

Midlands Manufacturing Sector



SECTORAL OVERVIEW

SKILLS & TALENT

Midlands Manufacturing Climate

The manufacturing sector in the Midlands (encompassing Laois, Longford, Offaly, and Westmeath) is a significant contributor to the regional economy, employing a higher proportion of the workforce compared to the national average. The region is strategically focused on developing as a centre of excellence in advanced manufacturing. Key strengths include a skilled workforce, good transport links, and a supportive business environment with attractive corporate tax rates and government incentives. The Midlands is working to address challenges and leverage opportunities presented by the transition to a low-carbon economy. Initiatives like the Midlands Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan aim to enhance the region's competitiveness and attract further investment.

Manufacturing Sub-Sectors

- Pharmaceuticals
- Polymers
- Food & Beverages
- Medical Devices
- Electronics
- Industrial Equipment

Employment Overview

The Midlands has a strong manufacturing sector that employs 23,000 people, representing 18% of the region's workforce. This is higher than the national average of 12.5%. The Midlands region also experienced the strongest job growth in 2023 for IDA client companies, with a 5.8% increase, indicating a stable and resilient FDI sector.

Course Finders



Top ten employment roles in demand:

- 1. Production Operatives/Operators** Assembler and General Operative.
- 2. Engineers (various specializations)** Process, Automation, Mechanical, Electrical, Biomedical, Chemical.
- 3. Maintenance Technicians/Fitters** Mechanical Automation and Maintenance Fitters.
- 4. Production Managers/Operations Managers**
- 5. Quality and Safety Managers/Engineers**
- 6. Supply Chain and Logistics Professionals**
- 7. Toolmakers/ Toolroom Assistants** producing and maintaining the precision tools, moulds, jigs, and fixtures used in manufacturing.
- 8. Warehouse Operatives/Managers**
- 9. Manufacturing specific IT Professionals**
- 10. Manufacturing Planners**

Top ten key upskilling areas in demand:

- 1. Industry 4.0 Technologies** Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML), Robotics & Automation, Cloud Computing.
- 2. Data Analytics and Visualization.**
- 3. Lean Manufacturing and Continuous Improvement** Lean methodologies (e.g., Value Stream Mapping, 5S, Kaizen) and Six Sigma.
- 4. Sustainable Manufacturing Practices/Green Skills** Energy Efficiency, Circular Economy Principles, Waste Reduction and Management, Environmental Compliance.
- 5. Cybersecurity for Industrial Control Systems**
- 6. Advanced Maintenance and Predictive Maintenance**
- 7. Digital Twin Technology** The ability to create virtual models of physical assets, processes, or systems to simulate, analyze, and optimize their real-world counterparts.
- 8. Supply Chain Resilience and Risk Management**
- 9. Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing)**
- 10. Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking (Applied to new technologies)**

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SUPPORTS

- **Advanced Technologies in Manufacturing Cluster (atim)** – Support to develop initiatives aimed at attracting, retaining talent. Coordinates upskilling, retraining and bespoke training supports. Address technology solutions for manufacturing. 100+ members from industry, academia, and government.
- **Engenuity Cluster** - Exchange forum where members can build links, share experiences and undertake joint commercial activity. Focuses on bringing solutions to industry challenges for engineering firms in the Midlands using peer learning and leveraging existing Government supports. Highly suited for SMEs..
- **IMR** - Manufacturing Research & Technology Organisation with labs and industrial pilot lines in Dublin and Mullingar, IMR works with leading global and indigenous brands to demystify and derisk new and emerging technologies & to deliver high-impact collaborative research.
- **Apprenticeship.ie** - Promotes and facilitates apprenticeships. Apprenticeship opportunities coordinated by LOETB and LWETB. Apprenticeship programs funded by SOLAS..
- **LEO** – Local Enterprise Offices - First-stop shops for businesses, providing a range of support services to help entrepreneurs start, grow, and develop their businesses. They offer advice, information, financial assistance, and training to both new and existing businesses.
- **Enterprise Ireland** - Irish state agency that supports the development and growth of Irish enterprises in international markets. They provide funding, advisory, and development support to help Irish businesses start, grow, innovate, and win export sales.
- **Skillnet Ireland** - Skillnet Ireland is the national agency dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of workforce learning in Ireland. Their mission is to facilitate increased participation in enterprise training and workforce learning within Ireland's small and medium enterprises (SME).

AVAILABILITY OF REGIONAL GRADUATES

The Careers & Employability service at TUS provides a link with companies and organisations that wish to recruit graduates and students at all levels. We welcome enquiries from employers and are pleased to discuss the specific requirements of any potential employer for our graduates and students.



In 2024 TUS: Midlands awarded 244 advanced degrees in Engineering & Manufacturing disciplines.

Visit the TUS
Athlone Campus
Careers Connect
Portal

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MIDLANDS REGIONAL SKILLS FORUM

SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Skills & Talent Assessments
- Signposting to Education & Training
- Regional Event Planning and Participation
- Facilitation to Cluster Membership
- Guidance to Funding Opportunities



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