

E109/114/02

31 July 2002

Circular 19/2002 : Confined competition for promotion to the position of Assistant Principal (higher scale), Technology posts, in the Centre for Management and Organisation Development, Department of Finance

A Dhuine Uasail,

Competition Overview

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce the holding of a confined, interview based, competition to be run by the Civil Service Commission, to set up a panel for Assistant Principal (higher scale) technology posts in the Centre for Management & Organisation Development (CMOD), Department of Finance. It is expected that two appointments to Assistant Principal (higher scale) will be made from the panel immediately. The panel will expire on 31 December 2003 or when the panel has been exhausted (whichever is the earlier). Appointments made from the panel will be in accordance with the usual conditions governing such appointments for promotion to an Assistant Principal (higher scale) post in the Department of Finance.

CMOD Overview

2. The information and communications technologies (ICT) divisions of CMOD are responsible for:
- the research, development and production of technical best practices, policies and guidelines for a range of topics, including -
 - telecommunications,
 - infrastructures and platforms,
 - eGovernment,
 - eLearning,
 - information and knowledge management architectures and solutions,
 - systems and applications of common usage across the civil service, and
 - procurement and expenditure control;
 - the development of information and content management systems and applications that are web-enabled and based on XML and modern industry-standard programming extensions;
 - the management and implementation of the Department of Finance's ICT Strategy; and
 - the provision of central technical support services for a range of common infrastructures and systems used throughout the civil service.

TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

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

Priorities for Post

3. The main priorities for the post/s in question include -
- implementing a public service Virtual Private Network (VPN);
 - facilitating continued development of the Public Services Broker in accordance with defined eGovernment policy;
 - continuing the definition and enhancement of eGovernment technology policy;
 - providing expert technical input to the Government's new Action Plan for the Information Society ("New Connections") and to the second eEurope Action Plan;
 - facilitating the implementation of pilot content management solutions and the negotiation of a public service draw-down contract for these solutions;
 - designing, developing, implementing and supporting information and document management solutions to support the day-to-day operations of Departments/Offices;
 - developing a range of technology pilots, solutions and policies, e.g., standard desktop platforms and images, e-mail & information management integration, directory services, secure electronic communications, eLearning and mobile communications;
 - establishing a refocused forum for IT Managers and through it developing policy proposals for a range of topics of common interest and relevance across the civil service;
 - participating in a range of interdepartmental and EU ICT and eGovernment groups; and
 - liaising with the Organisation Development and the Training & Development divisions of CMOD to ensure that full and cohesive responses and services are provided to client agencies.

Specific Post Requirements

4. Candidates for the post/s must have extensive knowledge and experience of, and proven ability in -
- information, communications & security technologies, infrastructures, and systems;
 - eGovernment initiatives and developments;
 - taking the initiative and adopting a proactive approach to the introduction of ICT-based solutions;
 - conducting research into new and emerging technologies/solutions of relevance to the civil service and implementing pilot projects to support this;
 - planning, designing, developing, implementing and project-managing technology projects, including hardware and software architectures and solution developments;
 - operating technology procurement processes, appraisal and evaluation techniques, contract negotiation and award exercises, and subsequent management of the implementation of solutions and/or the use of contractors/consultants; and
 - identifying best practices and developing technology policy and guidance.

General Requirements

5. Additionally, candidates must -
- have proven management ability in an ICT area, keen intelligence, strong detailed analytical ability, and sound judgement;
 - have a strong focus on quality of customer service and good interpersonal, communications and presentation skills;
 - be self-starters, capable of continuous self-learning, new thinking, working to very tight deadlines and committed to achieving high quality results;

- have good motivational skills and be capable of working equally well as a member of a team and as a leader of interdepartmental groups;
- ⁴ be able to deal effectively with diverse audiences and stakeholders including top-level civil service and political management;
- plan and manage budgets and expenditure; and
- develop, manage and monitor staff training and development.

Eligibility

6. In order to be eligible to compete, prospective candidates must satisfy the conditions set out at either (a) or (b) below:

(a) be serving in an established capacity in the civil service in one of the following grades:

- Assistant Principal (standard scale)
- Senior Auditor in the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General
- First Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Assistant Principal Committee Clerk in the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas
- Investigator in the Offices of the Ombudsman and Information Commissioner

or

(b) (i) be serving in an established capacity in the civil service in one of the following grades:

- Higher Executive Officer (including HEO/Systems Analyst)
- Administrative Officer
- Third Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Auditor in the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General
- Senior Clerk in the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas
- Systems Analyst in the IT and Telecommunications Division at Garda Headquarters of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Social Welfare Officer in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs

and

(ii) on **1 August 2002** have at least three years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of three years' service in eligible grades set out at b(i) above, except in the case of a Social Welfare Officer or a Higher Executive Officer or an Administrative Officer who has prior service in the Social Welfare Officer grade or the former grade of Higher Officer of Customs & Excise (see paragraph 7). In this context, credit is given for all work sharing service on the same basis as full-time service.

7. Social Welfare Officers must have not less than eight years' service to be eligible to compete, and may count up to five years' service in the Executive Officer grade as service in the Social Welfare Officer grade for this purpose. Former Social Welfare Officers and former Higher Officers of Customs & Excise who have been recertified as Higher Executive Officers and/or appointed as Administrative Officers and who have less than three years' service in those recertified grades, must have an aggregate of at least eight years' service in eligible grades in order to compete. Service in the former grade of Higher Officer of Customs & Excise will count as service in an eligible grade. Former Higher Officers of Customs & Excise may count up to

five years' service in the Executive Officer grade or in the former grades of Officer and Indoor Officer of Customs & Excise as service in the Higher Officer grade for this purpose.

8. 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.

9. 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 the terms of their career break conform to the provisions of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible.

Conditions of appointment

10. Appointments will be to the grade of Assistant Principal (higher scale) and will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. 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 or her former department or duties. Any extra payment arising from the assignment would then cease.

The competition

11. 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 priorities for the post set out at paragraph 3, to the specific post requirements set out at paragraph 4 and to the general requirements set out at paragraph 5, 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 to select the candidate best qualified for appointment. The interviews will be conducted by a board set up by the Civil Service Commission. Candidates invited to interview must be prepared to make themselves available at short notice. It is expected that interviews will take place in September.

12. In placing in order of merit the candidates considered best qualified for appointment, the Civil Service Commission will give credit for proficiency in both Irish and English, in accordance with Department of Finance Circular 30/90 and Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75, and any other relevant instruction to candidates qualified for the award of such credit.

Applications

13. Candidates should obtain their application forms from their own Personnel Section. The Civil Service Commission will supply forms to Personnel Sections on request. Candidates should return their completed application forms directly to the **Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Civil Service Commission, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1**, or by e-mail to: mary.keaveney@publicjobs.ie to reach there as soon as possible but not later than **5.30 p.m. on Thursday 5 September 2002**. **This closing date must be strictly observed.** Candidates should use only one means of application i.e. hardcopy or e-mail.

14. 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 asked to give the Commission an assessment of the candidate's suitability for promotion on a form supplied by the Commission. The Personnel Officer will also be required to certify, in respect of each candidate being called to competitive interview, that the candidate:

- has been satisfactory and worked well in his or her present grade;
- has been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- fulfils the conditions of **eligibility** set out in paragraphs 6 to 9 above,

15. 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 the competitive interview stage. Admission to the competition or invitation to interview therefore, 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 Sections before applying.

16. The Civil Service is an equal opportunity employer. Promotion within the service is made on the basis of qualifications and the ability to carry out the responsibilities of the grade or post.

Circulation and further information

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 Civil Service Commission.

Mise le meas.

Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary