



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

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>

E109/137/04

10th December 2004

Circular 34/2004: confined competition for Appointment to the position of Head of Research and Development - Principal (standard scale) level in the National Council for Special Education

A Dhuine Uasail

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce a confined competition, to be held by the Public Appointments Service, for appointment to the position of Head of Research and Development at Principal (standard scale) level in the National Council for Special Education based in Trim Co Meath.

Background

2. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) was recently established by the Minister for Education and Science as an independent statutory Council by order under the Education Act 1998.

3. The Council's headquarters is located in Trim Co Meath. It has a staffing complement of 98 posts headed by a Chief Executive Officer and including 18 headquarters' posts and 80 regionally based Special Educational Needs Organiser posts. Staff are employed by the Council and are civil servants.

4. The functions of the Council are to:

- carry out research and provide expert advice to the Minister on the educational needs of children with disabilities and the provision of related services
- provide for a range of services at local and national level in order that the educational needs of children with disabilities are identified and provided for
- co-ordinate with health boards, schools and other relevant bodies, the provision of education and related support services to children with disabilities.

TO ALL DEPARTMENTS [For Department read Department/Office throughout this Circular]

5. The Council is currently being re-established under primary legislation under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 which is available on the Department of Education and Science website at www.education.ie

Job Description

6. The appointee will be responsible for developing and managing the Council's research programmes and related information services in accordance with the Council's statutory functions (see appendix 1) and strategic plans. The appointee will also be required to undertake research projects directly where this is appropriate.

7. As the organisation and the research and information function is new, a high degree of flexibility and creativity will be required. Key internal and external relationships will need to be established and fostered. As part of the senior management team of the Council the appointee will be required to contribute actively to and participate in the development of Council policies generally.

8. The Head of Research and Development reports to the Chief Executive Officer.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

9. The main duties and responsibilities of the post include:

- developing a programme of research to support the needs and obligations of the Council
- developing and managing an annual research plan, within agreed budgetary parameters
- planning an annual schedule of research activities, securing an annual budget for these activities and accounting for delivery and related expenditure
- analysing and evaluating existing and ongoing research
- commissioning research projects and managing such projects
- undertaking research directly
- developing and managing (or collaborating in developing and managing) relevant information data bases and systems to meet the Council's needs in relation to research and development
- liaising and developing relationships with relevant organisations in Ireland and abroad in relation to educational disability research and information
- representing the Council on various national and international fora relating to the Council's research and information functions
- maximising the importance of research on the other activities of the Council

- assisting and advising the council in the development of its strategic plans for research in accordance with its statutory functions
- managing staff, resources and programmes
- collaborating with CEO and senior NCSE staff in the development and implementation of NCSE strategies and policies generally
- coordinating the research and information activities of staff
- undertaking other duties appropriate to the Principal Officer grade as assigned by the Council from time to time including cover for absent colleagues as required.

Personal Requirements

10. The following skills/attributes are considered essential for the position:

- a relevant post graduate qualification
- significant post graduate research experience and achievement, preferably in relation to education or health or special educational needs
- proven management experience (including project management) at a senior level or a demonstrated competence to discharge senior management functions
- a sound understanding of a range of research methodology including appropriate research practice in regard to people with disabilities
- a strong commitment to and knowledge of educational issues with a specific focus on special educational needs of children with disabilities
- good interpersonal, analytical and communications skills.

Eligibility

11. To be eligible for **Principal (Standard Scale)** posts, candidates must,

(a) be serving in an established capacity in the civil service *or on secondment from the Civil Service*, in one of the following grades:

- Assistant Principal (Standard Scale)
- Assistant Principal (Higher Scale)
- Assistant Regional Director or Regional Director on secondment to FÁS from the Civil Service
- a Departmental grade listed in **Appendix 2** to this scheme

and

(b) on **1 January 2005** have not less than two years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of two years' service in eligible grades set out at (a). In this context, credit is given for all job-sharing service on the same basis as full-time service,

and

(c) be certified by the Personnel Officer as being suitable for consideration with regard to;

- eligibility
- performance of work in the present grade,
- general conduct
- suitability for promotion and
- health, especially sick leave.

12. 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

13. Successful candidates must be in a position to take up duty without delay.

14. While serving in the National Council for Special Education, an officer will continue to have access to promotional opportunities and access to interdepartmental competitions in the Civil Service.

