



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

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2 October 2002

Circular 34/2002: Confined competition for appointment as Clerical Officer (Computer Programmer) Dublin only

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (CSC) will hold a confined competition to set up a panel from which appointments as Clerical Officer (Computer Programmer) may be made. The appointments from this competition may be made in any department* where there are suitable vacancies. It is not envisaged that appointments from this competition will be made after 31 December 2003.

Eligibility

2. 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.

3. The competition will be confined to officers who, on 11 October 2002,

(i) are serving in the civil service or on secondment from the civil service to FÁS or to the Health and Safety Authority and

(ii) are serving in a grade with a maximum pay scale equal to or less than that of the Clerical Officer higher scale. The Clerical Officer higher scale maximum is currently €28,332 per annum (€542.97 per week) or €29,823 per annum (€571.54 per week) for those making a personal pension contribution.

4. 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. Other officers who are 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 Department of Finance Circular 33/91 does not cover them.

5. Candidates may wish to note that officers can apply while on probation or in an unestablished position.

*For department read department/office throughout this circular.

6. Candidates should have a particular interest in working in an I.T. area. Previous experience of I.T. work would be welcome but is not necessary, as officers appointed from this competition will be given full training.

Job requirements

7. A Clerical Officer (Computer Programmer) has general responsibility for programming work. Programming work involves the writing of detailed instructions for computers in accordance with predetermined codes or languages. Other aspects of the work include, inter alia,

- interpreting systems specifications designed by systems analysts
- liaising with systems analysts and user staff
- problem solving

The work requires special qualities of application and patience, as well as a capacity for painstaking attention to detail. Selected officers will be given full training (which may involve spending a period outside Ireland).

8. Competencies

Systematic Approach: CO/Computer Programmers need to take a thorough and structured approach to tasks and problem solving. The effective CO/Computer Programmer must break down tasks and work out problems step by step and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the approach taken.

Communication Skills: CO/Computer Programmers must be able to communicate effectively with a range of people. He/she must be able to listen to the requirements of others, be responsive to their queries, and impart information in a timely and user friendly manner.

Team-working and Collaborative Style: Team-working is an important part of the CO/Computer Programmers role. The effective CO/Computer Programmer must be aware of the different roles in a team and be willing to help and support others. He/she will need to get on well with others and contribute to the achievement of a group objective.

Motivation and Commitment to Delivering Quality Results: It is important that a CO/Computer Programmer takes responsibility for tasks and shows that he/she is personally committed to ensuring that assigned tasks are completed well. An effective CO/Computer

Programmer perseveres with a task and puts in extra effort to ensure that it is completed to a high standard.

Openness to learning new skills: Effective CO/Computer Programmers must demonstrate a willingness to learn from a variety of situations and be proactive in seeking new learning experiences. He/she must consider ways of applying this learning to improve the way things are done.

General conditions of appointment

9. Appointment as Computer Programmer from the competition will be on a trial basis in the first instance. Not less than six months' satisfactory service will qualify the appointee to be certified as a competent Computer Programmer. On certification, the appointee's scale of pay will be increased at each point by €1845 per annum (€1940 per annum for established officers making a personal pension contribution) with effect from the original date of appointment as Computer Programmer. This sum, being regarded as pay for all purposes, will apply only while the officer continues to be assigned to programming duties.

10. An officer will remain on loan while serving on a trial basis in a department other than the parent department. During this period the officer will be paid by the department to which he/she is appointed as Computer Programmer. If certified to be a competent Computer Programmer, the officer will be definitively transferred. Officers are expected to serve on I.T. duties for a minimum of 5 years.

11. At any time during the trial period the officer on loan may be returned to the parent department if the officer either so requests or is found to be unsuitable for computer programming work. An officer who is not certified as a competent Computer Programmer will not be entitled to any additional pay because of having been on programming duties.

12. On certification as a competent Computer Programmer an officer who is not already a Clerical Officer will be appointed as Clerical Officer and treated for pay purposes as if promotion to Clerical Officer had taken place on the date of assignment to programming duties.

13. An officer who accepts an offer of appointment as Computer Programmer, from this competition or otherwise, will cease to be eligible for appointment from this competition. An officer who retires, resigns, etc. from his/her position in the Civil Service will cease to be eligible.

14. A Clerical Officer (Computer Programmer) is a general service Clerical Officer and is eligible in the usual way for promotion or admission to confined competitions. Officers who have not completed a period of probation and are appointed as Computer Programmer will be assigned in rotation to general clerical duties, in their new department, for a period of three months. This is to ensure that the officer obtains relevant experience in the important work aspects of the Clerical Officer grade. The period of service in general service duties will begin not later than one year after the original date of assignment to Computer Programmer. This will not affect an officer's rate of pay.

The Competition

15. Selection will be by means of a competition conducted by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners, which will consist of a qualifying written test, a competitive interview and an optional language test. The written test will be designed to ascertain candidates' potential competence for computer programming 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 written test is expected to be **held in Dublin in the week commencing 11th November 2002.**

A certificate of attendance will be issued to all candidates at the test venues. Officers should present this certificate to their Personnel Section on their return to verify their attendance. The CSC will contact candidates direct to notify them of the date, time and venue of the examination. Details regarding the format and structure of the written test will, where appropriate, issue to candidates in advance.

16. Those candidates who obtain the highest marks at the written test will be invited to competitive interview. 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 CSC and will be in a structured format. Details of the structure of the interview 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 for any test and/or interview at short notice if required. Requests for postponements will not be considered.

17. (i) In determining the order of merit at the competitive interview, credit will be given 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 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 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

18. Candidates should apply on line at www.publicjobs.ie. Alternatively candidates may complete applications over the telephone by phoning (01) 8587625, 8587858 or 8587465. Candidates are required to have their PPS Number (formerly RSI Number) available when telephoning.

Closing date

The closing date for receipt of applications is 5.30 pm on Tuesday 15 October 2002. This closing date must be strictly observed. An applicant who has not heard from the CSC by Friday, 1st November 2002 should contact that Office immediately.

19. The CSC will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each candidate called to competitive interview, the Personnel Officer will be required to certify that she or he fulfils the conditions of eligibility specified in paragraphs 3 to 4 of this circular.

20. Candidates will retain their scores in the Diagrammatic Reasoning Test and in the Fault Diagnosis Test for a period of twelve months. Accordingly, candidates who apply for any competition(s) where the selection process includes a Diagrammatic Reasoning Test and/or Fault Diagnosis Test during that twelve month period will carry their scores forward to that competition(s).

21. 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 a candidate comes under consideration for appointment. Admission to the competition, or any of the selection stages of the competition, does not imply acceptance by the CSC. In particular, candidates should note that the Personnel Officer will not have verified health and the level of sick leave of those called to competitive interview - accordingly admission to the competition, or an invitation to any of the selection stages of the competition, does not imply that candidates meet the health and sick leave criteria. In considering a candidate's suitability for appointment from the point of view of health and sick leave the CSC 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 proceeding with the application.

Circulation

22. Please take special care to bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers in your department and associated offices without delay (including officers newly appointed up to the closing date, and all other eligible officers eg. on maternity leave, career break, term time leave or other forms of leave).

23. If candidates have any query about this circular, they should contact their Personnel Section. Any subsequent enquiry about the progress of their application should be addressed to the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners.

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Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary