



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

E 109/63/03

22 June 2004

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Circular 15/2004: Confined competition to participate in a Masters Programme in Public Policy Analysis and, upon successful completion of the Programme, appointment as Assistant Principal to work in public policy analysis.

A Dhuine Uasail

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce a confined competition for the selection of up to twenty candidates to participate in a Masters Programme in Public Policy Analysis. Upon successful completion of the programme, candidates will be appointed as Assistant Principals and will work in public policy analysis.
2. The programme will be a two year fulltime programme involving academic study and projects in public policy evaluation. Successful completion of the programme will result in the award of an NUI accredited MSc Econ. in Public Policy Analysis. An outline of the programme is attached at **Appendix A**.

Nature of Work

3. Policy analysis is concerned with reviewing the objectives of Government policy, evaluating the effectiveness of programmes and assessing alternative means of achieving policy objectives. It is also concerned with assessing value for money, and ensuring sound decision making.
4. The policy analyst will be expected to initiate and carry out evaluations of departmental programmes and activities and to apply appropriate methodologies for analysing public policy. Analysts will also be expected to promote the more widespread use of policy analysis by employing networking and influencing skills in their organisations.

Training to be provided

5. The Master Programme in Public Policy Analysis is a two year, full time programme to be delivered by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in association with the Faculty of Commerce, UCD.
6. The first year will be a full time academic year. It will have a practical focus, with an emphasis on learning analytical skills and techniques which can be applied in practice.

To all Departments and Offices [For Departments read Department/Office throughout this circular]

7. The second year will require students who successfully complete year one to undertake two¹ major evaluation projects under supervision. Departments in co-operation with CMOD and the IPA, will identify suitable topics for the projects to be undertaken by participants. The selection of topics for evaluation will have regard to the practical needs of Departments in terms of meeting their existing evaluation requirements and could, for example, include evaluations to be carried out under the *Expenditure Review Initiative*, etc.
8. Suitable, ongoing, formal assessment of participants by the course tutors will also form an integral part of the training programme.

Personal Requirements

9. The Masters Programme in Public Policy Analysis is aimed at officers in middle management (Higher Executive Officer and Administrative Officer or equivalents) grades across civil service Departments who have potential to advance to more senior levels in the future.
10. Applicants should :
 - Have a strategic perspective and understand the relevance of wider departmental, civil service and external issues and recognise their implications in the context of their role;
 - Possess analytical thinking and understand the role of policy analysis and its application in achieving work objectives;
 - Possess good communication and influencing skills;
 - Be able to deliver results and demonstrate an independent and creative approach to problem solving.
 - Be able to demonstrate a capacity to undertake a demanding academic programme (An Honours Primary Degree or equivalent professional qualification is desirable but not essential).
11. It would also be desirable to have already undertaken some level of basic policy analysis and evaluation training and development. This could include completion of CMOD's introductory policy analysis training course, or completion of the Diploma Programme in Public Policy Analysis or other suitable policy analysis related training intervention.

Eligibility Requirements

12. A nominee must on 30 June, 2004
 - (a) be serving in an established capacity in the civil service as a Higher Executive Officer or Administrative Officer or equivalent grade

¹ Candidates may at the discretion of their parent Department and the IPA, elect to work on one major evaluation project, subject to fulfilling the requisite academic criteria for the award of the MSc. Econ. Degree.

and

- (b) have completed not less than two years service in the existing grade or an aggregate of two years service in eligible grades. In this context, credit is given for all job-sharing service on the same basis as full-time service;

and

- (c) be certified by the Personnel Officer in their Department as suitable for consideration with regard to performance of work in the present grade, general conduct, and health, especially sick leave. (the assessment requirements that Departments must fulfil in respect of each nominee are set out at paragraphs 22, 23 and 34 below.)
13. Candidates, if subject to probation in the existing grade, must have satisfactorily completed probation in that grade or in another eligible grade; in cases where officers would have been eligible to compete had they remained in their previous grade, this probation requirement would not apply.
 14. Officers who are on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers who are on special leave without pay (e.g. to serve with the EU) may be eligible – Personnel Sections should check individual cases with this Department if they are not covered by Circular 33/91. Officers on career break may apply if the terms of their career break conform to the provisions of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible to apply.