15. In the event of the officer's service with the Office of the National Council for Special Education not being satisfactory, the officer will be returned to his or her parent Department.

Competition

16. Selection will be by means of a competitive interview and may include a presentation, conducted by the Public Appointments Service. The right to short-list candidates for interview, having regard to the nature of the duties and the personal requirements for the position, is reserved.

Codes of Practice

17. The Recruitment and Selection of a candidate for this post will be in compliance with codes of practice established by the Commissioners for Public Service Appointments.

The code reflects the following core principles

- Probity
- Merit
- Best Practice
- Fairness and Consistency
- Openness, Accountability and Transparency.

Under these codes of practice the Public Appointments Service is obliged to:-

- provide all eligible candidates with a reasonable opportunity to apply for the post
- ensure that the eligibility requirements are appropriate to the duties and requirements of the post
- treat all candidates in a fair, impartial and equal fashion and ensure that their applications dealt with in confidence
- select candidates according to merit using sound, objective and appropriate selection techniques
- ensure there is appropriate expertise among the board selecting candidates
- comply with all relevant legislation for example Employment Law, Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Equality.

18. For further information on the Codes of Practice, please see www.cpsa-online.ie or contact the Commission for Public Service Appointments, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1.

19. Complaints and Requests for Review: The Public Appointments Service will consider appeals from candidates made in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the notification of the decision. On receipt of an appeal the selection decisions will be re-visited and the candidate will be informed of the outcome of this review.

Applications

20. Applications must be made on-line directly to the Public Appointments Service by logging on to www.publicjobs.ie. The completed application form must be submitted so as to reach the Public Appointments Service, "Chapter House", 26 – 30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, **not later than 6th January, 2005**. Applicants may attach a CV if they so wish.

21. Candidates should note that health and the level of sick leave are not verified until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment after the competitive interview stage. Admission to the competition, 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 Public Appointments Service will have regard to the Department of Public Service Circular 34/76, as amended by Department of Finance Circulars 32/91, 33/99 and 17/03.

22. Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility are advised to clarify their position with their Personnel Section before proceeding with the application.

23. Interviews are expected to take place at end January/early February 2005. The onus is on candidates to make themselves available for interview at short notice. If candidates have not been contacted by the Public Appointments Service by Mid-January they should contact that Office at (01) 858 7461/5.

Circulation

24. Please bring this Circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in your Department and associated Offices without delay. Special care should be taken to ensure that eligible officers on maternity leave, career break or any other relevant forms of leave are notified of the competition.

25. 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 Public Appointments Service.

26. The Civil Service is an equal opportunity employer. Recruitment to posts within the Service is on the basis of qualifications and the ability to carry out the responsibilities of the grade or post.

Mise le meas

John O'Connell
Assistant Secretary

APPENDIX 1

Council's statutory functions relating to research

The National Council for Special Education Establishment Order 2003 (No 270 Of 2004) provides that the Council's functions will include the following in regard to research and information

- carry out research and provide expert advice to the Minister on the educational needs of children with disabilities and the provision of related services,
- conduct and commission research on matters relevant to its functions and, as it considers appropriate, to publish in such form and manner as it thinks fit the findings arising out of such research,
- from time to time carry out general assessment and review of the provision of education and related support services to children with disabilities,
- disseminate to schools and to parents information relating to best practice, nationally and internationally, concerning the education of children with disabilities.

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (No 30 of 2004) includes the following Council functions relating to research and information (section 20)

- to disseminate to schools and to parents and such other persons as the Council considers appropriate, information relating to best practice, nationally and internationally, concerning the education of children with special educational needs;
- to assess and review the resources required in relation to educational provision for children with special educational needs;
- to review generally the provision made for adults with disabilities to avail of higher education and adult and continuing education, rehabilitation and training and to publish reports on the results of such reviews (which reviews may include recommendations as to the manner in which such provision could be improved);
- to advise all educational institutions concerning best practice in respect of the education of adults who have disabilities;
- to conduct and commission research on matters relevant to the functions of the Council and, as it considers appropriate, to publish in such form and manner as the Council thinks fit the findings arising out of such research.

Appendix 2

DEPARTMENTAL GRADES ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Senior Auditor

Courts Service

Any grade at Assistant Principal level in the Courts Service

Department of Foreign Affairs

First Secretary

Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Assistant Principal Committee Clerk

Principal Clerk

Office of the Ombudsman - Office of the Information Commissioner

Investigator