic qualification, paid internship, permanent job upon successful completion.
- Students experience Ericsson's work environment while Ericsson can evaluate how they operate in the workplace and ensure they are fit for the role.
- The intake of graduates from this programme has a strong grounding in applied software development which is directly relevant to Ericsson's product and technology.
- Being based in central Ireland, it is advantageous for Ericsson to partner up with a local HEI to implement this programme and attract potential students in the locality without having them relocate to another country.

Key resources:

- One working month to advertise, liaise with the educational institutions, and process the applications of students.
- Company's financial support to students (i.e., bursary and paid internship).
- In-kind investment from the company's staff to support students during their internships (i.e., 758 hours annually).
- Initial cost for the creation of the academic programme for the educational institution and company.

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