



Having MBA increases earning power

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One in four graduates with a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) earned in excess of €100,000 last year, indicating that the hefty fees and tough study regimen involved will result in greater earning power, a new survey has revealed.

While a quarter of male graduates were paid between €100,000 and €150,000 in 2006, the proportion of women and public-sector workers with the qualification on the same pay scale was just 17 per cent, according to the MBA Association of Ireland, which recently followed up its members' fortunes through a poll conducted by Amárach Consulting.

Some 70 per cent of MBA graduates enjoyed pay increases within two years of completing their studies, the survey showed. Almost half of those who received pay increases saw their salary climb at least 20 per cent, while 14 per cent of graduates saw their pay packet jump 50 per cent.

An overwhelming majority of MBA respondents found that their careers were substantially enhanced after graduation. More than a third of those with an MBA, one of the most sought-after masters degrees in the world, received a "significant" promotion, while 51 per cent had changed position.

"The MBA is certainly advantageous in the recruiting process," said Bill Hennessy, partner at executive search company Merc Partners. "When a situation arises where two candidates are equal in all other respects, the candidate with an MBA will have an edge."

Some 78 per cent of MBA graduates believe that the degree has given them a competitive advantage when looking for jobs, a view backed up by Mr Hennessy.

"It would be third in line, after experience and qualifications, and interpersonal skills," he said.

Some 6,500 entrepreneurs, senior managers and chief executives in Ireland hold an MBA and 750 people embark on the course each year. However, Irish universities have demonstrated contrasting fortunes in the *Financial Times's* annual ranking of full-time MBA programmes.

The Trinity MBA programme climbed 15 places in the rankings in January, while the UCD Michael Smurfit School of Business fell nine places. The Trinity programme, which is run in conjunction with the Irish Management Institute (IMI), now ranks 70th in the world and the UCD Smurfit School course is 98th.