



An Roinn Airgeadais  
Department of Finance

E109/2/03

29 July 2005

Sráid Mhuirfean Uacht,  
Baile Átha Cliath 2,  
Éire.

Upper Merrion Street,  
Dublin 2,  
Ireland

Telephone: 353-1 676 7571  
Facsimile: 353-1 678 9936  
LoCall: 1890 66 10 10  
VPN: 8109  
<http://www.irlgov.ie/finance>

**Circular 25/2005: Confined competitions for appointment to posts at Principal (Standard Scale) in the Civil Service and Principal (Higher Scale) in the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance**

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to refer to the attached scheme for interdepartmental promotion to posts at Principal level which has been discussed with the Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants (AHCPS). Under the terms of that scheme, this circular announces competitions, to be run by the Public Appointments Service, for the establishment of panels for appointment to Principal (Standard Scale) posts in the Civil Service and Principal (Higher Scale) posts in the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance.

**The scheme**

2. Eligible officers who are interested in participating in the competitions should familiarise themselves with the scheme, which sets out the key features of the competitions, including the scope and application of the scheme itself, the nature of work at Principal level, eligibility and the selection and appointments procedures. The selection procedures arise out of a review of the Interdepartmental Principal Officer selection system - "*Job Analysis Report and Recommendations for Selection*" - that was commissioned by the Department of Finance. The review encourages a move towards competency based selection and identifies the essential competencies required for effective performance at this level. A copy of the report will be available on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie).

**Duration of panels**

3. The Principal (Standard Scale) panel will be formed by means of a two-stage interview-based competition conducted by the Public Appointments Service. Preliminary interviews are expected to commence in **October, 2005** with the main interviews **commencing in mid November, 2005**. The panel should be available by **end November / early December, 2005**, and the related Counsellor panel available shortly afterwards. Each of these panels will be valid from **1 January 2005**.

4. The Principal (Higher Scale) panel will be formed through a competition, consisting of a single competitive interview, confined to those who are successful at the second interview for Principal (Standard Scale) and to officers already serving at that level. The timing of those interviews has yet to be determined and eligible candidates will be notified at a later stage. The Principal (Higher Scale) panel will also be valid from 1 January 2005.

5. The validity of all panels set up under the terms of this circular will extend to **28 February 2007** or until the date on which the lowest-ranked candidate on a particular panel is assigned to a post from that panel, whichever is the earlier.

6. The validity periods (start and end dates) of the panels formed under the terms of the circular may be altered by agreement between the Department of Finance and the **AHCPS**.

### **Applications**

7.1 Applications must be made on the official application form which is available on the Public Appointments Service website [www.Publicjobs.ie](http://www.Publicjobs.ie). Should you have any difficulties applying online please contact Orla Dooley on (01) 8587645 or Michael Duggan on (01) 8587504. Completed forms must be submitted so as to reach the Office of the Public Appointments Service **not later than 14 September, 2005**. This closing date must be strictly observed.

7.2 A short briefing session on the format of the competition for promotion to Principal (Standard Scale) **will be held at 12.00 noon and again at 2.00 pm on 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September** in the Office of the Public Appointments Service for prospective applicants. Those wishing to attend one of these briefing sessions should contact Orla Dooley on (01) 8587645 or Emma Adams on (01) 8587492 to book a place. Prospective applicants are advised to book as early as possible as places for each session will be limited. Alternatively, the content of the briefing may be viewed on the Public Appointments Service website [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie).

8. For each candidate entering the competition(s), the Line Manager and Personnel Officer should complete an assessment of the candidate's suitability for promotion on a form to be supplied by the Public Appointments Service. This assessment form is designed to reflect the new competency framework.

9. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competitions and (ii) health and the level of sick leave are not verified by the Public Appointments Service until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment. Admission to the competitions and interview(s) does not imply acceptance by the Public Appointments Service. In considering a successful candidate's suitability for appointment in terms of health and sick leave, the Public Appointments Service will have regard to Department of the Public Service Circular 34/76 (as amended by Department of Finance Circulars 32/91, 33/99 and 17/03). Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility should clarify their position with their Personnel Section before applying.

