



**An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance**

E109/14/06

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**Circular 25/2006:
Confined competition for promotion to Staff Officer in the Civil Service**

A Dhuine Uasail

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that the Public Appointments Service will hold a confined competition to set up panels from which appointments as Staff Officer may be made. It is not envisaged that appointments will be made from this competition after 30 June, 2008.

Eligibility

2. 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 are serving in an established, unestablished or acting capacity in the Civil Service or on secondment from the Civil Service to FAS or the Health and Safety Authority in the grades of:

Clerical Officer (general service) or Head Services Officer, and on 29 September, 2006 have not less than two years' service in the grades of:

- Clerical Officer or Head Services Officer;
- Household Survey Co-Ordinators and Household Survey Interviewers – Quarterly National Household Survey – Central Statistics Office;
- Court Messenger – Courts Service.

Previous service in the following grades may be counted as Clerical Officer or Head Service Officer service (if applicable) for the purposes of this competition:

- Clerical Assistant (general service) on clerical, shorthand-typing, typing or data entry duties, including previous service as Writing Assistant, Shorthand-Typist, Clerk-Typist, Typist, Card Puncher or Key-Punch Operator
- Departmental Clerical Officer (Customs and Excise)
- Assistant Officer of Customs and Excise
- Departmental Clerical Assistant (Customs and Excise)
- Departmental Clerical Assistant (Taxes)
- Paperkeeper

To All Departments: [For Department read Department/Office throughout this Circular].

Unestablished officers and officers acting in the eligible grades may compete in the competition provided they fulfil the eligibility requirements set out above. Where an officer was acting or on contract in an eligible grade, and was thereafter appointed in a substantive capacity, eligibility can be based on the aggregate service e.g. six months in an acting capacity or on contract and eighteen months in a substantive capacity, can be aggregated to give two years service. For the purpose of deciding eligibility, officers must be serving on the eligibility date and the one year of continuous service must have taken place immediately prior to the eligibility date of the competition in question.

4. 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).

Where candidates have previously served in eligible grades in the Civil Service and have re-entered through open competition, the following eligibility conditions may apply.

Where such candidates:

- have satisfactorily completed probation in the previous period of service;
- and
- have satisfactorily completed one year's probation in the current period of service;

eligibility for promotion in this competition may be based on an aggregation of previous and current service.

5. Officers who are on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers who are on career break may apply if their career break conforms to the terms of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are 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.

Selection Procedures

6. Please note that the Public Appointments Service will hold a combined Stage 1 test process in respect of applicants for the confined competition(s) of **Staff Officer (Circular 25/2006)** and **Executive Officer (Circular 26/2006)**. Those who apply for both competitions will be tested at one sitting. However, separate Orders of Merit will be established following the Stage 1 tests. Applicants will be required to complete **one application form only** and indicate, on their application, the competition(s) they are applying for.
7. Selection will be by means of a competition conducted by the Public Appointments Service and will consist of a qualifying Written Test (Stage 1) and Competitive Interview (Stage 2).

Stage 1: It is intended that Stage 1 tests will be held in Dublin during the week commencing **9th October, 2006** and in other locations during the week commencing **16th October, 2006**. Candidates should note that these dates have not yet been confirmed.

The Public Appointments Service will contact candidates directly to confirm the date, time and venue of the written tests. A certificate of attendance will be available to attending candidates at the end of the tests, if requested. Officers should present this certificate to their Personnel Section on their return to verify their attendance.

8. Test familiarisation material will be made available on the Public Appointments Service website (www.publicjobs.ie) **after the closing date** in advance of the Stage 1 written tests. The Test Familiarisation Booklet will give details regarding the format and structure of the written tests.
9. **Stage 2:** Those candidates who are placed highest in the written tests (Stage 1) will be invited to competitive interview. The number to be invited to interview (Stage 2) will be determined from time to time having regard to the vacancies to be filled. Every third and fourth vacancy arising in a sequence of five will be filled from the panel set up under this competition. Candidates will only be entitled to one interview.

The interview will be conducted by a board or boards to be set up by the Public Appointments Service. Regional panels will be drawn up, in order of merit, from among qualified candidates.

More detailed information in relation to the interview will be made available in advance to all applicants invited to attend. Applicants must make themselves available for any test and/or interview at short notice, if required.

10. In determining the order of merit at Stage 2, 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. This means that credit for proficiency in both Irish and English is awarded when candidates are being placed in order of merit following the final Stage of the competition.
11. Candidates who wish to be considered for positions where fluency in Irish is required may have a separate assessment made of their ability to communicate effectively in both Irish and English.

Applications

12. Applications must be made on-line directly to the Public Appointments Service through www.publicjobs.ie. The completed application form must be submitted **not later than 15th September 2006**.

In order to process this competition efficiently this closing date will be strictly observed. Applicants who have not heard from the Public Appointments Service concerning the date, time and venue for their test **by 4th October, 2006** should contact that office immediately by phoning **1890 252 031**.

13. The Public Appointments Service will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each candidate called to interview, the Personnel Officer will be required:
 - (i) to certify that the candidate:
 - has worked well and been satisfactory in their present capacity
 - has been satisfactory in general conduct, and
 - fulfils the conditions of eligibility specified in paragraphs 2 to 5 of this Circular.
 - (ii) to supply the Public Appointments Service with an assessment of the candidate's suitability for appointment on a form to be supplied by the Public Appointments Service.
14. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition 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 this competition, or any of the selection stages of the competition, does not imply acceptance by the Public Appointments Service. 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 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 from the point of view 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). If candidates have doubts about any aspect of their eligibility, they are advised to clarify their position with their Personnel Section before proceeding with their applications.

Conditions of Appointment

15. **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.
16. Where an offer of appointment is to a post in a Department/Office that it is planned to be decentralised, **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.
- 17:1. Appointees will be required to serve a **minimum period of 2 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.
- 17:2. Where the appointee is required to serve a period of less than or equal to two 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 two years in the decentralised location.
- 17:3. Where the appointee is required to serve a period of greater than two 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 four years.
- 17:4. Prospective appointees serving in locations outside Dublin will, most likely, be required to come to Dublin for training with their new Department prior to that Department's re-location under the Decentralisation programme. Offers of appointment will be conditional on prospective appointees' written agreement to this effect.
18. Candidates who do not accept an offer of appointment on this basis will remain on the panel for consideration for further offer(s) of appointment, should these arise. However, it should be noted that any 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.
19. Candidates should note that the provisions of Circular 6/89, Removal Expenses, **will not apply** to any offers of appointment arising from this competition.
20. Following Stage 1 Tests, separate Orders of Merit will be established in respect of the

regions listed below.

Successful candidates will be required to make a limited selection of the regions in which they would be prepared to work, from the list given below. **A separate questionnaire for this purpose will be made available to these candidates following the issuing of the Stage 1 test results.**

Regions

Region 1 Dublin	Region 2 Carlow Kilkenny	Region 3 Waterford Wexford	Region 4 Cork	Region 5 Laois Offaly Westmeath
Region 6 Galway Clare	Region 7 Mayo Roscommon	Region 8 Limerick Tipperary	Region 9 Louth Meath	Region 10 Cavan Monaghan
Region 11 Kerry	Region 12 Leitrim Longford Sligo	Region 13 Donegal	Region 14 Kildare Wicklow	

Some vacancies may arise where fluency in Irish (written and spoken) is required. If you are interested, please specify when applying.

21. Candidates can be given no assurance that an appointment to any location listed above will be available. Appointments to an office relocated under a decentralisation programme will not be offered if positions in that office are being filled from special panels set up under the programme.
22. A candidate who refuses an offer of appointment to a location within their selected region(s) will not be considered for that particular location but may remain eligible for consideration for appointment to any other location within the region(s) which they have specified. **Candidates are strongly advised to apply only for regions in which they would be prepared to serve.**
23. A candidate who accepts an offer of appointment as Staff Officer or higher grade, whether as a result of this competition or otherwise, will cease to be eligible for appointment from this competition. An officer who retires, resigns, etc. from his or her position in the Civil Service will cease to be eligible.
24. Officers not promoted at the expiry of the panels, will have no claim to promotion thereafter because of having been on the panels.

Codes of Practice

25. The recruitment and selection process for appointment to this position will be conducted in accordance with the Codes 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 Codes 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 Codes of Practice including, inter alia, the provisions in relation to the responsibilities placed on candidates who participate in the recruitment and selection process.

26. Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Codes of Practice.
27. The Codes of Practice may be accessed by visiting www.cpsa-online.ie or by contacting the Commission for Public Service Appointments, Chapter House, 26-30 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

General

28. Appointments from the panels will initially be in an acting capacity. In the event of reversion, an officer will return to a vacancy in his/her former grade in the former Department.
29. The Minister reserves the right to arrange that vacancies for Staff Officer may be filled by separate interdepartmental competition or otherwise where special qualifications are deemed necessary or where other special circumstances exist. In such circumstances there will be consultation between the Official and Staff Sides.

Information on Panels

30. The information on panels formed as a result of these competitions will be 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.

Circulation and further information

31. Personnel Sections should bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in their Departments and associated Offices without delay, including eligible fixed term workers, officers on term time, secondment, maternity leave, career break, contract, and all other relevant forms of leave
32. 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.
33. The Civil Service is an equal opportunities employer.

Mise le meas

John C. O'Connell
Assistant Secretary