

# Shifting Sands

**SOLAS**  
learning works

Navigating the patterns emerging in the Irish labour market post-COVID-19.

## Top growing occupations & skills

Top growing occupations were identified in areas including transport, sales, healthcare, industry and hospitality. Common skills across these growing occupations include customer service, budgeting, project management and data-related skills.

### Manufacturing & Production



Occupations have become more technical in nature, with growing demand for computer-aided manufacturing and computer numerical control (CNC). Quality assurance and control is the most demanded skill for this group.

### Information Technology



Increased demand for data analysis and associated skills such as data techniques, machine learning, and PostgreSQL. Most of the top demanded skills are related to software development, as that occupation tends to dominate the overall IT job family.

### Transportation



A growing emphasis on occupational health and safety and customer service/customer contact skills, demonstrating an increased focus on human skills that have become more crucial for the industry likely due to the pandemic. Additionally, requests for sales skills have been growing.

### Hospitality, food & tourism



A growing emphasis on cleaning and occupational health and safety, a trend observed in other countries also after the emergence of the pandemic.

### Finance



Top growing skills include interpersonal and human skills, including creativity, verbal/oral communication, mentoring, and being a self-starter, marking a shift towards placing greater value on soft skills. In contrast, top demanded skills for this group focus primarily on job-specific tasks and knowledge.

# Reskilling & Upskilling Opportunities

## Career pathways

The report identifies occupations negatively impacted by the pandemic which did not see a recovery in 2021, such as those involved in events and maintaining spaces, along with those previously identified as at high risk for automation. It then selects next-step occupations that provide viable transition options for workers and are in high demand, with salary growth and education and skill overlap. The process is then repeated to find target occupations that are feasible transitions from the next-step occupations, along with the skills required to make these transitions.

Hard-hit occupation	→	Stable next step occupation	→	Target occupation
Legal secretary	→	Receptionist	→	Medical secretary
Administrative/ office manager	→	Storage/distribution manager	→	Operations manager/ supervisor
Event specialist	→	Public relations/ communications specialist	→	Marketing manager
Insurance underwriter	→	Compensation/ benefits analyst	→	Compensation/ benefits manager
Reservation/ ticket agent	→	Customer service representative	→	Sales executive
Payroll specialist	→	Shipping/ receiving clerk	→	Logistician/supply chain specialist

## Labour Tightness

### Remote Work



- An increase of 610% in postings mentioning remote work between 2019 and 2021.
- Largest increase for Science and Technology occupations (e.g. Research Agents, Environmental Consultants and Cloud Engineers).
- Others with large increases in remote work postings include Customer and Client Support, Healthcare, Clerical & Administrative, and Finance.

### Training



- The share of job postings offering training to employees once they have started increased by 18% between 2019 and 2021.
- Manufacturing and Production had the largest increase in percentage of postings offering training for job titles including Production Operatives, Machine Operators, and Production Managers.
- Others with large increases in postings offering training included Planning & Analysis and Marketing & Public Relations.