

To : The Chief Executive Officer of each Vocational Education Committee

Programme Co-Ordinator Posts In Vocational Schools

The Minister for Education and Science wishes to advise Vocational Education Committees that, following consultation with the interested parties, agreement has been reached on the following arrangements for posts of Programme Co-ordinator in vocational schools.

Programme Co-ordinator Posts

- 1.1 A post of Co-ordinator will be established in each school offering any of the following programmes:

Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
Transition Year
Junior Certificate Schools Programme

- 1.2 The post will not form part of the normal cohort of school posts of responsibilities and will lapse when none of the programmes listed in 1.1 above is being provided by the school.
- 1.3 Selection for the post will be by way of special competition among the eligible teaching staff of the school.
- 1.4 Remuneration will be at the level of the allowance for a Special Duties Teacher Post of Responsibility in the case of schools with up to 100 pupils on these programmes and at the level of allowance for an Assistant Principal Post of Responsibility where the number of pupils is 100 or more.
- 1.5 Schools will arrange to provide a reduction in teaching hours to these post holders for co-ordination purposes from within the overall hours available to the school. The reduction in hours will be on the following basis

No of Pupils	Hours Reduction per week
1-59	2
60-99	3
100-139	4
>140	6

The loss of teaching hours will be compensated by way of a concession in the allocation of the annual number of teaching hours to the school.

- 1.6 In the event that the number of pupils falls below 100 pupils where the Programme Co-ordinator had previously been in receipt of an allowance at AP level, the co-ordinator will continue to hold the AP level allowance but will have the reduction in hours provided in accordance with the table in paragraph 1.5.
- 1.7 The above arrangements will be implemented with effect from 1 September, 2001.
- 1.8 Appointment to such a post in a vocational school shall have no implication for subsequent appointment to an SDT post of responsibility or an AP post of responsibility.
- 1.9 Any existing post of responsibility holder may apply for a post of Programme Co-ordinator and, if appointed, will receive the higher of the relevant allowances and the reduction in teaching hours. The post of responsibility thus vacated will be filled on a temporary basis at the level of the Programme Co-ordinator post or at the level of the vacated post of responsibility, if lower, and this temporary post will be retained by the school for as long as the Programme Co-ordinator post is warranted and the post-holder, thus appointed, does not revert to his/her original post. The reduction in teaching hours deriving from the level of the Programme Co-ordinator post will be compensated to the school for the purposes of co-ordination and fulfilment of duties having regard to the needs of the school. A post holder thus appointed may opt to revert to his/her original post status from the beginning of a school year having given notice of his/her intent at the latest by 1st May of the previous school year. Any revision of duties necessitated by this arrangement will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Circular Letter 20/98.
- 1.10 The holder of a Programme Co-ordinator post may apply for and be appointed to an SDT or AP post of responsibility under the terms of Circular 20/98. If appointed the teacher may retain the duties of Programme Co-ordinator and the higher of the relevant allowances. The post of responsibility may be filled on a temporary basis at the appropriate level, for as long as the teacher appointed to the post of responsibility is carrying out the duties of Programme Co-ordinator.
- 1.11 Arising from these arrangements a new competition will be held for the temporary post of responsibility retained by the school where an increase in the level of that temporary post is warranted by an increase in the level of the Programme Co-ordinator post.

2. Appointment Procedure

- 2.1 Notice of the vacant post shall be posted in the school for a period of not less than 5 school days, i.e. days on which the school is in operation for pupils.
- 2.2 Every reasonable effort shall be made to bring the vacancy to the attention of all eligible teachers. Members of staff on approved leave are eligible to apply and therefore, a copy of the notice of the vacant post should be sent directly to the designated contact addresses of such teachers.

- 2.3 The notice shall specify that the post is a post of Programme Co-ordinator with remuneration at SDT level or Programme Co-ordinator with remuneration at AP level. The notice should also specify the number of pupils involved in the programmes on the previous 30th September and the reduction in teaching hours available. On first introduction of a programme or programmes, the level of the post and the reduction in hours will be based on an estimate of the number of pupils taking the programmes in the first year.
- 2.4. All teachers on the staff of the school with a minimum of three years' wholetime teaching service or equivalent are eligible to apply for the post where the remuneration is at AP level. All teachers on the staff of the school with a minimum of one years' wholetime teaching experience or equivalent are eligible to apply where the remuneration is at STD level. The revised arrangements for the calculation of service for eligibility for posts of responsibility are set out in Circular Letter PPT06/2002.
- 2.5. The notice shall specify the closing date for receipt of written applications which should not be earlier than ten school days after the initial date of posting of the notice in the school.

