

2011-02-15

Who Earns What in our Education Quangos

Irish Times

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ggmed>

Recommended Citation

Irish Times, "Who Earns What in our Education Quangos" (2011). *Media*. 56.
<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ggmed/56>

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the TU Dublin Grangegorman at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Media by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact arrow.admin@tudublin.ie, aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie, vera.kilshaw@tudublin.ie.

Who earns what in our education quangos?

Tue, Feb 15, 2011, 00:00

The number of education agencies or quangos has increased dramatically in the past decade. But what do these agencies do? And how do they pay their staff? **PETER McGUIRE** and **SEÁN FLYNN** report

LATE LAST year *The Irish Times* revealed how over 60 staff in the education sector earn more than €150,000 per year. A further 476 staff earn more than €110,000. In all, 497 people are on the professorial salary scale, €113,00–€145,000.

The top earner was Prof Des Fitzgerald, vice-president for research at UCD, who earns over €263,000.

The high earnings were revealed at a time when the education service is coming to terms with severe cutbacks. Programmes for the disadvantaged and services for special needs children have been scaled back. Deeper cuts are expected over the next three years.

Last year, the McCarthy, or the Bord Snip Nua, report recommended a culling of the various education quangos. Many, the report said, could be re-integrated back into the Department of Education or completely abolished. This would save money and provide a better service – a win-win for the taxpayer.

But the expected “Bonfire of the Quangos” never took place in last year’s budget. Last week Fine Gael said it would abolish 150 quangos across the State sector.

The agencies say they are providing an essential service at very cost-efficient rates. They stress how they can make decisions free from day-to-day political pressures and bureaucracy – and use the the best available expertise. In this, the second article in *The Irish Times’* education pay survey we examine pay levels in these agencies. This information was compiled over several months.

Many agencies co-operated fully with this survey but others were unwilling to provide information on pay and pension payments to *The Irish Times*, despite being fully funded by the taxpayer.

What are the main findings?

As in the third-level sector many education quangos have senior staff earning well over €100,000.

In total, these agencies cost the taxpayer close to €1.5 billion – equivalent to what the State spends on the entire third-level sector.

FÁS alone consumes almost €1 billion in funding. Average pay in Science Foundation Ireland is over €80,000 per year. In some cases former staff are on pensions which are a multiple of the average industrial wage.

1 FÁS

The Director General of the State training agency FÁS, Paul O’Toole, is the highest officer paid of any State agency in the education sector, with a salary of €189,115. Six assistant directors at FÁS are also among top earners in the education sector, with an average salary of €149,469. FÁS spends 16.5 per cent of its budget on staff costs and overheads, while 53 per cent is paid directly to trainees. FÁS is due to be completely restructured following a succession of damaging revelations.

Annual budget €950 million

Number of staff 1,936

Top earners Paul O’Toole, director general: €189,115; Assistant director generals €134,523–€153,885 (Martin Lynch, Oliver Egan, Assumpta Delany, Denis Rowan, Patricia Curtin, Conor Dunne)

Average salary €47,795

Highest annual pension paymentFÁS refused to disclose this information

2 SCIENCE FOUNDATION IRELAND

SFI is praised by many for its instrumental role in developing Ireland's capacity as a science-based economy. SFI projects are also seen as key to attracting inward investment. Critics carp that the huge spending on research has not delivered enough jobs. SFI staff is required to be highly skilled and to hold appropriate PhD qualifications.

Annual budget €165m

Number of staff 52

Top earners John Travers, director general (interim): salary to be negotiated. His predecessor as director general was paid a salary of €259,697; Prof Fionn Murtagh, director, information, communications emergent technologies directorate: €163,991; Donal Keane, chief operations officer secretary to the board: €153,885

Average salary €83,000

Highest pension payment Forfás, on behalf of SFI, refused to release this information

3 NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

The NCCA advises on curriculum and assessment for early childhood education through to primary and post-primary schools. The agency has been in operation for almost 30 years and was established on a statutory basis in 2001. Currently working on a revamp of the Junior Cert exams.

Annual budget €3.8 million

Number of staff 23

Top earners Anne Looney, CEO: €119,636; deputy chief executives, John Hammond and Dr Sarah Fitzpatrick: €80,051-€98,424

Average salary €66,000 (estimated)

Highest pension payment No retirements have taken place

4 NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Established in 2004, the NCSE works with parents, schools, and other agencies to provide advice and make decisions about special educational needs. The number of special needs assistants will be capped at just over 10,000 under the Government's four-year plan. Many special needs assistants have already lost their jobs in the past year. Viewed with a certain trepidation by teachers and principals, special needs education organisers (SENOs) from the NCSE visit schools and decide whether to increase, retain, or cut special needs hours.

