



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

E100/9/66

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15 March 2000

Circular 12/2000: Confined competition for appointments as Clerical Officer (Computer Programmer)

A Dhuine Uasail

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (CSC) will hold a confined competition to set up a panel from which appointments as Computer Programmer may be made. The appointments from this competition may be made in any department * where there are suitable vacancies. Additional panels may be established to fill vacancies, **if any arise**, in certain provincial locations. It is not envisaged that appointments from this competition will be made after 30 June 2002.

Eligibility

2. The Civil Service is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

3. The competition will be confined to officers who on 1 April 2000

(i) are serving in an established capacity in the civil service or on secondment from the Civil Service to FAS or to the Health and Safety Authority and

(ii) are serving in a grade with a pay scale the maximum of which is equal to or less than that of the Clerical Officer higher scale. The Clerical Officer higher scale maximum is currently £ 348.15 per week.

4. Officers on probation are not eligible to compete excepting where they would have been eligible had they remained in their previous grade and they have served continuously since satisfactorily completing a period of probation (periods of special leave without pay should not be considered to break continuity of service for this purpose).

* For department read department/office throughout this circular.
To/All Departments etc.

5. Officers who are on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers who are on career break may apply if the terms of their career break conform with the provisions of Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible. Other 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.

Job requirements

6. Programming work involves the writing of detailed instructions for computers in accordance with predetermined codes or languages. Other aspects of the work includes, inter alia, (a) interpreting systems specifications designed by systems analysts (b) liaising with systems analysts and user staff and (c) problem solving. The work requires special qualities of application and patience, as well as a capacity for painstaking attention to detail. Selected officers will be given full training (which may involve spending a period outside Ireland).

General conditions of appointment

7. Appointment as Computer Programmer from the competition will be on a trial basis in the first instance. Not less than six months' satisfactory service will qualify the appointee to be certified as a competent Computer Programmer. On certification, the appointee's scale of pay will be increased at each point by £ 1,182 (established officers Class A PRSI: £1,244) per annum with effect from the original date of appointment as Computer Programmer. This sum, being regarded as pay for all purposes, will apply only while the officer continues to be assigned to programming duties.

8. An officer will remain on loan while serving on a trial basis in a department other than the parent department. During this period the officer will be paid by the department in which the officer is serving. If certified to be a competent Computer Programmer, the officer will be definitively transferred.

9. At any time during the trial period the officer on loan may be returned to the parent department if the officer either so requests or is found to be unsuitable for computer programming work. An officer who is not certified as a competent Computer Programmer will not be entitled to any additional pay because of having been on programming duties.

10. On certification as a competent Computer Programmer an officer who is not already a Clerical Officer will be appointed as Clerical Officer and treated for pay purposes as if promotion to Clerical Officer had taken place on the date of assignment to programming duties.

11. An officer who accepts an offer of appointment as Computer Programmer, from this competition or otherwise, will cease to be eligible for appointment from this competition. An officer who retires, resigns, etc. from his/her position in the Civil Service will cease to be eligible.

12. A Clerical Officer (Computer Programmer) is a general service Clerical Officer and is eligible in the usual way for promotion or admission to confined competitions.

The Competition

13. Selection will be by means of a competition conducted by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners which will consist of a qualifying written test, a competitive interview and an optional language test. The written test will be designed to ascertain candidates' potential competence for computer programming work and will not require any special knowledge. The written test will encompass aptitude tests covering specific task oriented capabilities in multiple

choice format. The written test is expected to be held in the week commencing 22 May 2000 in Dublin and the week commencing 29 May 2000 in provincial locations. The CSC will contact candidates direct to notify them of the date, time and venue of the examination. Details regarding the format and structure of the written tests will, where appropriate, issue to candidates in advance.

14. Those candidates who obtain the highest marks at the written test will be invited to competitive interview. The number to be invited to interview will be determined from time to time having regard to the number of vacancies to be filled. A candidate will be entitled to only one interview from this competition. The interviews will be conducted by a board or boards to be set up by the CSC and will be in a structured format. Details of the structure and the matters to be addressed by the board will be issued in advance to all applicants invited to attend for interview. Applicants must make themselves available for any test and/or interview at short notice if required. Requests for postponements will not be considered.

15. (i) In determining the order of merit at the competitive interview, credit will be given for proficiency in both Irish and English in accordance with Circulars 43/75 and 30/90 to candidates qualified for the award of such credit on or before the date of the interview.

(ii) If they so wish, candidates other than those qualified for the full credit of 6% as at (i) above, may, if they are admitted to the interview, have an assessment made of their ability to communicate effectively in both Irish and English. Ability in the language in which the interview is conducted will be assessed at the interview and in the other language by a separate language test. Candidates who as a result of this assessment show that they are proficient in both Irish and English will be given credit in respect of such proficiency.

Applications

16. Candidates should obtain their application forms from their own Personnel Section. The CSC will supply application forms to Personnel Sections on request. Candidates should return their completed application forms directly to the Secretary, Office of the Civil Service Commissioners, 1 Lower Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2, to arrive as soon as possible but not later than 5.15 p.m. on Friday 31 March 2000. This closing date must be strictly observed. An applicant who has not heard from the CSC by Tuesday 16 May 2000 should contact that Office immediately.

17. The CSC will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each candidate called to competitive interview, the Personnel Officer will be required to certify that s/he

has worked well and been satisfactory in his/her present grade

has been satisfactory in general conduct and

fulfils the conditions of eligibility specified in paragraphs 3 to 5 above.

18. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition and (ii) health and the level of sick leave are not verified by the CSC until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment. Admission to the competition, or any of the selection stages of the competition, does not imply acceptance by the CSC. In particular, candidates should note that the Personnel Officer will not have verified health and the level of sick leave of those called to competitive interview- accordingly

admission to the competition, or an invitation to any of the selection stages of the competition, does not imply that candidates meet the health and sick leave criteria. In considering a candidate's suitability for appointment from the point of view of health and sick leave the CSC will have regard to Circular 34/76 (as amended by Circulars 32/91 and 33/99). If candidates have doubts about any aspect of their eligibility, they are advised to clarify their position with their Personnel Section before proceeding with the application.

Circulation

19. Please take special care to bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers in your department and associated offices without delay (including eligible officers on maternity leave, career break, term time leave or other forms of leave).

20. If candidates have any query about this circular, they should contact their Personnel Section. Any subsequent enquiry about the progress of their application should be addressed direct to the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners.

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J. McGovern
Assistant Secretary