Nominations

15. All Departments are invited to each nominate a maximum of two candidates at Higher Executive Officer or Administrative Officer level or equivalent grade. All nominated candidates at the above mentioned grades will go forward to a central selection process for consideration for inclusion on the Masters Programme in Public Policy Analysis to commence in September 2004.
16. Departments should satisfy themselves that nominees meet all the requirements of this circular letter, that they can undertake the rigorous programme of study involved and that they have the capacity to make a significant contribution to public policy analysis on successful completion of the programme.
17. Nominations, accompanied by a completed application form at Appendix B for each nominee, should be forwarded by the Personnel Officer of the nominating Department to Ms. Ailish O'Connell, Civil Service Training and Development Service, CMOD, Department of Finance. Nominations must be received in CMOD, no later than 16th July, 2004. It is anticipated that the central selection process will begin in the week commencing 19th July 2004 and will continue into the following week. Nominees will be expected to be available for interview during those two weeks.

Decentralisation

18. In Budget 2004, the Government announced a major programme of decentralisation of Government Departments and other agencies from Dublin to locations around Ireland.
19. Candidates should be aware that, if they are successful at the first stage of the competition within their Department and are selected to go forward for central competitive interview,

any offer of a placement on the Masters programme will be conditional on agreement, on completion of the programme, to work in a particular location if the post in question is a decentralised post. Candidates will be asked to sign a written commitment to that effect. Agreement on the location of this post should be reached between each nominated candidate and his/her Department before the candidate's name is put forward for inclusion in the competition.

20. If a candidate chooses not to accept an offer of a place on the course on this basis, that candidate will not be put forward for competitive interview.
21. Where the relocation of a Department or Office outside Dublin is planned but has yet to take place, it is likely that staff will be required to work in Dublin for a period before moving to the new location. All successful candidates on the 2004 / 2005 programme will initially be located in Dublin for year 1 of the Masters Programme.

Performance Appraisal

22. Eligible officers who are interested in participating in this programme should inform the Personnel Officer of their serving Department. For each nominee, the Personnel Officer will be required to provide CMOD with an assessment of suitability (i) for inclusion on the programme and (ii) for promotion on a supernumerary basis during the training period and on a permanent basis on successful completion of the two year training programme.
23. The official assessment form and departmental nomination form, which must be completed by the nominee's immediate and second supervisor and the personnel officer, are provided at Appendix C.

The Competition

24. Those nominated by Departments will be required to undergo a selection process, which will be by way of competitive interview. In addition, CMOD in consultation with the interview panel, may at their discretion, adopt a short-listing procedure based on quality assurance of completed applications, using qualifications, experience level and appraisal information, or require candidates to undergo a preliminary interview and invite only those who reach the requisite standard to attend for competitive interview.
25. In placing in order of merit the candidates considered best qualified for appointment, credit will be given for proficiency in both Irish and English, in accordance with Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75 and Department of Finance Circular 30/90, and any other relevant instruction to candidates qualified for the award of such credit on or before the closing date for receipt of applications for this competition.

Conditions of participation in the programme and for appointment

26. For the duration of the programme, Departments will appoint successful nominees to temporary supernumerary positions at Assistant Principal (Standard Scale) level on an acting basis subject to the maximum scale point of the Assistant Principal (Standard Scale) salary not being exceeded. If a nominee successfully completes the programme, which will specifically include reaching the required academic standard, s/he will be promoted to Assistant Principal in an existing vacancy in her/his own Department and the supernumerary position would cease to exist.

27. Officers will continue to be employed by and formally assigned to their own Departments for the duration of their participation in the programme. Each participant's parent Department will have responsibility for meeting all costs associated with the programme, including fees and expenses and any general accommodation/administrative requirements etc. **Any net additional expenditure under the scheme will be considered as eligible expenditure for the purposes of meeting the 4% payroll target for spending on training and development under the PPF and reiterated in "Sustaining Progress". Such net additional expenditure would include expenditure on academic fees and the salary cost of the supernumerary Assistant Principal position.** During the second year of the programme, participants will undertake project work (see paragraph 7 above). Participating Departments will be expected to suggest suitable topics for this project work. Programme participants may be required to undertake project work unrelated to the work of their Department.
28. Before being released to begin the first year of the training programme, each nominee will be required to sign an agreement declaring that, if s/he leaves the Civil Service within two years of completing the course, s/he will refund the cost of the course (e.g. fees and any other expenses incurred on the officer's behalf) and the salary costs paid to the nominee during release from normal working duties for the purpose of attendance on the course.
29. Officers will continue to be eligible for promotion in the normal course in their parent Department during the programme period. An officer promoted to Assistant Principal (Standard Scale or Higher Scale) or equivalent during the training period may accept the promotion and opt either to take up the promotion in the relevant Department or continue to participate in the programme.
30. An officer whose participation on the training programme is not satisfactory may, at any time during the training period, be returned to her/his former position (or other suitable vacancy at that level) and duties without delay and any entitlement to an allowance or subsequent appointment to Assistant Principal under the terms of this Circular will then cease.
31. An officer will not be released for career break or special leave, with or without pay, or to work-share during the training period because of the specialised nature of the training in the programme.

Assignment and promotion on satisfactory completion of the programme

32. On satisfactory completion of the programme officers can generally expect to be assigned to a posting in their parent Department at Assistant Principal level and to undertake work in public policy analysis. Please see paragraphs 18-21 above regarding Departments participating in the Government's decentralisation programme.
33. Officers will, on assignment, be offered promotion to Assistant Principal (Standard Scale) in an acting capacity in accordance with the normal arrangements in their Department, subject to completion of the minimum period of service necessary for such a promotion. Starting pay will be calculated in accordance with the provisions of Circular 34/77 (Starting Pay on Promotion or Establishment).

Assessment of Eligibility

34. The Head of the Department should not send a candidate's application to CMOD unless satisfied that the candidate fulfils the conditions of eligibility set out at paragraphs 12 to 14 above, has worked well and been satisfactory in their present grade and in their general

conduct, and are suitable from the point of view of health, with particular regard to sick leave.

35. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition and (ii) health and the level of sick leave are not verified until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment onto the Masters (Public Policy Analysis) Training Programme. Admission to the competitions and interview does not imply acceptance of a person's candidature. In considering a successful candidate's suitability for appointment in terms of health and sick leave, regard will be given to Department of the Public Service Circular 34/76 (as amended by Department of Finance Circulars 32/91, 33/99 and 17/03). Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility should clarify their position with their Personnel Section before applying.

Circulation

36. Personnel Sections should bring this Circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in their departments and associated offices without delay, including officers on maternity leave, career break and any other relevant forms of leave. If candidates have any queries about this circular they should contact their Personnel Section. After the nomination process has been completed and nominations submitted by Departments any subsequent enquiries about this confined competition should be addressed to Ms. Ailish O'Connell, Civil Service Training & Development Service, CMOD, Department of Finance, Floor 3, Lansdowne House, Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4 (Phone 01 6045024 or e-mail at ailish.o'connell@finance.gov.ie).
37. The Civil Service is an equal opportunity employer. Promotion within the service is made on the basis of qualifications and the ability to carry out the responsibilities of the grade or post.

Mise le meas

John O'Connell
Assistant Secretary

APPENDIX A

Master of Economic Science

(Public Policy Analysis)

Programme Outline

Master of Economic Science

(Public Policy Analysis)

The MSc in Policy Studies is a two-year full-time programme. The primary aim of the programme is to enhance the capabilities of personnel within the public sector system to analyse policy and thus to contribute to decision-making on the allocation of public money.

Admission requirements

An honours primary degree or equivalent is desirable but not essential. Applicants without an honours degree but with suitable professional experience may, subject to assessment, be permitted to enrol in the programme.

Programme Content

Year 1

Participants will study five subjects per semester in the two semesters of year one.