Annual budget €8.984m

Number of staff 109

Top earners CEO: €146,191 (vacant); Sé Goulding, head of operational services, Jennifer Doran, head of research and development Mary Byrne, special education adviser, Ray Jordan, head of corporate services: €80,051-€98,424

Average salary €56,500

Highest pension payment The NCSE refused to disclose this information

5 NATIONAL EDUCATION WELFARE BOARD

Established in 2002, the agency (NEWB) has responsibility for encouraging and supporting regular school attendance. In the first 11 months of 2010, the board issued 91 summonses against parents who failed to ensure their children attended school. Three years ago the NEWB told the Dáil Public Accounts Committee that the failure of internal procedures which led to the loss of €700,000 ‘in public funds was a “matter of great regret”.

A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General found that lapses “were exploited by a member of staff, apparently in collaboration with a supplier”. As a result the board paid out almost €700,000, including professional fees of €228,000 in investigating the matter.

Up to a quarter of education welfare officers enjoy the same leave entitlements as primary school teachers, with a working day of 9am to 4.30pm, including a half-hour lunch break. The remainder of staff are employed under standard public sector conditions. The McCarthy Report recommended the absorption of the National Education Welfare Board into the Department of Education, bringing about an estimated saving of €0.5m.

In September 2009, it was announced that the Home School Community Liaison Scheme, the School Completion Programme and the Visiting Teachers Scheme for Travellers would be integrated under the NEWB.

Budget: €9.575million. (This does not include integrated services).

Number of staff: 152. This includes 103 educational welfare service staff, 41 visiting teachers for Travellers plus management and support for School Completion and Home School programmes.

Top earners: Acting CEO Nuala Doherty on a salary scale of €102,963 – €123,452. Salary scales for the management team range from €102,963 to €123,452. For integrated services scale is €65,185 to €113,000.

Average salary: €54,800

Highest annual pension payment: €30,439.39 (The NEWB refused to disclose the name of the pension holder)

6 THE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY (HEA)

The HEA manages a budget of over €1.6billion for the third-level education sector. The total budget for operating the HEA includes €0.65m provided for the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), €0.84m provided for the Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology (IRCSET), and €0.63m for the National Access Office. The two research bodies allocated €35m in grants to postgraduate and postdoctoral this year. However, academic researchers and PhD students who have committed to research projects have been warned that their funding may be cut mid-stream.

The McCarthy report said absorption of the HEA into the Department of Education could save €1m a year. But the recent Hunt Report says a beefed up HEA should drive reform across the third level sector.

Annual budget €7.7 million

Number of staff 68

Top earners Tom Boland, CEO: €145,592; Other posts on civil service principal officer level from €84,133-€106,411 (Mary Kerr, Eucharía Meehan, Muiris O’Connor, Mary Liz Trant, Fergal Costello, Stewart Roche).

Average salary €54,795

Highest annual pension payment €78,958 (The HEA refused to disclose the name of the pension holder)

7 GRANGEGORMAN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

This agency is overseeing the relocation of the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) to a new campus at Grangegorman, near Phibsboro in Dublin. The Government recently re-affirmed its commitment to the Grangegorman project. It was hoped the entire project could be funded by selling off DIT’s 30-plus properties across Dublin city centre, but the property slump means the taxpayer will now have to fund most of the €486 million cost.

Annual budget€1.8m

Number of staff4.5

Top earnersMichael Hand, CEO: €80,051-€98,424; Nora Rahill, corporate affairs manager: €48,832-€60,224; Ronan Doyle, communications manager: €48,832-€60,224

Average salary€57,798

Highest pension paymentNo retirements have taken place

8 THE STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

One of the more essential of the education quangos, the SEC is charged with overseeing the Leaving and Junior Certificate exams. Despite occasional mistakes and embarrassments, the SEC has largely run a professional operation since taking charge of the exams from the Department of Education and Skills in 2003.

Annual budget€66.6m (including €9.7m in exam fees from students)

Number of staff168 full-time, 36 part-time.

Top earnersAidan Farrell, CEO: €146,191; Vacant, director of operations: €98,565-€118,037; Pat Coffey, head of examinations and assessment: €93,197-€113,503

Average salary€57,190

Highest pension paymentThe SEC refused to release this information

9 THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY OF IRELAND (NQAI)*

The NQAI oversees standards for third-level institutions outside the university sector.

