



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

33/2001

Sraid Mhuirfean Uacht, Upper Merrion Street, Telephone: 353-1-676 7571
Baile Atha Cliath 2, Dublin 2, Facsimile: 353-1-678 9936
Éire. Ireland. LoCall: 1890 66 10 10
VPN: 8109
<http://www.irigov.ie/finance>

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14 June 2001

Circular 33/2001: Competition for appointment as Higher Executive Officer / Systems Analyst

A Dhuine Uasail.

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce the holding, by the Civil Service Commission, of an interdepartmental competition for appointments as Higher Executive Officer/Systems Analyst on Information Technology (IT) work in the civil service.

Posts to be filled from the competition

2. Successful candidates will be placed on a panel from which they may be appointed to any department where fillable vacancies exist for systems analysis work, subject to that department deciding to have recourse to the panel. 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 2003.

Job description

3. Appointees to the post of Higher Executive Officer/Systems Analyst will take part in studies related to the feasibility of extending the use of IT in civil service work and engage in the planning, design, development and implementation of all aspects of IT systems and infrastructures, including those relating to the delivery of public services electronically. Duties will also include analysis of business practices e.g. workflow, change, and research into technologies new to the market. Successful candidates will receive comprehensive training, through attendance at formal courses, seminars and conferences, on-the-job instruction from colleagues and superiors, on-line tutorials, and extensive reading. They will be called upon to help in the training of other officers in IT.

4. For officers with the necessary aptitudes and disposition, systems analysis is a highly interesting field of work. Appointees are in close touch with management in planning and implementing business solutions, including IT developments. They have, therefore, a special opportunity for developing a keen awareness of management problems and functions, together with a knowledge of modern management techniques.

TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

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

Personal requirements

5. For systems and business analysis work, officers must be logical, imaginative and persistent in their approach to problems. They should be able to express themselves lucidly, cogently and persuasively. In their capacity as team leaders they will be required to deploy supervisory and management skills. An element of relationship building and collaborativeness in work style that transcends formal grade structures will also be necessary. While they do not need to have had previous experience in IT or related fields, candidates should be able to demonstrate an interest in IT generally and their experience should preferably be of a kind that would help them to become good systems/business analysts.

Eligibility

6. In order to be eligible to compete, prospective candidates must;

(i) be serving in an established capacity in the civil service, or be an established civil servant on secondment to FAS, in a grade with a salary maximum, exclusive of any long service increments, equal to or above the maximum point of the Executive Officer (standard scale) pay scale. At present the maximum point on this pay scale is £23,726 per annum.

and

(ii) on 1 October 2001 have not less than three years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of five years' total service of which not less than two years was in an eligible grade as set out at (i) above.

7. Officers on probation are not eligible to compete except 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.

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

Conditions of appointment

9. All officers appointed from this competition will be assigned to IT duties. *Officers are expected to serve on IT duties for a minimum of five years.*

10. Offers of appointments will be made from the panel in order of merit. An officer will have five working days after receipt of an offer to accept or reject it; failure by the officer to decide within that time-frame may be construed as a rejection of the offer. Officers not promoted at the expiry of the panels will have no claim to promotion thereafter because of having been on the panels.

11. Appointments as HEO/Systems Analysts will be on an acting basis for at least one year. An officer whose service is not satisfactory, or who opts not to remain on systems analysis work, may, at any time up to the end of twelve months, be returned to his or her parent department and/or duties in the former grade; any extra payment arising from the assignment to systems analysis work would then cease.

12. Officers appointed as HEO/Systems Analysts will be eligible at all times, subject to being qualified in all other respects, to apply for entry to interdepartmental competitions for which HEOs are eligible.

13. A candidate who accepts an offer of appointment as HEO/Systems Analyst whether as a result of this competition or otherwise will cease to be eligible for appointment from this competition. A candidate who resigns, retires, is suspended or dismissed from his or her post will cease to be eligible for appointment from this competition.

14. An officer who immediately prior to appointment as a HEO/Systems Analyst was on a salary scale the maximum of which was equal to or above the HEO maximum will enter the HEO/Systems Analyst scale at the minimum or at existing pay plus accrued increment whichever is the greater, subject to the maximum of the HEO scale not being exceeded.

The competition

15. Selection will be by means of a competition conducted by the Civil Service Commission which will be held in two stages:

- **Stage 1** will consist of a qualifying written test, which will be designed to ascertain candidates' potential competence for systems analysis 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 examination will be held on **Saturday 22 September 2001**. The Commission will contact candidates directly to confirm for them the time and venue of the examination. Details regarding the format and structure of the written tests will be issued to candidates, where appropriate, in advance.
- **Stage 2** will be a competitive structured interview to which those candidates who obtain the highest marks at the written examination will be invited. 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 Civil Service Commission. 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 at short notice if required. Requests for postponements will not be considered.

16. (i) In determining the order of merit at the competitive interview, the Commission will give credit for proficiency in both Irish and English in accordance with Department of Public Service Circular 43/75 and Department of Finance Circular 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 competitive 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

17. Candidates should get their application forms from the Personnel Section of their serving department. The Commission will supply application forms to Personnel Sections on request.

Candidates should return their completed application forms directly to the **Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners, 1 Lower Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2 marking the envelope HEO/SA2001, or by E-mail to HEO/SA2001@csclac.irlgov.ie (Word 97 Format), to arrive not later than 5.15 p.m. on Friday 27 July 2001.** This closing date must be strictly observed as late applications will not be accepted. Any applicant who has not heard from the Commission by 5 September 2001 should contact ASSESSMENT SERVICES at (01) 6692034.

18. The Commission will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each such candidate the Personnel Officer will be required:

(i) to certify that he or she

- has worked well and been satisfactory in his or her present grade,
- has been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- fulfils the conditions of eligibility set out in paragraphs 6-8 above,

and

(ii) to supply each candidate with an assessment of the candidate's suitability for appointment to HEO/Systems Analyst, and promotion if appropriate, on a form to be supplied by the Civil Service Commission. **The candidate will be required to present the completed assessment form to the interview board on the day of the interview.**

19. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition and (ii) health and the level of sick leave are not verified by the Civil Service Commission until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment after Stage 2. So admission to the competition, or any of the selection stages of the competition, does not imply that a candidate meets the health and sick leave criteria. In considering a successful candidate's suitability from the point of view of health and sick leave the Commission will have regard to Department of the Public Service Circular 34/76 (as amended by Department of Finance 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 applying.**

Circulation and further information

20. Personnel Sections should bring this Circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in their Departments and associated Offices without delay, including eligible officers on maternity leave, career break, term time leave or other forms of leave. If candidates have any queries about this Circular, they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed to the Civil Service Commission.

Mise le meas,

Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary