



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

E100/4/01

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

Circular 38/2001: Confined competition for appointment to the post of Personnel Officer, at Principal (standard scale) level, in the Central Statistics Office, Cork

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that it is proposed to hold a confined competition to be run by the Civil Service Commission, for appointment to the post of Personnel Officer, Central Statistics Office. The post is at Principal (standard scale) level and may be competed for by officers at Assistant Principal and Principal (standard scale) level.

Background

2. The Central Statistics Office is the independent Civil Service Office responsible, under the aegis of the Taoiseach, for compiling and disseminating the bulk of official Irish statistics. It has a core staffing of approximately 600 persons together with a permanent survey field-force of almost 150 who are located throughout the country.

3. Approximately 440 of the core staff work in its Cork office, which deals with vital statistics, business, prices, agriculture, labour market, and service statistics. The supporting IT and administration functions are mainly located in the Cork office and the successful candidate will be headquartered there.

4. The Dublin office has a permanent staffing complement of some 160 staff and is primarily concerned with national accounts, balance of payments, external trade and demographic statistics. The latter includes the Census of Population which is undertaken every five years. The census is the single biggest operation undertaken by the CSO and up to 150 additional headquarters staff are required for a period to cope with the work involved.

5. The management structure is headed by a Director General and includes senior managers responsible for functional areas including Human Resources. The Director General has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the CSO, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Service Management Act, 1997 and the Statistics Act, 1993.

TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

[For Department, read Department/Office throughout this Circular.]

Nature of work

6. The successful candidate will manage the Personnel/Human Resource Management (HRM) function in the CSO. This will require the formulation and implementation of progressive HRM policies; the management of the IR function with emphasis on the achievement of consensus; and the achievement of organisational change and development so as to deliver an excellent and cost-effective service. The successful candidate will be a member of the Senior Management Committee (SMC or MAC). The functions will include Personnel, Human Resource Management, Management Support Services and Training.

Specifically, the appointee will be responsible for:

- Development with line managers of progressive HRM policies in the CSO, including recruitment, promotions, mobility and succession planning.
- Leading discussions with Staff Associations on change management issues.
- Ensuring that all HRM processes and procedures comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice, including health and safety.
- Implementation of effective management development and staff training programmes.
- Implementation of partnership arrangements in the CSO.
- Promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Implementation of fair and accessible systems for dealing with grievances, discipline and poor performance issues.
- Acting as an expert advisor to line managers in HRM matters.
- Development of policies and procedures for devolving HR responsibility to local managers.
- Contributing to, and participating in, with other members of the senior management team, the preparation of the following for the CSO;
 - Mission Statement
 - Corporate Strategy Statement
 - Three-year Business Plans
- Such other duties appropriate to the grade as may be assigned by the Director General from time to time.

Relevant extracts from the current PMDS Role Profile Form are at Appendix 2.

Personal requirements

7. The successful candidate will possess the following essential requirements:
- Substantial HRM experience, involving a significant level of personal responsibility.
 - Proven ability to create and develop the framework and mechanisms for the achievement of significant organisational change.
 - Proven people management skills, keen intelligence and sound judgement.
 - Proven ability to lead and motivate staff.
 - Excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills.
8. A relevant qualification in human resource management is desirable, though not essential.

Eligibility

9. Candidates must,

(a) on the date they apply for the competition, be serving in an established capacity in the Civil Service in one of the following grades:

- Assistant Principal,
- Principal (standard scale),
- a departmental grade listed in Appendix 1 to this circular.

AND

(b) on 1 October 2001, those candidates who are serving in an established capacity at Assistant Principal level must have not less than three years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of three years' service in eligible grades. In this context credit is given for all job-sharing service on the same basis as full-time service.

10. 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 individual cases with this Department if they are not covered by Department of Finance Circular 33/91.

11. 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.

12. A candidate who resigns, retires or is dismissed from his or her post will cease to be eligible for appointment from this competition.

Conditions of appointment

13. The appointment will be at Principal (standard scale) level. The salary scale for Principal (standard scale), effective from 1 April 2001, is: £44,331 - £46,210 - £48,078, - £49,960 - £51,547 - £53,191 - £54,834.

14. The appointment will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. If the appointment is a promotion then it will be in an acting capacity in the first instance. An officer whose service is not satisfactory, or who opts not to remain in the post, may, at any time up to the end of one year, be returned to his/her former Department or duties. Any extra payment arising from the assignment would then cease.

The competition

15. Selection will be by competitive interview conducted by the Civil Service Commission. The interview board may, having examined the applications of all candidates by reference to the nature of the duties and the personal requirements described in paragraphs 6-8 above, decide that not all of the candidates will be invited to attend before the board for interview. In addition, the board may, at its discretion, require candidates to undergo a preliminary interview and invite only those who reach the requisite standard to attend for competitive interview, which will select the candidate best qualified for appointment. The interview(s) will be conducted by a board to be set up by the Commission. It is planned to hold interviews in November 2001 in Cork. The onus is on candidates to make themselves available for interview at short notice. Requests for postponements will not be considered.

16. In determining the order of merit at the competitive interview, the Civil Service Commission will give credit for proficiency in both Irish and English in accordance with Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75 and Department of Finance Circular 30/90 and any other instruction to candidates qualified for the award of such credit on or before the date of the interview, or such other date as may be agreed between the Department of Finance and the Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants.

Applications

17. Candidates should obtain their application forms from their own Personnel Section. The Civil Service Commission will supply application forms to Personnel Sections on request. Candidates should return their completed application forms directly to the Chief Executive Officer, Civil Service Commission, 1 Lower Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2, to arrive not later than 5.15 p.m. on Friday, 12 October 2001. This closing date must be strictly observed.

18. The Civil Service 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/her present grade,
- has been satisfactory in general conduct,
- fulfils the conditions of eligibility set out in paragraphs 9-12 above,

and

(ii) to send to the Commission an assessment of the candidate's suitability for

- appointment to the post applied for, and
- promotion if appropriate,

on a form to be supplied by the Commission.

19. Eligibility to compete, and health and the level of sick leave, are not verified by the Commission until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment. So admission to the competition 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 Department of the Public Service Circular 34/76, as amended by Department of Finance 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

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 or other relevant forms of leave (see paragraphs 10 and 11 above).

21. If candidates have any queries about this Circular they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed directly to the Civil Service Commission.

Mise le meas,

Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary

APPENDIX 1

DEPARTMENTAL GRADES ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Senior Auditor

Deputy Director of Audit

Courts Service

Any grade at Assistant Principal or Principal level in the Courts Service

Department of Foreign Affairs

First Secretary

Counsellor

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Co-ordinator of Work and Training

Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Principal Clerk

Assistant Principal Committee Clerk

Principal Committee Clerk

Clerk Assistant of the Seanad

Office of the Ombudsman - Office of the Information Commissioner

Investigator

Senior Investigator

APPENDIX 2

EXTRACTS FROM CURRENT PMDS ROLE PROFILE FORM

Job Title: Personnel Officer

What is the purpose of the job? First give (1) A general summary description followed by (2) a listing (7-8) of the key functions/responsibilities of the job distinguishing, where appropriate, the 4 dimensions: Operational, Human Resources, Customer Service and Strategy/Planning

(1) General Description:

Effective management of Personnel, Training, HR and Office services to meet the needs of the Office, with particular focus on the development and implementation of strategic Human Resource policies throughout the office, contribute to corporate policy at SMC level, and generally carry out the role and duties formally assigned to me by the D.G. under the Public Service Management Act, 1997.

(2) Key Functions/Responsibilities:

- *Operational*

- Directing, managing and monitoring in an integrated and resource effective way the work of 3 Assistant Principal headed areas in the Division.

- *Human Resources*

- Modernising the human resource function in line with the Government's SMI and DBG programmes
- Supporting the implementation of PMDS within the Office and ensure its effective implementation within my Division
- Progressing and leading discussions with staff interests on IR and change issues
- Supporting the provision of focussed staff training and development throughout the Office, facilitate the training and development needs of staff in my Division with particular emphasis on staff reporting directly to me to improve their competencies,
- Improving the communications environment in the Division to ensure that all staff are aware of divisional and corporate developments
- Manage the development of a range of integrated HR strategies with a view to improving the recruitment, induction, placement and staff retention capability of the Office
- Actively promote Partnership

- Customer Service

- Ensuring that a top quality service is maintained to internal and external customers with a particular emphasis on the timely provision of high quality services
- Minimising as far as practical, the burden placed on staff by administrative systems, with a particular focus on the opportunities presented by devolution of functions and the introduction of new technologies
- Maximising the amount of information that is readily available to all on Lotus Notes

- Strategy/Planning

- Advising/assisting the D-G in the overall management of the Office.
- Helping as part of the SMC to develop strategic Office policy in relation to statistical, HR and other SMI/DBG issues.
- Ensuring that the annual Local Business Plans for the Division are prepared, implemented and their progress regularly monitored in collaboration with staff.

- Additional responsibility

- Member of the *SMC*
- 'Person Responsible' under the Health and Welfare Act, 1989 for ensuring a proper level of safety, health and welfare within the Office.
- Member of the *Staff Training and Development Committee*
- Member of the *Partnership Committee*

What are the key long term objectives?

- publicise and achieve, high quality service standards for all on-going services provided by the Division
- Improved organisational capability through the development of integrated HR policies/strategies covering areas such as induction placement and mobility, performance management and recognition/reward including promotion; and the elimination of demarcations (in the broadest sense).
- Refocusing Personnel services in line with DGB/SMI - devolution of functions to line managers and the provision of a quality (professional) support service.
- Align the service (business support) area with the business needs of the office through a greater focus on identifying and serving the needs of our customers.
- Develop manpower strategies to meet the future needs of the office.
- Achieve a partnership approach to HR and IR
- Optimise the distribution and management of staff, accommodation and other resources
- To actively support and implement the various SMI/DBG initiatives, particularly the PMDS and refocusing HRM
- Ensure that the quality of the services provided by the Division meet the corporate high level goals in CSO's Statements of Strategy

Key Deliverables for the year *(what elements should I focus on achieving this year? What are the key elements of my performance that I will be judged on?)*

- Policy document outlining the elements of the integrated HR strategy/policies
- Actual policy documents on placement/mobility and induction
- PMDS implemented with some measure/feedback as to satisfaction.
- Policy document/consultancy report on re-orienting Personnel services.
- Improved management structure and communications within the Division
- Movement/clarity in relation to the vision document.
- New flexi system in operation with an emphasis on further devolution of Personnel functions -work commenced on a new PAS system
- New Safety Statement in place

Critical Success Factors *(what are the key elements which must go right / must be in place that will help me to achieve my objectives?)*

- Progress centrally in relation to some aspects of SMI and the PPF modernisation programme
- Resources, skills and buy-in within the Division
- Buy-in and support from SMC and SMG
- Willingness of Partnership Committee, and staff associations to actively participate and support the process
- Continued support and commitment of staff and line managers to implement PMDS
- Availability of new recruits to meet the office needs

Key Performance Indicators *(specifically, what key results, qualitative and quantitative, am I expected to show and what are the benchmarks by which success will be judged?)*

- Action plan/policy for refocusing Personnel in place
- Lateral mobility and induction policies in place
- PMDS phases 1 & 2 training completed, phase 3 scheduled: role profiles and review system in place, year 1 cycle on target for completion by mid-2002
- Regular section and management meetings in the Division
- Clarity in relation to the Vision document and formal meetings with staff associations to discuss associated issues.

Identification of Competencies for the Job

Behaviours and Attributes required - *select the 7-8 key competencies required for the effective performance of the job from Column 2 of the Competency Framework and list the most appropriate statement from Column 3 opposite the selected competency. Competencies may be selected from any or all the competency clusters.*

1. Leadership - *guide the performance of others, make choices and decisions which take the organisation forward in a changing environment, and develop a vision for the future*

2. Networking/Influencing - *develop key relationships and build support*
3. Managing and developing people - *clarify roles and responsibilities , provide feedback and support*
4. Customer Service - *anticipate customer needs and work to meet them*
5. Achievement Drive /Commitment - *have a strong focus on results, set challenging standards and goals for myself and others*
6. Initiative - *be capable of new thinking and be creative in developing effective solutions*
7. Decision making/judgement - *Make decisions where there are conflicting issues. Apply good judgement, especially when a degree of risk exists*
8. Interpersonal Understanding - *understand the underlying feelings and concerns of individuals and use this understanding to achieve agreement*

Knowledge and Skills required - list not more than four particular skills and/or knowledge required - *not from competency*

1. Knowledge of HR/Personnel 'best practices'
2. Negotiating and conflict resolution skills
3. Interpersonal skills including self-confidence and social skills
4. Meeting skills