## **Codes of Practice**

10. The recruitment and selection process for appointment to these positions will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice titled *Selection of Persons for Appointment on Promotion to Positions in the Civil Service (No. 02/04)* published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

The Code of Practice reflects the following core principles:

- *Probity*
- *Appointments Made on Merit*
- *An Appointments Process in Line with Best Practice*
- *A Fair Appointments Process Applied with Consistency*
- *Appointments Made in an Open, Accountable and Transparent Manner*

Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code of Practice including, inter alia, the provisions in relation to the responsibilities placed on candidates who participate in the recruitment and selection process.

11. Complaints and Requests for Review: Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Code of Practice.

12. The Code of Practice may be accessed by visiting [www.cpsa-online.ie](http://www.cpsa-online.ie) or by contacting directly the Commission for Public Service Appointments, Chapter House, 26-30 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

## **Circulation and further information**

13. 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 term time, contract, secondment, maternity leave, career break and any other relevant 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 Public Appointments Service.

14. 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.

Mise le meas,

John O'Connell  
Assistant Secretary

## **Scheme for interdepartmental promotion to posts at Principal level**

### **DEFINITION**

1. "Department" includes any office such as the Central Statistics Office, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Office of Public Works and the Public Appointments Service which is normally treated as a separate nominating unit for the purpose of interdepartmental competitions.

### **SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE SCHEME**

2.1 In keeping with the commitment to improving promotion systems in the Civil Service, Sustaining Progress (paragraph 22.17(ii) provides for:

***“The proportion of posts filled under mobility provisions of interdepartmental promotion competitions will be increased from 33.3% to 40% from the beginning of the next competitions to be held under the existing arrangements for interdepartmental promotion schemes”***

2.2 This arrangement will change the sequence of promotions from the Principal Officer interdepartmental panels established under these competitions and the new sequence will be effective from 1 January 2005. This means that two vacancies in every five must be filled under this provision i.e. the second and fourth vacancy in a sequence of five must be filled from the interdepartmental panel. On 1 January 2005, Departments should commence their sequence of promotions at the 1<sup>st</sup> point which is internal. The proportion of posts to be filled from interdepartmental competitions will be increased to 50% from the date equating to the commencement of the next subsequent competition for promotion to Principal level.

### **2.3 The following posts will be filled under the Scheme:**

(a) Every second and fourth promotion (in a sequence of five) to an existing post in the grade of Principal (Standard Scale) in each department (excluding the Department of Finance and the Department of the Taoiseach) and every second and fourth promotion (in a sequence of five) to an existing post in the grade of Principal (Higher Scale) in the Department of Finance and the Department of the Taoiseach.

(b) Every second and fourth promotion (in a sequence of five) to an existing post in each of the grades listed in **Appendix 1** to this scheme.

(c) Every new post in the grades of Principal (Standard Scale) and Principal (Higher Scale) that is filled by promotion.

(d) Every new post in each of the grades listed in **Appendix 1** to this scheme that is filled by promotion.

(e) Every promotion to the grades of Principal (Standard Scale) or Principal (Higher Scale), or to any of the grades listed in **Appendix 1** to this scheme, arising as a consequence of the former occupant of the post taking up

appointment at Assistant Secretary level or higher in a department other than his or her parent department.

3. For the purpose of paragraph 2(a) and (b) above, the grades of Principal (Standard Scale), Principal (Higher Scale) and each of the grades listed in **Appendix 1** to this scheme will be given separate sequences, within each department. Posts filled under paragraph 2 (c), (d) and (e) above, will not reckon in the sequence of promotions; where a post is filled by special interdepartmental competition, provided for under paragraph 33 below, it will be regarded as fulfilling the requirements to fill posts by interdepartmental competitions.

4. For the purpose of paragraph 2(c) above, new posts may, in certain circumstances, be deemed not to include certain posts which originate in the promotion *in situ* of officers at Assistant Principal level who have effectively filled those posts on the basis of a higher duties / ex gratia allowance for Principal-level duties for a lengthy period. The exemption of posts in this way will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Department of Finance, which will consult with the AHCPs and individual departments as appropriate.

#### **DURATION OF THE PANELS SET UP UNDER THE SCHEME**

5. The panels established under the scheme will be valid for the periods specified in paragraph 5 of the Circular. The period of validity may be varied by agreement between the Department of Finance and the AHCPs.

#### **NATURE OF WORK**

6. The duties of posts at Principal level are broad-ranging, the main functions generally being as follows:

- Responsibility for the general management of specific areas of Government activities and for representation of these areas internationally and domestically as appropriate.
- Policy work relating to broad national issues, including the review of current policies, strategies and legislation and the development of new initiatives in the light of Government and ministerial policy and agreed objectives and priorities.
- Advising Ministers in relation to issues arising within their areas of responsibility.

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

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

(a) be serving in an established or unestablished (see d below) 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 paragraph 1 of **Appendix 2** to this scheme **and**

(b) on **1 September, 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.

(d) Unestablished officers may also compete in the competition provided they fulfil the eligibility requirements set out above, subject to having a minimum of one year's continuous service in one of the grades concerned. An unestablished officer who is successful in the competition will be required to satisfy an establishment element in order to be appointed to an established post.

8. To be eligible for **Principal (Higher Scale)** posts, candidates must,

(a) be serving in an established or unestablished capacity in the civil service, or on secondment from the civil service, in the grade of Principal (Standard Scale) or in a Departmental grade listed in paragraph 2 of **Appendix 2** to this scheme,

**or**

have been successful at the second interview in the competition for Principal (Standard Scale);

**and**

(b) 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.

(c) Unestablished officers may also compete in the competition provided they fulfil the eligibility requirements set out above. An unestablished officer who is successful in the competition will be required to pass an establishment element in order to be appointed to an established post.

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

10. The eligibility of any particular grade or group for appointment to any grade under the competitions held under this scheme applies exclusively in the context of the Scheme.

## **SELECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Stage 1**

11.1 Stage 1 will consist of a preliminary interview to be conducted by one of a number of boards set up by the Public Appointments Service. The interview will focus on the candidate's career to date, with special emphasis on the achievements that have particularly prepared them for Principal level. While the interview is underpinned by the Principal Officer competencies (see Appendix 3), the structure of the interview will be around exploring candidates' key achievements in relation to the following:

- Contributing to & Implementing Strategic Change
- Critical Analysis & Decision Making
- Managing & Delivering Quality Results
- Working with People to Achieve Challenging Objectives

11.2 This exploration will help the interview board assess if the candidate is ready for the step-up to operating at Principal level. Candidate performance will be assessed against the competencies identified as being necessary for effective performance at Principal level (for more detail see Appendix 4). The Board will consider evidence from across the interview in awarding a score under the relevant competency areas. All competency areas carry equal marks.

### **Stage 2**

11.3 The focus of the Main Interview will be on exploring candidate awareness and understanding of the types of challenges facing senior managers in the Civil and Public Service today.

11.4 A number of days prior to interview, candidates will be provided with a list of potential service-wide strategic/ change management issues on which to reflect upon. This list will be available on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie). On the day and in advance of the interview, candidates will be informed of the issue on which they will be required to address the Board and will be given a short amount of time to prepare. During the interview candidates will have up to 10 minutes to address the Board on the issue. The Interview Board will discuss and challenge the candidate's thinking on the topic and will follow up on the issues presented. At this stage the discussion may be broadened to discuss some of the wider issues impacting on the Civil and Public Service.

11.5 Candidate performance will be assessed against the competencies identified as being necessary for effective performance at Principal level (for more details see Appendix 5). All competency areas carry equal marks.

- Leadership & Direction
- Critical Analysis & Decision Making
- Managing & Delivering Results
- Building Relationships / Communication
- Personal Effectiveness

12. Candidates will be called to Stage 2 interviews on the basis of equivalent ranked groups from each Stage 1 board. For example, those candidates ranked one to five by each Stage 1 board might be called to final interview to form the original panel (i.e. the first batch). If however one of those candidates, in the case of a particular board, had, in the period between Stage 1 and being called to final interview, been promoted internally, then he or she would not be entitled to proceed to final interview (see paragraph 18), and so only four candidates from that particular board would be invited to final interview. This principle of equivalent ranked groups would also apply to the calling to interview of candidates to form a “second batch”.

