

E109/66/06

8 February, 2007

Circular 11/2007: Confined competition for appointment to posts at Principal Officer (Standard Scale) in the Civil Service

A Dhuine Uasail,

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 agreed with the Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants (AHCPS). Under the terms of the Scheme, this circular announces a competition, to be run by the Public Appointments Service, for the establishment of a panel for appointment to Principal Officer (Standard Scale) posts in the Civil Service.

General Council agreement on Decentralisation

1.1 Candidates attention is drawn to the agreement reached at General Council in February 2006 that all posts being filled from interdepartmental competitions will be existing regional posts or posts that will be decentralised. The agreement applies to appointments under the Scheme.

1.2 Candidates should note that where a post that would normally be due to be filled from the interdepartmental panel and is located in a Department/Office that is remaining in Dublin, it will be filled in accordance with separate arrangements agreed at General Council for the filling of such Dublin-based posts.

1.3 These separate arrangements provide that the first call in filling such a post will be to the Dublin Arrangements. In summary, where an officer relocates under the Dublin Arrangements, the panel liability will transfer to the donor Department/Office. The donor Department/Office must, in the first instance, seek to fill the consequent vacancy through the Central Applications Facility (CAF). Where no officer is available on the CAF, the vacancy may be filled from the Interdepartmental Panel, with a decentralisation commitment.

The Scheme

2. Eligible officers who are interested in participating in the competition should familiarise themselves with the Scheme, which sets out the key features of the competition, including:

- the scope and application of the Scheme itself,
- the nature of work at Principal Officer level,
- eligibility conditions and
- selection and appointment procedures.

The selection and appointment procedures arise out of two reviews of the Interdepartmental Principal Officer selection system - "**Job Analysis Report and Recommendations for Selection**" and "**Feasibility of the use of Assessment Centres at Principal Officer Level**" - that were commissioned by the Department of Finance. The reviews identify the essential competencies required for effective performance at this level and set out a selection approach for the post of Principal Officer, comprising of a series of assessments administered over a number of stages. Copies of these reports are available on www.publicjobs.ie.

Duration of panels and competition schedule

3. The Principal Officer (Standard Scale) panel will be formed by means of a three-stage assessment process conducted by the Public Appointments Service. The Stage 1 assessment is expected to commence in the week commencing **19 March 2007**. The panel will be valid for appointments due from **21 May, 2007**.

4. All panels set up under the terms of this circular will be valid until **30 April, 2009** inclusive 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. The period of validity may be varied by agreement between the Department of Finance and the AHCPs.

Applications

5. Applications must be made on the official application form which is available on the Public Appointments Service website www.publicjobs.ie. In the event of difficulties in applying online please call the **Public Appointments Service LoCall at 1800 44 99 99**. Completed forms must be submitted so as to reach the Office of the Public Appointments Service **not later than Thursday 22 February, 2007**. This closing date must be strictly observed. A Self Assessment questionnaire will form part of the application process.

Briefing Sessions

6.1 The Public Appointments Service will hold short briefing sessions for prospective applicants on the format of the competition for promotion to Principal Officer (Standard Scale). **It is expected that briefings will commence in the week of 12 February 2007** and will take place in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Sligo and Athlone. **The proposed dates and times of the briefing sessions will be available on www.publicjobs.ie**. Those wishing to attend the briefing sessions should contact Ms Sharon Gilbert by email at sharon.gilbert@publicjobs.ie or by phone at (01) 8587519 to book a place. Prospective applicants are advised to book as early as possible as places for each session will be limited.

6.2 Alternatively, the content of the briefing may be viewed on the Public Appointments Service website www.publicjobs.ie.

Health and Sick Leave

7.1 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 assessment process does not imply acceptance by the Public Appointments Service that a candidate is eligible to compete in the competition.

7.2 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

8. 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.

9. The Code of Practice may be accessed by visiting www.cpsa-online.ie or by contacting directly the Commission for Public Service Appointments, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1.

Complaints and Requests for Review

10.1 Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Code of Practice.

10.2 Candidates' Rights and Review Procedures in relation to the Selection Process are set out at Appendix 4.

Circulation and further information

11.1 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 and any other relevant forms of leave.

11.2 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.

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

Electronic Copies of Circular

13. This Circular is also available on the Department's web-site at <http://www.finance.gov.ie>.

Mise le meas,

Michael Errity
Assistant Secretary

Scheme for interdepartmental promotion to posts at Principal Officer 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

Filling posts at Principal level in the Civil Service

2.1 Under the agreement with the AHCPs on filling posts at Principal level in the Civil Service and in accordance with the provisions of "Sustaining Progress", 50% of all promotions are made from Departmental selection processes. The remaining 50% is divided between Interdepartmental appointments and Open Recruitment as set out at 3.4 below. The first appointment in each Department/Office will be a Departmental appointment.

"Sustaining Progress" – improvements in promotion systems

2.2 In keeping with the commitment to improving promotion systems in the Civil Service, Section 22 - Delivering Quality Public Services of "Sustaining Progress" (paragraph 22.17(ii)) provides that:

"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. This proportion 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 holding of this competition thus gives effect to the revised proportion of promotions.

"Towards 2016" – Open Recruitment

2.4 A commitment exists in Chapter IX - Public Service Modernisation (Part 2) of "Towards 2016" in relation to open recruitment. Paragraph 29.3 (b) of Section 29 – The Civil Service provides that:

***"The Civil Service may recruit by open competition in any year:
2 in 9 of all vacancies at Principal Officer [standard and higher scales] and equivalent grades, including professional and technical grades"***

It was agreed between the parties to the Agreement that where vacancies are filled by open competition under this provision, Departments and Offices will reduce their liabilities to the corresponding interdepartmental panel and this arrangement is reflected in the sequences set out at 3.4 below.

Specialised requirements in general service posts

2.5 "Towards 2016" also provides that where there is such specialised skills recruitment, there will be discussions between the parties.

Posts to be filled under the Scheme:

3.1 Appointments to the following posts are covered by the Scheme:

- (a) Promotion to an existing post in the grade of Principal Officer (Standard Scale) in each Department/Office classified "Interdepartmental" in the sequence at 3.4 below.
- (b) Promotion to an existing post in each of the grades listed in **Appendix 1** to this Scheme classified "Interdepartmental" in the sequence at 3.4 below

- (c) Every promotion to the grades of Principal Officer (Standard 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/Office other than his or her parent Department/Office subject to the General Council agreement on Decentralisation.

3.2 For the purpose of paragraph 3.1(a) and 3.1(b) above, the grades of Principal Officer (Standard Scale), and each of the grades listed in **Appendix 1** to this Scheme will be given separate sequences, within each Department/Office. Posts filled under paragraph 3.1(c), above, will not reckon in the sequence of promotions. Where a post is filled by special interdepartmental competition, provided for under paragraph 29 below, it will be regarded as fulfilling the requirements to fill posts by interdepartmental competitions.

3.3 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 Officer level who have effectively filled those posts on the basis of higher duties / ex gratia allowance for Principal Officer-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.

3.4 To give effect to open recruitment provisions in "Towards 2016", the Public Appointments Service will operate the following sequence in assigning candidates to Principal Officer posts from the panels set up under the Scheme and from the open recruitment competitions:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Interdepartmental | 2) Open Recruitment | 3) Interdepartmental |
| 4) Open Recruitment | 5) Interdepartmental | 6) Open Recruitment |
| 7) Interdepartmental | 8) Open Recruitment | 9) Interdepartmental |

3.5 Candidates should note that while the overall sequence is 2 in 9 of all vacancies this sequence applies to only 50% of vacancies i.e. the interdepartmental proportion. This results in the sequence of 4 in 9 as set out above. The sequence repeats as required.

3.6 Where an appointment is made requiring specialised skills, as at paragraph 2.5 above, it will substitute for an open recruitment appointment in the above sequence.

Debts to the Principal Officer panel

3.7. Departments/Offices should note that all debts to the Principal Officer panel must be met by Departments prior to the introduction of the new sequence of promotion.

Shortfalls arising in posts listed on CAF

3.8. Posts listed on CAF that have not been filled through normal CAF procedures may be offered, by agreement with the AHCPs, in order of merit to candidates on the panel set up under this competition.

NATURE OF WORK - SUMMARY

4. The duties of posts at Principal Officer 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.

A fuller overview of the role of Principal Officer is set out in pages 16 and 17 of the **“Principal Officer Job Analysis Report and Recommendations for Selection”**. The Report is available on www.publicjobs.ie.

ELIGIBILITY

5. To be eligible for appointment under the scheme, candidates must,

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

- Assistant Principal Officer (Standard Scale);
- Assistant Principal Officer (Higher Scale);
- Assistant Regional Director on secondment to FÁS from the Civil Service;
- A Departmental grade listed in Appendix 2 to this Scheme.

and

(b) on **Thursday 22 February, 2007** 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 work-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:

- (i) eligibility - Personnel Officers should verify that a candidate is serving in one of the eligible grades set out at 5(a) above or in Appendix 2
- (ii) performance of work in the present grade -
 - Personnel Officers should verify that the candidate has received an annual review rating of at least grade 3 under the Integrated PMDS model (agreed in General Council Report 1452).
 - Where a Department/Office has not yet completed the familiarisation period provided for in General Council Report 1452, the Personnel Officer should confirm that the candidate's line manager is prepared to certify that the candidate has attained a performance standard at least equivalent to PMDS level 3.
- (iii) general conduct,
- (iv) suitability for promotion, and
- (v) health, especially sick leave.

5.1 In respect of competitions for Principal Officer (Standard Scale), 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.

6. 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 to the provisions of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible.

6.1 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.

Placement on Panels

7. A candidate will not be placed on a panel where:

- a) s/he has resigned, retired or been dismissed from his or her post or
- b) s/he has been found not qualified by the selection board as being suitable for promotion to Principal Officer level.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

8. Selection will be by means of a 3 Stage process as set out below.

Stage 1

8.1 The Stage 1 assessment will consist of a Situational Judgment Exercise and an Analysis Exercise and will take place on Wednesday **21 March 2007**:

- The Situational Judgment Exercise evaluates the candidate's approach to a series of scenarios typical of those that may occur in the Principal Officer role.
- The Analysis Exercise will take the form of a series of questions designed to assess the candidate's critical analysis ability.

Familiarisation material will be available on www.publicjobs.ie from **Thursday 1 March 2007**. Candidates are advised to read this material in advance of attending the Stage 1 Assessment.

Stage 2

8.2 Only those placed highest on the order of merit following the Stage 1 assessment will be considered for progression to Stage 2. This stage consists of a Strategic Management Exercise and an Interview focused on key achievements:

- In the Strategic Management Exercise, candidates are presented with a detailed scenario and asked to review the information and produce a written response and a presentation.
- The Interview will focus on the candidate's career to date, with special emphasis on the achievements that have particularly prepared the candidate for Principal Officer level. While the Interview is underpinned by the Principal Officer competencies (see Appendix 3), the format of the Interview will involve an exploration of candidates' key achievements.
- Each candidate will be required to complete a supplementary application form giving an overview of employment and an outline of the key achievements that have prepared the candidate for working at Principal Officer level.
- In accordance with General Council Agreement 1452, Personnel Officers should submit the last two PMDS Annual Reviews in the current grade as part of the documentation in support of the candidate's application. This will include both the rating and narrative assessment in the candidate's application Annual Review form.

8.3 Candidates will be called to Stage 3 on the basis of equivalent ranked groups from each Stage 2 board. The number of candidates to be called from each board will be decided by the Public Appointments Service, in the context of the likely number of posts to be filled during the period of the panel.

8.4 Where a candidate has been promoted internally in the period between Stage 2 and being called to Stage 3, then he or she will not be entitled to proceed to Stage 3 (see

paragraph 15 below). In that case, one less candidate from that particular board will be invited to Stage 3 interview.

Stage 3

Stage 3 of the selection process consists of an Interview and a Group Exercise.

8.5 The Interview will explore the candidate awareness and understanding of the types of challenges facing senior managers in the Civil and Public Service today.

8.6 The Group Exercise will involve the participation of a number of candidates, where each is assigned a different role. The group will be given detailed instructions on the purpose and format of the exercise and the competencies to be assessed. Candidates will be observed and assessed by trained assessors.

8.7 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. This list will be available on www.publicjobs.ie. On the day, and in advance of the interview, candidates will be informed of the particular 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 Board will discuss and challenge the candidate's thinking on the issue and will follow up on the topics presented. At this stage, the discussion may be broadened to discuss some of the wider issues impacting on the Civil and Public Service.

8.8 A Departmental Assessment is required for each candidate going forward to Stage 3 (form to be supplied by the Public Appointments Service). This is a specific and reflective qualitative assessment of the candidates' skills. The information will be based on the competencies required for performance in the Principal Officer role and will feed into the overall process.

8.9 It is not possible to specify precisely in advance the numbers likely to go through from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and from Stage 2 to Stage 3 as this depends inter alia, on the overall quality of performance at each stage. However, it is possible that approximately half the applicant pool will go forward to the second stage and that approximately one third of candidates competing at the second stage will advance to the final stage.

8.10 Where it is likely that the Principal Officer (Standard Scale) panel may expire before its end-date of **30 April, 2009**, it may be replenished by calling to interview, by a reconvened final board, a "second batch" of candidates comprising the next highest-ranked candidates at Stage 2 who were not originally invited to Stage 3

8.11 The exact number to be invited to interview will be determined by the Public Appointments Service. The lifetime of the "second batch" panel will not extend beyond the original expiry date of the panel.

8.12 The reconvened final interview board will not necessarily have the same membership as the original board. The principle of equivalent ranked groups will also apply to the calling to Stage 3 of candidates to form a second or subsequent 'batch'.

CREDIT FOR PROFICIENCY IN BOTH IRISH AND ENGLISH

9.1 Credit for proficiency in Irish and English will be given in accordance with Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75 and Department of Finance Circular 30/90.

9.2 In placing candidates in the order of merit, credit due under the above Circulars will be applied only to those candidates who are successful at Stage 3.

CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

Decentralisation Regional Posts:

10.1 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.

10.2 Where an offer of appointment is to a post in a Department/Office that 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.

10.3 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.

10.4 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.

10.5 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.

10.6 Candidates who do not accept an offer of appointment on the basis of provisions in paragraphs 10.1 to 10.5 above 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.

General Council Agreement on Decentralisation – Dublin Arrangements

10.7 Candidates attention is drawn to the agreement reached at General Council in February 2006 that all posts being filled from interdepartmental competitions will be existing regional posts or posts that will be decentralised. The agreement applies to appointments under the Scheme.

10.8 Candidates should note that where a post that would normally be due to be filled from the interdepartmental panel and is located in a Department/Office that is remaining in Dublin, it will be filled in accordance with separate arrangements agreed at General Council for the filling of such Dublin-based posts.

10.9 These separate arrangements provide that the first call in filling such a post will be to the Dublin Arrangements. In summary, where an officer relocates under the Dublin Arrangements, the panel liability will transfer to the donor Department/Office. The donor Department/Office must, in the first instance, seek to fill the consequent vacancy through the Central Applications Facility (CAF). Where no officer is available on the CAF, the vacancy may be filled from the Interdepartmental Panel, with a decentralisation commitment.

Removal expenses

11. Candidates should note removal expenses will not apply to any appointment arising from this competition.

Order of Merit and Appointments

12. Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 15-17 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.

Appointment on probation

13.1 Appointments will be to the grade of Principal Officer (Standard Scale) and will be subject to the usual conditions governing promotion as set out in the Department of Finance Guidelines on Probation. On appointment, officers will serve a one year probationary period in the grade of Principal Officer (Standard Scale). At the end of this period, a decision will be made on substantive appointment to the grade. It is envisaged that such appointments will be subject to the PMDS procedures in relation to performance monitoring and to probationary reviews. During the probationary period, the appointee will be assessed to determine whether s/he:

- has demonstrated the capacity to undertake the duties of Principal Officer (Standard Scale), and
- has performed the duties in a satisfactory manner, and
- has been satisfactory in general conduct.

13.2 An officer whose service is not satisfactory will be notified of the action to be taken.

13.3 Where a decision is made not to confirm an appointee in the new grade, the Personnel Officer may be asked by the appointee to request that the Civil Service Disciplinary Code Appeal Board review the decision. Ref. Circular 14/2006 Civil Service Disciplinary Code paragraphs 11 and 50 (ii).

13.4 In the event of reversion an officer will, where practicable, return to fill a vacancy in the grade and Department/Office 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/Office provided the reversion occurred before the expiry of the panel. Any extra payment arising from the assignment would then cease.

Officers not promoted at the expiry of the panel

14. Officers not promoted at the expiry of the panel will have no claim to promotion thereafter because of their having been on the panel.

Acceptance of a promotion in own Department/Office

15. Officers on the panels will continue to be eligible for promotion in their own Department/Office. Where an officer accepts such a promotion to a grade covered by the Scheme, he or she will no longer be eligible to be offered appointment to posts at or below that level under the Scheme.

Knowledge of Irish

16. It is recognised that the performance of duties in certain posts in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of Education and Science and the Public Appointments Service requires a competency in Irish. Those Departments/Offices 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.

Department of Foreign Affairs

17. 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 Officer (Standard Scale) panel, will present before a separate board, and this may include the candidate addressing the board on an issue relevant to the work of the Department.

- 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 Officer and First Secretary grades who are placed on the Principal Officer (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 Officer (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 Officer (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.

REFUSAL OF APPOINTMENTS

18. 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

19. 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.

20. 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/Office concerned and that Department/Office will be deemed to have satisfied its liability to the Scheme in respect of the vacancy in question.

21. An officer who is found not suitable for appointment to a particular post because of the Irish language competency requirement in paragraph 16 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 competency requirement, that officer will be offered the first appointment which would fall to be filled from the **next** equivalent panel to which this competency requirement does not apply.

22. 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.

DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT

23.1 For each candidate admitted to Stage 3, 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 Principal Officer competency framework.

23.2 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, a current appraisal should be made.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

24. 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 necessary induction training (formal and on-the-job) should also be provided as soon as practicable.

STEERING COMMITTEE

25. 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

26. The information on panel(s) formed as a result of this competition 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 AHCPs for the purpose of monitoring the operation of the Scheme.

REVIEW

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

RESERVATIONS

28. 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.

29. The Minister for Finance also reserves the right to arrange for the filling, by separate interdepartmental competition or otherwise, of vacancies at Principal Officer (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.

30. Staffing proposals from Departments relating to special circumstances must be raised in the first instance with Personnel and Remuneration Division of the Department of Finance.

8 February, 2007

APPENDIX 1

DEPARTMENTAL GRADES IN WHICH POSTS MAY BE FILLED

The Dublin Arrangements referred in paragraphs 10.8 and 10.9 of the Scheme will apply, as appropriate, to posts listed in this Appendix.

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

FOR PRINCIPAL OFFICER (STANDARD SCALE) POSTS

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Senior Auditor

Courts Service

Any grade at Assistant Principal Officer level in the Courts Service

Department of Foreign Affairs

First Secretary

Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Assistant Principal Officer Committee Clerk

Principal Clerk

Office of the Ombudsman - Office of the Information Commissioner

Investigator

APPENDIX 3

The Principal Officer Competency Framework: The five 'core' competency areas are presented below together with the individual competencies associated with each area.

<p><u>Leadership and Direction</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Strategic Thinking & Leadership ▫ Contextual Awareness ▫ Creativity & Innovation ▫ Initiating & Driving Change
<p><u>Critical Analysis & Decision Making</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Information Management & Analysis ▫ Judgement & Decision Making
<p><u>Managing and Delivering Results</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Managing Performance through People ▫ Resource Allocation & Management ▫ Customer Focus ▫ Personal Responsibility
<p><u>Building Relationships / Communication</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Influencing/Negotiating ▫ Networking ▫ Interpersonal & Communication Skills
<p><u>Personal Effectiveness</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Resilience & Composure ▫ Self-awareness & Career Development. ▫ Trust & Integrity

Appendix 4

Candidates' Rights - Review Procedures in relation to the Selection Process

The Public Appointments Service will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of the codes of practice published by the CPSA. The Codes of Practice are available on the website of the [Commission for Public Service Appointments](#)

Initial Review

The candidate must address his/her concerns in relation to the process in writing, setting out the basis for the complaint being made, to the Chief Executive in the first instance. A complaint or request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the initial decision or within 5 working days of the outcome of the informal review stage, if availed of. However, where the decision being conveyed relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the candidate should be informed that a request for review must be received within 3 working days of the date of receipt of the decision or within 3 working days of receipt of a decision under the informal process; candidates electing to use the informal process at the interim stage must do so within 2 working days of communication of the decision to them. Any extension of these time limits will only be granted in the most exceptional of circumstances and will be at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive.

Upon receipt of the request for review, the Chief Executive should issue an acknowledgement within 3 working days.

The case should be reviewed by a person other than the individual who made the decision in question.

The person conducting the initial review (the "reviewer") should consider any written submissions made by the candidate, and all other relevant information, including any emails, notes or memoranda held by the Chief Executive in respect of the selection process. Where necessary, the reviewer should meet with the personnel of the Chief Executive involved in the selection process and/or the candidate for the purpose of eliciting further information. Subject to any statutory (or other relevant) restrictions on disclosure, the reviewer shall provide the candidate with any relevant and material emails, notes or memoranda held by the personnel of the Chief Executive in respect of the selection process, on request.

The outcome must be notified to the candidate within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint or request for review. Where the investigation does not allow a decision within this timeframe, the initial reviewer must keep the candidate informed of the status of the review and the reasons for the delay.

In communicating the outcome to the candidate, which will be done by means of written report, the initial reviewer should indicate that he/she may seek further review by referring the matter to the Decision Arbitrator and that a request to do so must be made with 7 working days of receipt of the outcome of the initial review.

Review by the Decision Arbitrator

The Decision Arbitrator is appointed by the Chief Executive. This person is unconnected with the selection process and he/she will adjudicate on requests for review in cases where a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial review.

The request must be received within 7 working days of the notification of the outcome of the initial review. Upon receipt of the request for review, the Decision Arbitrator should issue an acknowledgement within 3 working days.

The outcome of the investigation must be notified to the candidate in the form of a written report within 10 working days.

The decision of the Decision Arbitrator in relation to such matters is final. The Decision Arbitrator will make his/her decision on the basis of any written information available in respect of the matter, or written submissions made, and will not generally conduct interviews, although he/she may do so if felt warranted by the particular circumstances of individual cases.

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

Candidates must not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- canvass any person with or without inducements
- personate a candidate at any stage of the process
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way

Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions, is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine/or imprisonment. In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then:

where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; and

- where he/she has been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, he/she shall forfeit that appointment.

Admission without liability

The admission of a person to a competition is not to be taken as implying that the Public Appointments Service is satisfied that such person fulfils the requirements of the competition or is not disqualified by law from holding the position.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by the Public Appointments Service, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence, as the Public Appointments Service require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Quality Customer Service

We aim to provide an excellent quality service to all our customers. If, for whatever reason, you are unhappy with any aspect of the service you receive from us, we urge you to bring this to the attention of the unit or staff member concerned. This is important as it ensures that we are aware of the problem and can take the appropriate steps to resolve it.

Data Protection Act

When your application form is received, we create a computer record in your name that contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature and is updated as the competition progresses.

Such information held on computer is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Act, 1988 & 2003. You are entitled under this Act to obtain a copy of information about you that is kept on computer at any time. The Public Appointments Service charge a fee of €6.35 for each request. You should enclose a cheque or postal order and address your request to: THE DATA PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR, PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS SERVICE, "CHAPTER HOUSE", 26-30 ABBEY STREET UPPER, DUBLIN 1