Annual budget€11.1 million

Number of staff28

Top earnersPádraig Walsh, chief executive: €127,796-€146,191; Jim Murray, director of framework implementation and qualifications recognition: €82,014- €104,770; Claire Byrne, director of corporate affairs and communications: €76,407- €97,520

Average salary€52,392

Highest pension paymentEdwin Murnagh, €35,000

10 IRISH UNIVERSITIES QUALITY BOARD*

The IUQB is charged with maintaining standards in the university sector. The IUQB refused to disclose salary details, stating that, although funded by the state, it is a private organisation. Last year, the success of the IUQB in monitoring standards was questioned after evidence emerged of serious grade inflation at third level.

Annual budget€750,000

Number of staff6

Top earnersThe IUQB refused to disclose this information

Average salaryThe IUQB refused to disclose this information

Highest pension paymentPrivate pension scheme

11 COMHAIRLE UM OIDEACHAS GAELTACHTA AGUS GAELSCOLAÍOCHTA

The Irish language organisation provides teaching resources, support services, and research for Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht schools. Its closure would save the Exchequer of €1.2m per annum, according to the McCarthy report. CEO Muireann Ní Mhóráin says that COGG is essential to address the needs of the Irish language school sector, and that its integration into the Department of Education would not bring about any savings. The agency employs three staff, including the CEO.

Annual budget€1.134m

Number of staff3

Top earnersMuireann Ní Mhóráin, CEO: €97,958; Aisling Nic Craith, executive officer: €31,243-€50,577; Pól Ó Cainín, research and publications assistant: €29,024-€45,616

Average salary€50,000 approx.

Highest pension paymentNo retirements have taken place

12 LÉARGAS AND THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION (NCGE)

A not-for-profit organisation, Léargas has managed European, national and international exchange and cooperation programmes in education, training and youth and community work for over 23 years. The NCGE, which operates under the aegis of Léargas, provides support to guidance counsellors at all levels of education.

Annual budget€4.13m

Number of staff43

Top earnersJim Mullen, executive director: €114,366; Other salaries of €90,884 and €89,176.

Average salary€49,610.

Highest pension paymentPrivate pension scheme

13 GAISCE

Gaisce recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. The popular programme, often undertaken by Transition Year students, challenges young people to undertake a personal challenge, community involvement, physical recreation, and an adventure journey in order to win the medal, which is seen as a CV booster.

Annual budget€886,000

Number of staff:6 full-time, 3 part-time

Top earnersPatrick G Callaghan, chief executive: €106,582; John Murphy, director of development: €106,582; all other staff: €60,069

Average salary€60,712

Highest pension paymentPrivate pension scheme

14 SKILLNETS

Skillnets, a private limited company that offers training to employees in private businesses, received €16.59 million from the

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovations national training fund in 2009. Last November, it emerged that Skillnets had paid for 24 courses, eight of which were not delivered, costing the Exchequer €50,000. A spokesperson for the agency says that it has put additional structures in place to ensure that this does not happen again.

Annual budget: €16.59 million received from the Exchequer

Number of staff: 19

Top earners: Alan Nuzum, CEO: €119,000

Average salary: Skillnets refused to disclose this information

Highest pension payment: Private pension scheme

15 THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL (FETAC)*

FETAC is the awarding body for further education courses.

Annual budget: €7.3million

Number of staff: 35

Top earners: Stan McHugh, CEO, €146,191; Other senior grades: €76,407-€97,520; €82,014-€104,770

Average salary: €64,220

Highest pension payment: €51,000.

16 THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL*

HETAC provides awards and sets standard for third-level institutions outside the university sector.

Annual budget: €3.5m (approx). Fee income of about €1.9m.

Number of staff: 30

Top earners: Chief executive (currently vacant): other senior grades: two directors €82,014-€104,770

Average Salary: €55,500 (approx)

Highest pension payment: €79,322, paid to a retired chief executive. HETAC refused to disclose the names of salary and pension holders.

**In November 2008, the Government announced plans to amalgamate the NQAI, HETAC and FETAC and the IUQB into one super agency- Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland.*

This followed widespread concerns about grade inflation and duplication of responsibilities across the four bodies.

Politics	Politics	International	Science
C greets F ant on historic state visit	Something sensational!	England soccer team to visit Aviva stadium	Planned €7.5m cancer research group 'patient focused'

News

Ireland
World

Consumer
Galleries

Politics

Crime & Law

Social Affairs

Health

Education

Environment

Science

Technology

Video

Weekly Quiz

Weather

The Anglo Trial

Cities in Transition

Digital Edition

All Sections

Back to top