13. Where it is likely that the Principal (Standard Scale) panel may expire before its end-date of **28 February 2007**, it may be replenished by the calling to interview, by a reconvened final board, of a “second batch” of candidates comprised of the highest-ranked candidates at Stage 1 who were not originally invited to Stage 2. Subject to paragraph 12 above, each Stage 1 board would supply the same number of candidates to be invited for interview at this reconvened Stage 2 with the exact number per board determined by the Public Appointments Service. The lifetime of the “second batch” panel would not extend beyond **28 February 2007**. The reconvened final interview board would not necessarily have the same membership as the original one.

#### **Selection for the Principal (Higher Scale)**

14. Selection for the Principal (Higher Scale) competition will be by means of a competitive interview conducted by the Public Appointments Service who 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. Interviews will be conducted by a board or boards to be set up by the Public Appointments Service and the selection criteria will be based on the five core competencies in the Principal Officer Competency Framework set out in Appendix 3, supplemented by the candidate addressing the board on an issue relevant to the local context. The board conducting the competitive interviews will form a panel in order of merit.

15. In placing candidates considered best qualified for appointment in order of merit, credit for proficiency in both Irish and English will be given in accordance with Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75 and Department of Finance Circular 30/90 and any other relevant instruction to candidates qualified for the award of such credit on or before the interview.



16. Any candidate who:

- a) resigns, retires or is dismissed from his or her post or
  - b) is not qualified by the selection board as being suitable for promotion to Principal level,
- will not be eligible to be placed on the panels.

### **CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

17. **Decentralisation:** In Budget 2004, the Government announced a major programme of decentralisation of Government Departments and other agencies from Dublin to locations around Ireland. In a decentralised civil and public service, offers of employment may be conditional on the appointee undertaking to work in a particular decentralised location where required to do so by the appointing Department.

18. Where an offer of appointment is to a post in a Department/Office that is planned to be decentralized, **or to an existing provincial location**, such offers of appointment will be made on condition that appointees are prepared to relocate to a particular decentralised location with the appointing Department/Office. In such cases, appointees will be required to sign an undertaking on taking up duty that they are prepared to relocate to a particular decentralised location as required to do so by the appointing Department.

19.1 Appointees will be required to serve a **minimum period of 3 years** in a decentralised location before they would be eligible for a transfer to another location and they will be required to sign an undertaking on appointment to this effect.

19.2 Where the appointee is required to serve a period of less than or equal to 2 years in Dublin prior to decentralisation, the total period, including the period in a decentralised location, before being eligible for transfer to another location would be the period served in Dublin plus 3 years in the decentralised location.

19.3 Where the appointee is required to serve a period of greater than 2 years in Dublin prior to decentralisation, the maximum total period including the period in a decentralised location, before being eligible for transfer to another location would be 5 years.

20. Candidates who do not accept an offer of appointment on the basis of provisions in paragraphs 17 to 19.3 will remain on the panel for consideration for further offer(s) of appointment, should these arise. However, it should be noted that all further offer(s) of appointment will also be made on condition of the candidate's undertaking that they are prepared to work in a particular decentralised location. However they will not receive further offers of appointment to a location which they have previously turned down.

21. **Candidates should note that the provisions of Circular 6/89, Removal Expenses, will not apply to any offers of appointment arising from this competition.**

22. Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 23-26 below, each appointment to a post which must be filled from a panel formed under the scheme will be offered to the candidate who is, at the time of making the offer, highest placed on the order of merit on the appropriate panel. Appointments will be in an acting capacity in the first instance and will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. Officers not promoted at the expiry of the panel will have no claim to promotion thereafter because of their having been on the panel. In the event of reversion an officer will, where practicable, return to fill a vacancy in the grade and department in which he or she served prior to promotion. The vacancy thus created will be filled again under the terms of the scheme without affecting the sequence of appointments in that department provided the reversion occurred before the expiry of the panel.

23. Officers on the panels will continue to be eligible for promotion in the normal course in their own department, but in the event of any such officer accepting an offer of promotion made in the normal course or under the scheme to a grade covered by the scheme he or she will no longer be offered appointment to posts at or below that level under the scheme.

24. Knowledge of Irish: It is recognised that the position in relation to the performance of certain duties in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of Education and Science and the Public Appointments Service through the medium of Irish could present special difficulties. Those departments may, therefore, as an exceptional arrangement, satisfy themselves as to the competence of any candidate due to be assigned to them to undertake such duties through the medium of Irish. If further appraisal of a candidate's competence in that respect is sought, it will be addressed by the Public Appointments Service on the basis of a test held specifically for this purpose.

25. Department of Foreign Affairs: Candidates who indicate on their application forms that they are interested in being considered for appointment as Counsellor in the Department of Foreign Affairs and who are successful in being placed on the Principal (Standard Scale) panel, will present before a separate board, and may include the candidate addressing the board on an issue relevant to the local context.

- The board will consist of a representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs and a person nominated by the Public Appointments Service. This board will confirm their suitability for the diplomatic service having regard to the particular work requirements and terms and conditions of employment, including the onerous and continuing liability for service abroad, which applies in the diplomatic service.
- The Public Appointments Service, may, at its discretion, decide that officers serving in the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Assistant Principal and First Secretary grades who are placed on the Principal (Standard Scale) panel can be deemed to be qualified for the diplomatic service without having to attend for further interview. Assignments to the post of Counsellor, should a vacancy arise, will be made from those candidates who have been confirmed suitable for the post, in accordance with their order of merit on the Principal (Standard Scale) panel.

- A decision by the board that an individual candidate is not suitable for assignment to the diplomatic service, or any agreement between the board and a candidate that the candidate will not proceed with his/her application in the light of the discussions with the board, will not, of course, interfere in any way with the candidate's place on the Principal (Standard Scale) panel.
- Candidates should note that posts at Counsellor level are restricted to citizens of Ireland and persons entitled to hold Irish citizenship in order that they can be issued with Irish diplomatic passports, thereby qualifying for appropriate diplomatic privileges and immunities while serving or travelling abroad.

26. Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General: The following procedure will apply where a post of Deputy Director of Audit in the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General falls to be filled under the scheme:

- (a) The post will be advertised and a confined competition will be held. The same eligibility conditions will apply to candidates in this confined competition as apply to normal Principal Officer competitions.
- (b) Selection will be by means of competitive interview conducted by the Public Appointments Service. The Public Appointments Service may, on the advice of the interview board, and following examination of the applications of all candidates by reference to the nature of the duties of the post and the candidates' experience and qualifications, decide the number of candidates to be invited to interview.

## **REFUSAL OF APPOINTMENTS**

27. An officer who refuses an offer of appointment on grounds of the grade of the post offered will not be offered an appointment to that grade again, but will remain on the panel for appointment to other grades. Similarly, an officer who refuses an offer of appointment on grounds of the location of the post offered will not be offered an appointment to that location again, but will remain on the panel for appointment to other locations. However, an officer who refuses an offer of appointment to a post following a competition held under paragraph 26 above will not be considered for any further appointment during the lifetime of the panels set up under that scheme.

28. An officer who refuses an offer of appointment on grounds of grade or location and who has not been promoted at the expiry of the relevant panel will have no claim to promotion thereafter because of having been on the panel.

29. Where an offer of appointment is refused, the post will be offered successively in order of merit to the remaining candidates on the relevant panel until it is filled. If no candidate accepts the post, it may be filled by internal promotion in the department concerned and that department will be deemed to have satisfied its liability to the scheme in respect of the vacancy in question.

30. An officer who is found not suitable for appointment to a particular post because of the Irish language requirement in paragraph 24 will retain his or her place on the relevant panel. If, on expiry of the panel, such an officer has not been promoted and it is established that he or she would have been promoted from the panel but for the operation of the Irish language requirement, then that officer would be offered the first appointment which would fall to be filled from the next equivalent panel to which the Irish requirement does not apply.

31. When an offer of appointment is made, an officer will have a maximum of **five working days** after receipt of the offer from the Department with the promotional vacancy to accept or reject the promotion. Failure to respond to the offer will be deemed to constitute a refusal of the offer.

### **PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

32. For each candidate entering the competition(s) the Line Manager and Personnel Officer should complete an assessment of the candidate's suitability for promotion on a form to be supplied by the Public Appointments Service. This assessment form is designed to reflect the new competency framework. Where a candidate is subject to a scheme of performance appraisal within his or her department, the promotion potential form in that scheme of performance appraisal as completed at the last appraisal before the date of the competition circular should be used when completing that form. Where a sufficiently long period, say about nine months, has elapsed since the candidate's appraisal *and* where there is sufficient reason to believe that the candidate's performance in the interim period merits a change in the assessment, then a current appraisal should be made.

### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

33. Where an officer is promoted from a departmental grade to a general service grade or vice versa under this scheme, that officer will have career development opportunities equivalent to other members of the grade. Subject to the demands of the job having priority, any desirable induction training (formal and on-the-job) should also be provided as soon as practicable.

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

34. A Steering Committee, representative of the Department of Finance and the AHCPs, will monitor the progress of the scheme with a view to resolving issues which may arise in relation to its operation.

### **INFORMATION ON PANELS**

35. The information on panel(s) formed as a result of these competitions will be made available to Personnel Officers in all Departments/Offices and Careers and Appointments Section in the Department of Finance. In addition, candidates will be asked to agree to the same information being made available to the relevant civil service unions for the purpose of monitoring the operation of the scheme.

## **REVIEW**

36. The Department of Finance and the AHCPs will review general matters arising from the operation of this scheme.

## **RESERVATIONS**

37. The Minister for Finance reserves the right to suspend or modify the scheme in the event of redundancy which has to be dealt with on a general service-wide basis, or in the event of any future Government decisions.

38. The Minister for Finance also reserves the right to arrange for the filling, by separate interdepartmental competition or otherwise, of vacancies at Principal (Standard or Higher Scale) level for which special circumstances exist. Before an interdepartmental competition is initiated, in any case where special circumstances are deemed to exist, there shall be consultation between the Department of Finance and the AHCPs.

39. Staffing proposals relating to special circumstances from Departments must be raised with Personnel and Remuneration Division of the Department of Finance prior to those Departments entering into any further discussions on this issue.

**29 July, 2005**

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **DEPARTMENTAL GRADES IN WHICH POSTS MAY BE FILLED**

#### **Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General**

Deputy Director of Audit

#### **Department of Foreign Affairs**

Counsellor

#### **Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas**

Principal Committee Clerk

#### **Office of the Ombudsman - Office of the Information Commissioner**

Senior Investigator

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **DEPARTMENTAL GRADES ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE**

#### **1. FOR PRINCIPAL (STANDARD SCALE) POSTS**

##### **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

#### **2. FOR PRINCIPAL (HIGHER SCALE) POSTS**

##### **Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General**

Deputy Director of Audit

##### **Department of Foreign Affairs**

Counsellor

##### **Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas**

Clerk Assistant of the Seanad

Principal Committee Clerk

##### **Office of the Ombudsman - Office of the Information Commissioner**

Senior Investigator

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **The Principal Officer Competency Framework**

The five 'core' competency areas are presented below together with the titles of the individual competencies associated with each area.

#### **Leadership and Direction**

Contributes to the shaping of strategy and policy development consistent with the strategies of the Department/ Government. Transforms the vision into meaningful objectives that others can relate to and provides a framework and structures for moving forward. Inherent to this area is the ability to balance change and continuity – to continually strive to improve service and program delivery, to create a work environment that encourages creative thinking and to maintain focus, intensity, and persistence, even under increasingly complex and demanding conditions.

- Strategic Thinking & Leadership
- Contextual Awareness
- Creativity & Innovation
- Initiating & Driving Change

#### **Critical Analysis & Decision Making**

Possesses the ability to rapidly assimilate information, discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information, and to see through to the core issues. It includes the capacity to acquire and to manage complex information and to base decisions on effective analysis of the data. Central to this area is the ability to challenge information, evaluate the consequences of different approaches and use sound judgment in coming to conclusions and in communicating with others. It also involves a willingness to take risks when appropriate to further the agenda and crucially, a willingness to make timely decisions and to stand by those decisions as appropriate.

- Information Management & Analysis
- Judgement & Decision Making

#### **Managing and Delivering Results**

Ensures that objectives are met by translating overall strategy into meaningful objectives that demonstrate a clear understanding of what is required and that others can relate to. Demonstrates a strong understanding and awareness of the management process, defining and implementing to deliver results. Develops capability; rolls out strategies to maximise employee potential/ performance; co-ordinates resources and manages activities to achieve high standards in the delivery of the Division, Department and/or customers objectives. Champions measurement on delivery of results and is willing to take personal responsibility to initiate activities and drive objectives through to a conclusion.

- Managing Performance through People
- Resource Allocation & Management
- Customer Focus
- Personal Responsibility

#### **Building Relationships / Communication**



This area involves the ability to explain, advocate and express facts and ideas in a convincing manner, and negotiate with individuals and groups internally and externally. It also involves the ability to develop an expansive professional network to remain up-to-date with and influence the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organisation and to work co-operatively with and influence senior management colleagues to drive forward the corporate agenda. Key to this is working effectively with a diverse range of people and driving forward the equality agenda.

- Influencing/Negotiating
- Networking
- Interpersonal & Communication Skills

### **Personal Effectiveness**

The essence of personal effectiveness is the ability to deal with challenging and sometimes difficult situations in a constructive fashion, maintaining composure when dealing with crises and keeping a sense of perspective and balance in situations that involve significant personal or work challenge. It has at its core a strong sense of personal self-belief and integrity and a willingness to be an independent voice, if that is necessary. It incorporates a sense of willingness to learn from experience and to identify opportunities to further grow and develop.

- Resilience & Composure
- Self-awareness & Career Development.
- Trust & Integrity

## Appendix 4

### Stage 1: The Preliminary Interview

The focus of the Preliminary Interview is on the candidates' career to date with emphasis on how their achievements prepared them for operating at Principal level. In the application form candidates are required to specify their key achievements under the headings presented in the table below. The competencies that map onto these headings are also presented below. All the assessment areas will carry equal marks.

<b>Key Achievement Area's being explored at interview</b>	<b><i>Principal Officer Competency Area's the achievement areas map on to</i></b>	
<i>Contributing to &amp; Implementing Strategic Change</i>	<i>Leadership &amp; Direction</i>	<i>Personal Effectiveness</i>
Critical Analysis & Decision Making	<i>Critical Analysis &amp; Decision Making</i>	
Managing & Delivering Quality Results	<i>Managing &amp; Delivering Results</i>	
<i>Working with People to Achieve Challenging Objectives</i>	<i>Building Relationships &amp; Communication</i>	

As the table depicts the 'Personal Effectiveness' is a global assessment area i.e. this competency area will be measured across the entire interview.

In the course of the interview the Board will be looking for evidence against the competency areas and these will inform their questions; the Board will be keen to get as much evidence from the candidate as possible in the time available.

Through their exploration of candidates' achievements in the relevant areas the Interview Board will build a rounded picture of candidate experience.

Candidates will receive comprehensive candidate preparation material in advance of attending for interview.

## Appendix 5

### Stage 2: Main Interview

During the Main Interview, the Interview Board will be interested in eliciting candidates' skills in relation to the competencies required at Principal level. This will be undertaken through exploration of their ability to deal with some of the key issues that impact on the Civil and Public Service. An example of the approach is presented below, along with an overview of how the competencies apply to scoring:

*Example Issue: 'Reduction in Public Expenditure - Impact on costs/ Value for Money'*

<i>Candidate x's address included the following broad points.....</i>	<i>How the points raised during the presentation might map onto the competency framework.....</i>	
.....presented options and ideas around how to manage the implementation of a 'reduced costs' strategy.....	<i>Leadership &amp; Direction</i>	<i>Personal Effectiveness</i>
....identification of impact / how to manage fallout.....	<i>Critical Analysis &amp; Decision Making</i>	
.....impact on the delivery of service....ideas around managing that....monitoring and evaluating.....	<i>Managing &amp; Delivering Results</i>	
....managing staff issues and concerns.....issues around communication strategy.....	<i>Building Relationships &amp; Communication</i>	

When reviewing the list of service-wide strategic/ change management topics candidates are advised to prepare their thoughts in relation to the pros and cons, impact and wider implications of the topics so as to be able to discuss the topics with the Interview Board who will challenge the candidate's thinking on the topic selected. When the candidate has addressed the Board, the Board will follow up on the issues presented and give the candidate the opportunity to clarify and expand on their thinking. At this stage the discussion may be broadened to discuss some of the wider issues impacting the Civil and Public Service.

In the course of the presentation and follow up discussions, the Interview Board will be looking for evidence against the competency areas and these will inform their questions; the Board will be keen to get as much evidence from the candidate as possible in the time available.

Candidate performance will be assessed against the competencies identified as being necessary for effective performance at Principal level. All the competencies will carry equal marks. Candidates will receive comprehensive candidate preparation material in advance of attending for interview.