

Reference No: ; **Date:** 30/01/78

Circular 2/1978:- Release of public servants to attend university courses leading to degrees in public administration

A Chara

I am writing to you about the release of staff to undertake courses of study which lead to university degrees in public administration.

Present courses

2 The following are the current arrangements for courses in this subject

University College Dublin

Master of Public Administration: Since 1973, the College have been providing a two-year post-graduate course leading to this degree. It has been run on a cyclical basis i.e. every two years, and the next course is therefore due to begin in the autumn of 1979.

The course is part-time and involves attendance during the academic year on one working day a week and Saturdays.

Bachelor of Public Administration: In the academic year 1978-79, the College propose to initiate a new four-year undergraduate course leading to this degree. It will involve evening lectures for the first three years and full-time attendance for the fourth and final year, which for the first cycle will be 1981-82.

Trinity College Dublin

Bachelor of Science (Public Administration): Since 1976, the College have been providing a one-year full-time course for this degree. It is open to holders of the Diploma in Public Administration awarded by the Institute of Public Administration.

Release of civil servants

3. The Minister for the Public Service, in pursuance of the policy of actively encouraging the educational development of public servants, is anxious that requests by civil servants for release to attend any of these courses should be treated with the utmost sympathy by their Departments or Offices and that the latter should do everything they can to facilitate attendance.

He will be prepared to consider any case made for a supernumerary post for the duration of an absence on full-time release and would therefore hope that requests for release would normally be granted save in the most exceptional circumstances.

4. The Minister appreciates, of course, that it would be entirely a matter for the employing Department or Office to decide whether or not full-time release should be allowed (subject to DPS Circular Letter 2/76). However, the following arguments in support of release (apart from the educational and developmental ones) may encourage Departments and Offices to adopt a sympathetic attitude:

(1) Most of the officers who would want to secure the two primary degrees mentioned, which alone involve full-time absence for an academic year, would be junior officers

(2) In practice, any officer who looked for full-time release should have committed himself well in advance, such as by doing the evening lectures for the B Public Administration, to studies for the completion of which full-time release would eventually be necessary. If such an officer gave suitable notice to his Department or Office, it should be possible, even if he were a key officer, to plan his replacement well in advance.

Release of public officials besides civil servants

5. The Minister also wishes that public service organisations and state-sponsored bodies under the aegis of your Department should adopt a similar policy in relation to requests by their staff for release to attend courses leading to degrees in public administration. I am to ask you to be good enough to inform those organisations and bodies to that effect and, if your Department's sanction is necessary for the recruitment of supernumerary staff to replace those who have been released, to consider sympathetically any requests for such sanction.

Mise le meas
John Mc Gartoll