3. Selection

- 3.1 Applicants for the post shall be interviewed by an Interview Board consisting of:

1 VEC Representative (to be a member of the VEC)
 1 Personnel Expert
 1 Education Expert

All members must be present. There shall be gender representation on selection boards.

- 3.2 Where the scheme CEO is a member of the selection board she/he should normally act as secretary. In the absence of the scheme CEO a Board member should be assigned responsibility for keeping records. Alternatively a VEC staff member may be assigned as recording secretary to the Board.
- 3.3 The objective of the Selection Board will be to select the most suitable candidate for the post. In making its selection, the Board shall adopt the following criteria and marking system when determining their order of merit for submission to the VEC.
- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| a. | Capacity of the applicant to meet the needs of the school | 50% of marks |
| b. | Service to the particular scheme | 30% of marks |
| c. | Experience of a professional nature in the field of Education and involvement in the school | 20% of marks |
- 3.4 The total of the marks awarded under the headings (a), (b) and (c) above shall determine the order of merit. All appointments from a given competition shall be made in accordance with such order of merit.

4. Testing of candidates and awarding of marks.

- 4.1 In assessing candidates for the post the following is an indicative but not exhaustive list of appropriate areas of testing by Selection Boards in awarding marks under each of the headings (a), (b) and (c)

(a) Capacity of applicant to meet the needs of the school – 50% of Total Marks available at interview

Indicative areas of testing.

Knowledge and awareness of relevant educational issues including the school's present provisions and structures.

Capacity to fulfil a middle management role by meeting the needs of the school as set out in the schedule.

Contribution to the overall management, organisation and development of the school. Communication and Organisation skills.

General presentation of case including application form/C.V.

(b) Service to the particular scheme (Max 30% of Total Marks available at interview).

Marks for service to the particular scheme in a permanent whole-time, temporary and part-time capacity should be on the basis of 100% of the available marks for the most senior candidate and pro rata for the other candidates. The computation of such service shall be in accordance with Circular Letter 44/00 and any subsequent circulars replacing or amending same issued by the Minister for Education and Science from time to time.

(c) Experience of a professional nature in the field of education and involvement in the school (Max. 20 % of Total Marks available at interview).

Indicative areas of testing.

Personal Professional Development through in-career and/or external programmes.

Involvement with Boards of Management/Parents' Association/Representative Bodies/School Committees.

Work in association with educational bodies and institutions.

Course/subject development, co-ordination of courses.

Involvement in organising school events e.g. open days, prize giving, parent information meetings, extra curricular activities, school tours.

- 4.2 The indicative areas listed above should be utilised by the Selection Board with a view to determining the suitability of the candidate for the purposes of performing the role of Programme Co-ordinator with particular reference to paragraph 6.2 of this circular.

5. Appeal Procedure

- 5.1 The decision of a Selection Board may be appealed by a candidate on the grounds that the agreed criteria and marking scheme as set out above were not applied by the Board.
- 5.2 The purpose of the appeals process is to ensure that candidates have been evaluated and awarded marks by the Selection Board in accordance with the criteria and marking scheme as set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Circular Letter.
- 5.3 The appeals process is not an instrument to examine or override the evaluation of the Board or to deal with other technical infringements of the selection procedures set out in this Circular Letter. Concerns in relation to departures from or interpretation of aspects of the circular should be submitted to the Department of Education and Science for decision.
- 5.4 The only grounds for appeal through this procedure are
- (i) The candidate was not evaluated in accordance with criteria set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Circular Letter
- and/or**
- (ii) the marks for service to the scheme were incorrectly calculated.
- 5.5 Each appeal must state precisely the grounds as to 5.4.(i) and 5.4.(ii) above. The appeal shall outline the arguments which will be made at an oral hearing. No additional issues will be admissible at a hearing. At the hearing stage extraneous matters, allegations or arguments unrelated to the written appeal and the VEC statement of its position must not be introduced.
- 5.6 An Appeal must be delivered to the VEC within 14 calendar days of the date of notification of the Selection Board's recommendation.

Within 14 calendar days of the final date for receipt of appeals the VEC shall notify all the candidates of the appeals and forward the appeal to the appropriate Arbitrator. In forwarding the appeal to the Arbitrator the VEC shall include a statement of its position. This statement shall include all the arguments which the VEC wish to make at an oral hearing. A copy of the VEC statement shall be sent to the appellant at the same time.

No appointment shall be made pending the outcome of the appeal.

- 5.9 The Arbitrator shall arrange an oral hearing as soon as possible. It is desirable that the hearing take place within 15 days of receipt of the appeal. At the oral hearing the Arbitrator will be advised by a nominated advisor from both the Irish Vocational Education Association and the Teachers' Union of Ireland.
- 5.10 Having heard the appellant's case and consulted the advisors the Arbitrator may:
- (i) make a decision

- (ii) seek further information/documents before making a decision. Any such documentation or information will be made available to the appellant, the VEC and the IVEA and TUI advisors. Apart from this the parties shall make no other submissions to the Arbitrator.

The Arbitrator shall issue his/her decision as soon as practicable. The decision shall be

- (i) to reject the appeal

or

- (ii) to uphold the appeal.

The reasons for the decision shall be given.

- 5.11 All candidates shall be notified of the decision. If the appeal is upheld the original applicants will be invited to attend for re-interview. If the appeal is rejected the original successful candidate shall be appointed.

- 5.12 The appointment arrangements and terms of reference for Arbitrators are set out in Appendix I.

6. Duties of Co-ordinator

- 6.1 The duties attached to the post of Co-ordinator should reflect the grade and level of responsibility entailed by the post taking into account the size and needs of the school. Therefore the role and duties of the Programme Co-ordinator will vary according to the number of programmes being offered by a school, the number of pupils taking the different programmes and the reduction of teaching hours available with the post. In the distribution of responsibilities, where there is more than one programme involved, the Programme Co-ordinator may be assigned responsibility mainly for one programme.

- 6.2 The duties of Co-ordinator may include:

- Communication e.g. liaising with parents, staff and outside agencies.
- Planning e.g. co-ordinating programme planning, time-tabling
- Administration e.g. record keeping, arranging out-of-school activities, monitoring of practical achievement tasks
- Motivation e.g. team building, establishing the profile of the programmes, maintaining morale.
- Organisation e.g. organising work experience, insurance, meeting employers.
- Reporting to the school authorities.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 6.3 In implementing the various programmes and following consultation with those involved, school authorities will distribute duties in relation to the

programme to the available personnel according to the individual circumstances of the school and according to the aptitudes and interests of the staff. In a school that offers more than one programme and/ or where there are significant numbers of pupils taking a programme, duties in relation to the programmes may be assigned to other teachers, who may be post of responsibility holders, in addition to the Programme Co-ordinator.

7. Review

- 7.1 The operation of the arrangements will be reviewed after a period of two years by a group which will include representatives of the TUI and IVEA and of the Department of Education and Science.

8. Copies of circular

- 8.1 You are requested to provide a copy of this Circular to the parents' and teachers' representatives on Boards of Management.

**Johnny Bracken,
Principal Officer.**

June, 2002.

Terms of Reference for Arbitrators

1. Arbitrators are appointed jointly by the IVEA and TUI. These are the terms of reference under which the Arbitrator shall operate. These terms of reference may be amended or extended from time to time by way of a joint written instruction authenticated jointly by the signatures of the General Secretaries of the IVEA and TUI. In the event of any doubt or dispute arising in relation to the interpretation of these terms of reference the matter shall be referred to the IVEA and TUI whose decision shall be final.
2. The only grounds for an appeal under this procedure are those as set out in Circular Letter PPT 19/02. Each appeal should state clearly the grounds of the appeal and the arguments which will be used at the oral hearing. The introduction of any matters unrelated to the interview and the marking criteria may warrant the disallowing of the appeal.
3. Each appeal submitted to the Arbitrator shall be accompanied by a statement of case by the VEC.
4. The only arguments to be considered by the Arbitrator shall be those contained in the Appeal and VEC statement.
5. The arbitrator shall convene an oral hearing as soon as possible on receipt of an appeal. It is desirable that a hearing should be held within 15 days of receipt of the appeal by the Arbitrator. Every effort should be made to meet that objective.
6. At the oral hearing the Arbitrator will be advised by a nominated advisor from both the Irish Vocational Education Association and the Teachers Union of Ireland.
7. Following the hearing the Arbitrator shall issue a finding in writing to both parties. The finding shall give the reasons for the decision. The Arbitrator shall not enter into any further correspondence or communication with the parties.
8. On appointment each Arbitrator will be briefed jointly by the IVEA and TUI.
9. While the appointment is a joint appointment and the costs of arbitration will be borne jointly by the particular VEC and TUI the IVEA shall arrange payments to all the Arbitrators.