

IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council Press Release
For immediate release: Thursday, 18 August 2011
Photography available from Andrew Towe, Parkway Photography,
048-90659808, mail@parkwayphotography.co.uk
Pdf of report attached.

- **Few students from Republic taking up courses in Northern Ireland**
- **Governments need to address obstacles to cross-border mobility of students**

The IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council (JBC), which is made up of employer groups IBEC and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), today launched a report about obstacles to cross border undergraduate education which shows low percentages of students from Ireland taking up courses in Northern Ireland and vice versa.

'A study of obstacles to cross-border undergraduate education', funded by the EURES Cross Border Partnership, shows that students from Northern Ireland represent only 1% of the Republic of Ireland's undergraduate population while the corresponding figure for southern students in Northern Ireland higher education institutions is just 4.4%.

The report identifies a number of obstacles and factors limiting cross-border undergraduate mobility including:

- a lack of information about universities and institutes of technology in the other jurisdiction
- the change in the equivalence between A level and Leaving Certificate grades
- unfamiliarity with the respective Central Admissions Office (CAO) and Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) application processes.

Speaking at the launch of the report Hugh Crossey, chairman of the JBC steering committee said: "Business is concerned at the very low number of undergraduates registering for courses in the other jurisdiction. There is very limited cross-fertilisation in terms of education opportunity taking place between the two jurisdictions.

"Planning for higher education on the island of Ireland must take account of future demographics with an expected fall in the number of 18 year olds in Northern Ireland and the high birth rates in the Republic of Ireland feeding into higher demand for education at all levels. We urge the two governments to ensure that higher level education policy in both jurisdictions takes account of the skill and job mobility priorities for the all-island economy.

"Equity and equality of cross-border university access should underpin the future policy decisions on higher education in both jurisdictions", he concluded.

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