Research Methods and Statistical Analysis

This course is designed to develop students understanding of the key statistical concepts underlying economic and social analysis. It aims to develop students' statistical reasoning skills and emphasises concepts over computations. This course also introduces students to the fundamental principles and methods of research that are necessary to conduct a reasoned analysis of policy. Students are introduced to the roles of research in policy analysis and to the different frameworks for gathering and interpreting data. Students will be introduced to quantitative and qualitative research, the differences between them and the appropriate methodologies for both. These modes of research will be illustrated by case studies.

Elements of Economic Analysis

The course covers the elements of microeconomic and macroeconomic analysis. It emphasises how economic analysis can be used to assess policies in the public sector. The course develops an understanding of markets and of the implications of government microeconomic policy. The macroeconomic analysis sector of the course provides the context for public policy.

Financial Analysis

This course emphasises the development of financial expertise and analytical skills relevant to modern day Public Service Financial Management. It blends the study of key underlying principles from a range of disciplines (finance, management and financial accounting, economics and quantitative analysis) with practice in their application to the complex strategies, policies and programmes encountered in the public sector.

Strategy and Modernisation

This course details the elements of the Public Service Modernisation programme. It relates them to their origins in 'New Public Management' and the problems confronting the public sector. The programme shares many characteristics with movements for public sector change in other Western states. The Irish experience will be compared and contrasted with these. The course also provides an understanding of the main concepts and elements of strategic management including: (i) an understanding of strategic issues (strategic analysis); (ii) the considerations and means of deciding on the exact strategies to be followed by an organisation (strategy evaluation); and (iii) the main issues that organisations must manage in order to realise their strategic direction (strategy implementation). It investigates how different organisational contexts impact on aspects of strategic management. It examines how strategies are realised and affected by the internal cultural and political processes operating in the organization

Workshops in Applied Statistical Analysis

This course is designed to develop students' ability to apply their understanding of key statistical concepts. It reinforces students understanding of the key concepts underlying economic and social analysis by focusing on the common issues confronting practising researchers in undertaking data analysis. It aims to assist prospective researchers in mastering the art of data analysis and to help students in recognising that quantitative analysis is far more than routine application of statistical tests.

Project and Risk Management

This course outlines the principles of effective Project and Risk Management. It makes the distinction between the skills required to manage a project as distinct from operational management techniques. The necessary tools required in designing a successful project are defined. Alternative approaches to structured project management are reviewed and practical approaches to implementation issues specific to project management are developed. The significance of risk management for public sector organizations is outlined and methodologies for risk assessment and management are explored.

Public Finance

This course examines spending decisions within the context of the annual budget cycle including the constraints attaching thereto. The economic implications of taxation and debt policies are outlined and alternative sources of finance explored. Public financial procedures are reviewed and assessed with an emphasis on the emergence of measures of accountability in evaluating performance. Reforms to financial management procedures are outlined and the usefulness and relevance of private sector techniques to public sector organizations are evaluated. International reforms to public sector financial management are also outlined and assessed.

Public Sector Economics

The course develops the understanding of the key concepts in public sector economics. It establishes the rationale for government intervention and critically examines the major forms of intervention in markets by government including,

taxation, subsidisation, regulation and direct provision. The course examines the private provision of public goods and the conceptual and procedural issues that arise in public private partnerships. The course examines policy issues in areas such as health, housing, regional policy, and education.

Policy Evaluation

This course distinguishes amongst the different kinds of evaluation methodologies appropriate to the variety of policy programmes at hand. The impact of patterns of governance upon the suitability of various forms of evaluation is examined. Economic evaluation and experimental design, commonly grouped under the rubric of impact evaluation, are identified as the most appropriate methodologies for those programmes whose goals are clear and homogenous. For those programmes which are more heterogeneous in terms of objectives and outcomes (typical of the governance paradigm), alternative models of evaluation are detailed. The problems surrounding the dissemination of research findings into the policy-process will also be discussed.

Economic Evaluation & Cost Benefit Analysis

The course establishes the principles and procedures of economic evaluation. It proceeds from the economic foundations of efficiency and effectiveness and develops an understanding of the different approaches to evaluation. The course makes a detailed study of the theory and practice of cost benefit analysis – the most developed method for public investment appraisal in the public sector emphasising both the conceptual and technical issues which arise. The course integrates the relevant evaluation documents from Ireland including “Guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals in the Public Sector” and “Proposed Working Rules on Cost Benefit Analysis”. The procedures of Cost Benefit Analysis are examined in a number of key areas. The lessons of economic evaluation and cost benefit analysis are applied to value for money studies.

Year 2

The second year will require students who successfully complete year one to undertake two major evaluation projects under supervision. CMOD, in conjunction with Departments and the IPA, will identify suitable topics for the projects to be undertaken by participants. The selection of topics for evaluation will have regard to the practical needs of Departments in terms of meeting their existing evaluation requirements, for example, in relation to evaluations to be carried out under the *Expenditure Review Initiative*, etc. Suitable, ongoing, formal assessment of participants by the course tutors will also form an integral part of the second year of the training programme.

The IPA will ensure that project assignments undertaken by the students are of sufficient quality to meet academic standards and represent best practice, and will also be responsible for carrying out whatever assessment is required to ensure that successful completion of the two year Policy Analyst Trainee Programme leads to the award of a Masters degree of National University of Ireland (NUI) standard.

APPENDIX B

MSc. Econ. in Policy Analysis Application Form

APPLICATION FORM

MSc. Econ. in Policy Analysis for the Irish Civil Service

Please insert Passport size photograph in
Box opposite.

Department: _____

Place
Photograph
Here

Please ensure that you complete and return this application form to your Personnel Officer for inclusion in your Department's selection process. Successful nominations should then be forwarded to Ailish O'Connell, Centre for Civil Service Training & Development, CMOD, Lansdowne House, Dublin 4 so as to reach there not later than 5.00pm on Friday 16th July, 2004

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Grade: _____

Do you claim marks for proficiency in Irish? Yes No

If "Yes" state on what basis _____

Indicate percentage being claimed _____

I hereby declare that I fulfil all the requirements set out in the Department of Finance circular 15/2004 and that the information given in this form is correct

Signature: _____ Date: __ / __ / ____

EDUCATION AND GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

Examination(s)	Year	School/College Attended	Results Obtained

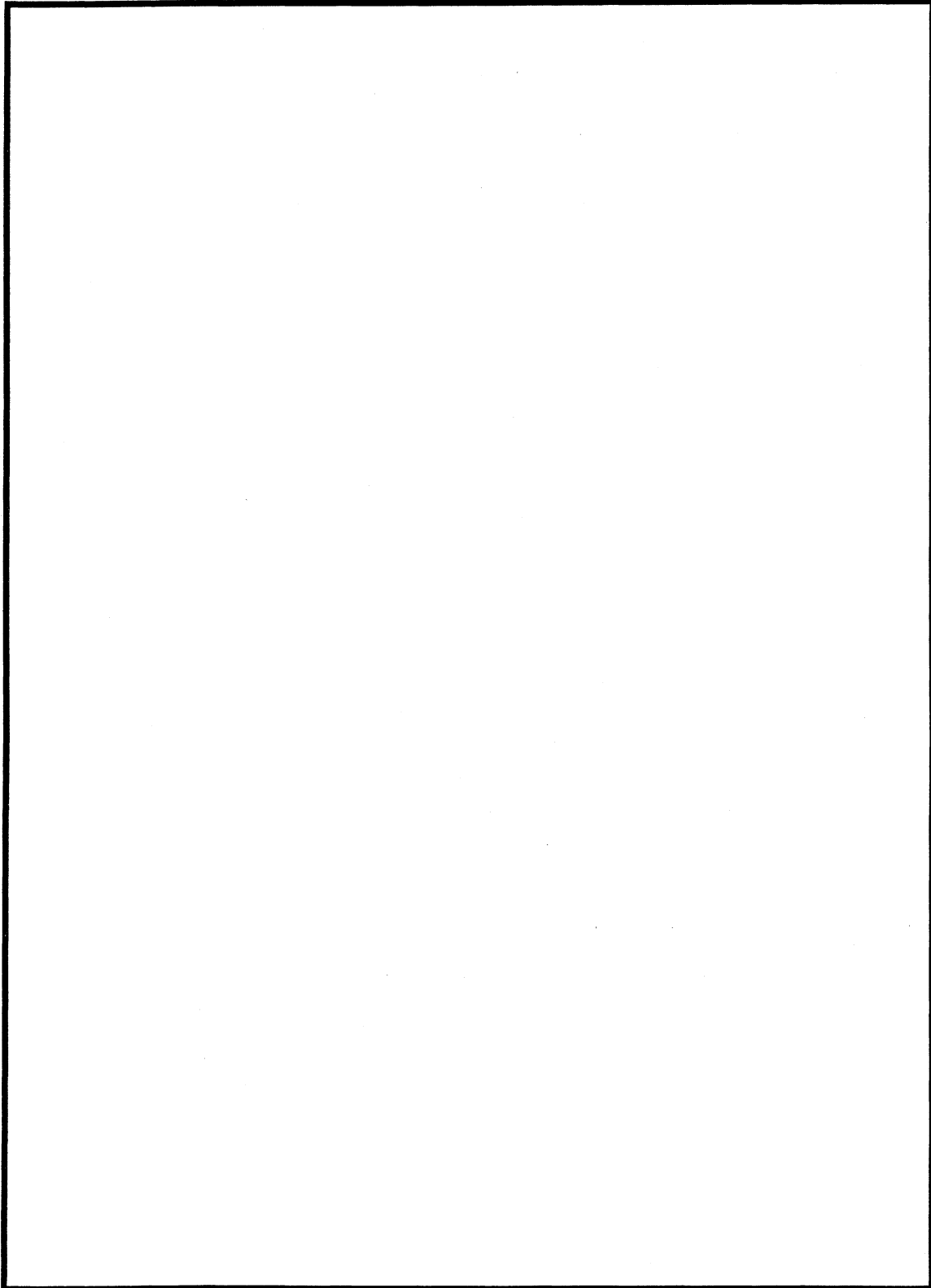
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Please give below, starting with your current work, particulars of all employment.

