



An Roinn Airgeadais  
Department of Finance

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30 November, 2000

**Circular 34/2000: Confined Competition for the re-certification of Visually Impaired Telephonists as Clerical Officers.**

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce that the Civil Service Commission will hold a confined competition for the re-certification of Visually Impaired Telephonists (VITs) as Clerical Officers.

**Eligibility**

2. The civil service is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.
3. The competition is confined to VITs who, on 1 November, 2000, are serving in an established capacity.
4. Officers on probation are not eligible to compete.
5. Officers who are on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers 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 may be eligible - Personnel Sections should check individual cases with this Department if they are not covered by Circular 33/91.

**The Competition.**

6. The competition will consist of an interview to be held by the Office of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The interview will assess the following four skill areas that have been identified as being necessary for the Clerical Officer role:-

- Dealing with people,
- Being thorough and organised,
- Being relied upon,
- Responding to change.

7. Prior to the interview candidates will be required to complete an application form and provide examples from their own experience/life to date which they consider to be good

illustrations of their skill or ability in each of the areas. Further information on the four skill areas is attached at Appendix A.

8. It is expected that interviews will take place in January.

### **General Conditions of Appointments**

9. Successful candidates will be reassigned to Clerical Officer duties within their own Department.

10. All appointments will be subject to a period of probation of 12 months from the date of recertification as a Clerical Officer by the CSC.

11. VITs re-certified as Clerical Officers will be eligible in the usual way for promotion or admission to confined competitions. The CPSU has agreed that re-certified VITs will retain their service for seniority purposes.

### **Applications:**

12. Application forms are available from Marie Mitchell, Clerical Recruitment Unit, Civil Service Commission, telephone 6767086 ext. 2132, e-mail: [marie.mitchell@csclac.irlgov.ie](mailto:marie.mitchell@csclac.irlgov.ie)

13. Applications are in standard and large print forms and are also available in audiotape, Braille and/or disk format (for HAL/JAWS users). Completed applications should reach the CSC as soon as possible, but not later than **20 December, 2000**. An applicant who has not heard from the CSC by **10 January, 2001** should contact that office immediately.

14. The CSC will contact Personnel Officers to ensure that each candidate:-

- fulfils the conditions of eligibility specified in paragraphs 3 to 5 of this Circular,
- has been satisfactory in their present grade,
- has been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- is suitable from the point of view of health, with particular regard to sick leave.

15. 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 the candidate comes under consideration for appointment. Admission to the interview does not imply that a candidate meets the health and sick leave criteria. In considering a candidate's suitability for appointment in terms of health and sick leave the Commission will have regard to Circular 34/76, as amended by Circulars 32/91 and 33/99. Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility should clarify their position with their Personnel Section before applying.

### **Circulation and further information.**

16. Personnel Sections should bring this circular to the attention of all eligible officer serving in their departments and associated offices, including staff on maternity leave, career break and other forms of leave.

17. If candidates have any queries about this Circular they should contact their Personnel Sections. Any subsequent enquiry about the progress of their application should be addressed to the Marie Mitchell, CSC.

18. Unsuccessful candidates will be given feedback by the CSC on their performance at the interview, if they so wish.

Mise le meas,

J. McGovern  
Assistant Secretary.

To all Departments  
[for Department read Department/Office throughout this Circular]



## Appendix A

### Clerical Officer Skills/Experiences Questionnaire

On this questionnaire you will be presented with four statements which describe some of the skills/qualities required by Clerical Officers in the Civil Service today.

Please read them carefully and for each area think of examples from your own experience/life-to-date which you think are good illustrations of your skill or ability in the area. You may include experiences from any kind of setting - for example, education, leisure activities, paid employment, voluntary work, etc..

When choosing your examples, you may find it useful to list out each individual step that you took and the reasons why. Consider the options that you were faced with at each step and how you arrived at a particular course of action.

For each of the FOUR areas on this questionnaire, briefly describe what you consider to be a good example of demonstrating your ability and try to structure what you write so that you give us information about:

- the background to the situation
- what you actually did using the skill in question and why
- how it worked out.

Please give examples for each of the four areas but do not use the same example to describe your skills in more than two of the areas.

Your responses to the skills/experiences questionnaire will be used to help structure your interview. The interview board may question you in detail about the information you provide, with particular reference to the actions you took and your reasoning for doing so. You may be asked for different examples than the ones identified on this form so it is important that you think about and prepare additional/alternative examples in each of the skill areas.

#### **The Interview**

There will be two people sitting on the Interview Board for this post; these people will be existing or former Civil Servants and they will be fully trained in the Structured Interview Technique.

At the start of the Interview you will be introduced to each member of the Board and the Chairperson will explain the format to you to clarify any outstanding issues relating to your application form.

Once this has been completed, one of the skill areas will be clearly introduced to you and one Board Member will ask you questions relating to your experiences of demonstrating that skill. The other Board Member will have an opportunity to ask you questions at the end of that skill area. You will be told when the questioning for that particular skill area has ended. The interview will follow this pattern of events until the range of skill areas has been covered. Throughout the interview the Board Members will take it in turn to take notes. This is to

provide the Board with a fair and accurate account of the examples you give, and it is used during the assessment which follows directly after the interview.

At the end of the interview you will be given an opportunity to add any additional comments in support of your application.

Typically the Interview takes about 20 minutes with about 4 minutes being spent on examining each of the four skill areas.

Please keep a copy of this completed questionnaire.

## **The Four Skills Areas.**

### **Area 1: Dealing with people**

A Clerical Officer has to deal with a wide range of people from different age groups and backgrounds (e.g. the people working around you, your customers, who may include members of the public) on a daily basis. They interact with others in a variety of ways, such as, face-to-face, on the telephone or via post / fax / e-mail. It is important that a Clerical Officer can understand other people's viewpoints and can deal with others in a helpful and cooperative manner. They also need to be able to communicate in a clear, sensitive and concise manner.

### **Area 2: Being Thorough and Organised**

In the Civil Service today, it is necessary for Clerical Officers to be orderly in their approach to the work they are given. This requires them to be organised in handling the different pieces of work they are dealing with. Effective Clerical Officers are fully aware of what work they have to do, can determine the order of importance of different elements of their work and what steps need to be taken to meet given deadlines. It is important that they always manage their own time efficiently.

### **Area 3: Being Relied upon**

Clerical Officers are expected to take responsibility for the work they are given and produce good quality work, even when this involves, what may be perceived as, routine and/or repetitive work. They must be reliable and dependable, use their own initiative and be able to press on with their work without taking too much of their supervisor's time.

### **Area 4: Responding To Change**

In recent years the Civil Service has undergone significant changes in areas such as customer service and the use of new technology. In response to these and many other changes, Clerical Officers need to be flexible in their approach to work and be willing to learn new tasks and to adapt to new ways of doing things.

[end]