



An Roinn Airgeadais  
Department of Finance

E109/7/01

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**Circular 13/2001: Confined competitions for temporary appointments on a higher duties allowance basis at Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officer level in the Refugee Legal Service of the Legal Aid Board**

A Dhuine Uasail.

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce the holding of confined competitions for a number of temporary appointments at Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officer level in the Refugee Legal Service of the Legal Aid Board. The eligibility requirements for temporary appointments at both levels are set out in paragraphs 5 to 8 below and the selection procedures are set out in paragraph 10. The competitions will be held by the Legal Aid Board itself.

**Refugee Legal Service**

2. The Legal Aid Board has statutory responsibility for the provision of civil legal aid and advice to persons of modest means. The service is provided mostly through a nationwide network of Law Centres by staff in the full-time employment of the Board.

3. In February 1999 the Board established the Refugee Legal Service (RLS) as a dedicated service providing legal advice and assistance to asylum seekers at all stages of the asylum process, including representation before an Appeal Authority. This service is currently being expanded and as a result, the Legal Aid Board is seeking to fill a number of temporary Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officer positions on a higher duties allowance basis.

**Job description**

4. All of the positions will be Dublin-based. The positions at Higher Executive Officer level will involve general administration and will carry staff management responsibilities. The positions at Executive Officer level will also involve responsibilities for general administration covering, amongst other things, the corporate support functions required for the Refugee Legal Service such as Personnel, Accounts and IT. Candidates for appointment will be required to satisfy the Legal Aid Board that they are suitably qualified to carry out all aspects of the work of Higher Executive Officer or Executive Officer as appropriate.

**TO ALL DEPARTMENTS**

[For department, read department/office throughout this circular.]

**Eligibility**

5. Candidates for posts at **Higher Executive Officer** level must:

(a) on the date they apply for the competition be serving in an established capacity in the civil service as an Executive Officer or a Junior Clerk in the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas or an Executive Officer on secondment to FÁS from the civil service,

**and**

(b) on 1 March 2001 have not less than five years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of five years' service in eligible grades or not less than seven years' total service of which not less than two years was in an eligible grade (set out at (a)). Service in the former grades of Officer and Indoor Officer of Customs & Excise in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners will count as service in an eligible grade.

6. Candidates for posts at **Executive Officer** level must:

(a) on the date they apply for the competition be serving in an established or equivalent capacity in the civil service, or on secondment to FÁS from the civil service, in the grades of Staff Officer (General Service) or Clerical Officer (General Service). Previous service in the following grades will count as Clerical Officer service for the purposes of this competition:

Clerical Assistant (General Service) on clerical, shorthand-typing, typing or data entry duties, including previous service as Writing Assistant, Shorthand Typist, Clerk Typist, Typist, Card Puncher or Key-Punch Operator

Departmental Clerical Officer (Customs & Excise)

Assistant Officer of Customs and Excise

Departmental Clerical Assistant (Customs & Excise)

Departmental Clerical Assistant (Taxes)

Paperkeeper

**and**

(b) on 1 March 2001 have not less than two years' service in eligible grades.

7. Officers on probation are ineligible unless they would have been eligible had they remained in their previous grade and they have served continuously since satisfactorily completing a probation period; special leave without pay does not break continuity of service for this purpose.

8. Officers on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers on special leave without pay (e.g. to serve with the EU) may be eligible; Personnel Sections should check cases not covered by Department of Finance Circular 33/91 with this department. Officers on career break may apply if their career break conforms with the terms of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible.

**Conditions of appointment**

9. Successful candidates will be offered temporary appointments of up to two years' duration at either Higher Executive Officer or Executive Officer level as appropriate and will be paid a higher duties allowance for the period of their temporary appointments. Successful candidates will be on loan to the Legal Aid Board from their parent department for the duration of their assignment to the Board. At the end of their periods of appointment, officers will return to their parent departments and any higher duties allowance payable as a result of assignment to the Legal Aid Board will cease.

### The competitions

10. Selection for temporary appointment at both Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officer level will be by means of a corapetitive interview conducted by boards established by the Legal Aid Board. The interview boards may, having examined the applications of all candidates decide that a number only of candidates will be invited to attend before them for interview. In addition, the boards may, at their discretion, require that candidates undergo preliminary interview and invite only those who reach the requisite standard to attend for competitive interview to select the candidates best qualified for appointment.

### Duration of panels

11. It is envisaged that, if sufficient candidates reach the requisite standard for appointment, panels for temporary appointments at Higher Executive Officer and Executive Officer level, on a higher duties allowance basis, will be formed as a result of the competitions. The panels will run until 31 December 2002 or until they are exhausted, whichever is the earlier.

### Applications

12. Candidates should obtain their application forms from the Personnel Section of their serving department; the Legal Aid Board will supply forms to Personnel Sections on request. Candidates should return their completed application forms directly to the **Personnel Officer, Legal Aid Board, St. Stephen's Green House, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2** to arrive not later than 5.15 p.m. on **Friday 2 March 2001**. This closing date must be strictly observed. An applicant who has not heard from the Legal Aid Board by 16 March 2001 should contact the Board immediately.

13. The Legal Aid Board will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called for interview. For each candidate called to this stage of the competitions the Personnel Officer will be required to certify that the candidate:

- has been satisfactory and worked well in his or her present grade,
- has been satisfactory in general conduct,
- fulfils the conditions of eligibility specified in this Circular, and
- will be released to serve in the Legal Aid Board, on loan, if successful in the relevant competition.

14. For each candidate called to interview the Personnel Officer will give the Legal Aid Board an assessment of the candidate's suitability for promotion on a form supplied by the Board. The promotion potential form in the relevant scheme of performance appraisal as completed at the last appraisal before the date of the competition circular should be used when completing that form. Where a sufficiently long period, say about nine months, has elapsed since the candidate's appraisal, and where there is reason to believe that the candidate's performance in the meantime merits a change in the assessment, then a current appraisal should be made.

15. Eligibility to compete, and health and level of sick leave, will not be verified by the Legal Aid Board until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment. So admission to the competition and placement on a panel do 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 Board will have regard to Department of the Public Service Circular 34/76, as amended by Department of Finance Circular 32/91. Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility should clarify their position with their Personnel Section before applying.

**Appointments**

16. Offers of appointment will be made from the panels in order of merit. An officer will have a maximum of five working days after receipt of an offer to accept or reject it. Officers who reject an offer of appointment will be ineligible to be considered for any future appointments that might arise from the competitions to be held under this Circular. Officers taking up appointments on a higher duties allowance basis with the Legal Aid Board will continue to be eligible for promotion in the normal course in their own Department/Office. In the event of an officer's service with the Legal Aid Board not being satisfactory, the officer will be returned to his or her parent Department/Office prior to the completion of the two year loan period and the payment of the higher duties allowance will cease on the date of such return. In the event of an officer failing to remain with the Legal Aid Board for the duration of a two year loan period, the next eligible officer on the appropriate panel may be offered an appointment for a shorter period than two years.

**Circulation**

17. 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 other relevant forms of leave. If candidates have any queries about the circular they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed to the Legal Aid Board.

Mise le meas.

Joe McGovern  
Assistant Secretary