From (mm/yy)	To (mm/yy)	Grade	Department / Office	Division / Section

SUITABILITY FOR MASTERS PROGRAMME IN POLICY ANALYSIS

You may highlight below specific personal qualities from your educational background and work experience which you believe are particularly relevant in demonstrating your suitability for this programme :

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the applicant to write their response to the question about their suitability for the programme.

APPENDIX C

MSc. Econ. in Policy Analysis

Departmental Nomination Form

&

Candidate Assessment Form

Departmental Nomination Form

Circular 15/04 – Confined competition to participate in a Masters Programme in Public Policy Analysis and, upon successful completion of the Programme, appointment as Assistant Principal to work in public policy Analysis.

Certification of the Head of _____
(Please insert Department name above)

Re: Candidate Name: _____

Grade: _____

I certify that the above candidate

- (a) has worked well and been satisfactory in all respects in his/her present position and
- (b) satisfies the conditions of Department of Pubic Service Circular 34/76 as amended by Department of Finance Circulars 32 91, 33/99 and 17/03 with regard to health and sick leave.

The location of the AP Policy Analyst post is: _____

I confirm that this issue has been discussed and agreed between this candidate and the Department.

Personnel Officer: _____

(Please print name in Block Letters underneath signature)

Date: _____

ASSESSMENT FORM

MSc. Econ. in Policy Analysis

Candidate Name: _____

Serving Division / Office: _____

The purpose of this assessment form is to provide detailed information on aspects of the candidate's performance in their current job that are relevant to the Policy Analyst role. This information will be available to the interview Board along with the candidate's application form, on the day of the interview.

Please take the time to complete this form carefully. It is essential that you rate the candidate honestly and accurately, as this information is important in assisting the Board with their overall assessment of the candidate. It is also important to note that this information is available to candidates, if requested, and will only provide useful feedback, if it accurately reflects the candidate's actual strengths and development needs.

This form consists of three parts :

1. Rating
2. Fitness for promotion
3. Annex 1 (Statement of required skills)

To be completed by Personnel / Corporate Services Division			
Is candidate entitled to marks for proficiency in Irish?	Yes	No	
If the answer to the above question is Yes, please give the following details:			
a) Date of written and oral Test, if candidate has passed the Irish competency and promotion test held by the Office of the Civil Service & Local Appointments Commissioners			
b) Date of Examination if candidate has passed the Irish paper at a Confined Written Competition for posts as Higher Executive Officer			
Date of written Test	Date of Oral Test	Examination Date	% Claimed
-- / -- / ----	-- / -- / ----	-- / -- / ----	--- %
Relevant details, if candidate has an appropriate certificate from Gaeleagras			
Date obtained -- / -- / ----			
Árd Chúrsa or Mean Chúrsa (please circle appropriate level)			
Teastas Tinrimh or Teastas Breithmheasa (please circle appropriate certificate)			

SECTION 1

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CANDIDATE'S DIRECT SUPERVISOR

From looking at the five core skill/quality areas listed below and carefully considering the statements which describe effective performance in each area (as listed in Annex 1), please rate the candidate's performance in their current position in relation to each of the skill/quality areas.

The rating scale runs from '5' down to '1' where :

- '5' indicates that significant development of the skill is required
- '4' indicates that some development of the skill is required
- '3' indicates that the candidate demonstrates the skill at an acceptable level
- '2' indicates that the candidate demonstrates the skill to an above average degree
- '1' indicates that the skill is a real strength of the candidate and he/she demonstrates it to an exceptional level

Please indicate the appropriate rating under each skill/quality area

Competency	Rating
Strategic Perspective	
Analytical Thinking	
Communication & Influencing	
Capacity to problem solve and deliver results	
Capacity to undertake demanding academic programme	

You may record any additional comments for the assistance of the Board here:

SECTION 2 – FITNESS FOR PROMOTION

Please indicate below the candidate's fitness for promotion

Qualified for Promotion *(Please tick appropriate box)*

- 1. Exceptionally well qualified -
(Consistently demonstrates all the required skills and qualities)
- 2. Well qualified –
(Usually demonstrates all the required skills and qualities)
- 3. Qualified –
(Adequately demonstrates the required skills and qualities)

Not Qualified for Promotion

- 4. Not adequately qualified -
(demonstrates some of the required skills and qualities but needs further development in some areas)
- 5. Not qualified -
(demonstrates few of the required skills and qualities. Needs further development in most areas)

Signed: _____
(First Supervisor)

Grade: _____

I [agree with] / [disagree with] the above assessment
(Please circle as appropriate)

In the event of disagreement please give reason below:

Signed: _____
(Second Supervisor)

Grade: _____

Noted and signed by Candidate: _____

Annex 1

AP Policy Analyst: Core Skills Framework

Core Skill	Demonstration of Competency
Strategic Perspective	Understands the relevance of wider Departmental/civil service and external issues and recognises the implications in the context of their role. Thinks about issues and their own role in a strategic way and aims to achieve beneficial outcomes for a wide range of stakeholders.
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making	Identifies relevant information sources, objectively analysing and evaluating complex information to identify the key issues. Demonstrates a well-rounded general capability to analyse and interpret numerical information. Makes sound and realistic decisions on issues based on a thorough analysis of the relevant information. Consults with others, where appropriate, and considers the implications of decisions on other parties.
Communicating and influencing	Communicates clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing. Makes a compelling case, can present persuasive arguments and maintain poise under questioning. When influencing, is clear about objectives, plans how to influence others to achieve the desired outcomes and is prepared to state own position clearly.
Problem Solving and delivering results	Effectively plans projects, maximising available resources and setting realistic timeframes to ensure quality outputs and services. Involves relevant stakeholders and delegates tasks according to the strengths of the team. Measures and monitors progress to ensure delivery of results. Anticipates potential problems and puts contingency plans in place.
Capacity to undertake demanding academic programme	Shows commitment to self-development through (a) voluntarily seeking out up-to-date information of relevance to work responsibilities; (b) actively identifying and attending relevant formal development programmes; (c) showing commitment to successful completion of formal training programme; (d) demonstrating newly acquired skills in the workplace; (e) being willing to coach others in newly acquired skills.