

31 March 2016

Circular 05/2016:
**Interdepartmental Competition for Promotion to
Higher Executive Officer (HEO) in the Civil Service**

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to say that the Public Appointments Service (**PAS**) will hold an interdepartmental competition to set up a panel from which appointments as Higher Executive Officer may be made. It is not envisaged that appointments will be made from this competition after **30th March 2018**.

2. **Higher Executive Officer Role**

The Higher Executive Officer generally reports to and supports an Assistant Principal in pursuit of goals of the organisation and as such is a key member of the mid-management team. In many cases the Higher Executive Officer is responsible for the delivery of an efficient and effective customer service.

Higher Executive Officers are key drivers of the Civil Service Renewal Plan which outlines a vision for the Civil Service including practical changes that will create a more unified, professional, responsive, open and accountable Civil Service, providing a world-class service to the State and to the people of Ireland. Successful candidates will play a central role in driving organisational change and will be ideally placed to make a significant contribution to shaping the future of Ireland. They will also advise and interact with senior management in respect of their areas of responsibility. The ideal candidate must have experience in managing and leading teams, managing projects and managing budgets.

Positions requiring specialist Irish language skills

The Civil Service is fully committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Official Languages Act. It is intended that vacancies arising which require staff to provide a full range of services through the Irish language (Functional Bilinguals), may be filled from this competition.

Candidates who indicate their interest on the application form and who are successful at the final selection stages will be required to undergo an assessment of their Irish language skills.

3. **Eligibility**

The eligibility requirements in this competition reflect those set out in General Council Agreed Report 1526 in respect of the cross-stream promotion arrangements to apply in the Civil Service. Available here:

<http://hr.per.gov.ie/files/2011/12/Letter-to-Personnel-Officers-Jan-2014-and-General-Council-Report-1526.pdf>

4. **Candidates for promotion to Higher Executive Officer must:**

- a) be serving in an established, unestablished or acting (see para 4.e) below) capacity in the Civil Service in a grade below that of Higher Executive Officer.
- b) on or before the closing date of **19 April, 2016** have not less than two years' service in the Civil Service. Unestablished officers and officers serving in an acting capacity in the eligible grades may compete in the competition provided they fulfil the eligibility requirements set out above.
- c) Fulfil the requirements in respect of health and sick leave as set out in Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 12/2015.
- d) PMDS Rating
have received a minimum PMDS rating in their 2015 end of year review an evaluation of at least "Fully Achieved Expectations";
- e) Be suitable in terms of work performance and general conduct

In considering a successful candidate's suitability for appointment in terms of health and sick leave, the Public Appointments Service will have regard to the relevant Department of the Public Expenditure and Reform Circulars. Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility should clarify their position with their Personnel Section before applying.

The Public Appointments Service will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates under consideration at the latter stages of the selection process. Personnel Officers will be required to certify a candidate's suitability for consideration with regard to

- performance of work in the present grade;
- verification that the candidate has received an Evaluation of at least "Fully Achieved Expectations" at PMDS End-of-Year Review;
- general conduct;
- health, especially sick leave.

- f) Have management experience at an appropriate level;
- g) Demonstrate that they possess the skills/competencies identified as necessary for the role as follows:
 - Team Leadership
 - Analysis & Decision Making
 - Management & Delivery of Results
 - Interpersonal & Communication Skills
 - Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development
 - Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values

For more detailed information on these competencies please see Appendix 1.

- h) Where an officer was acting or serving on a Fixed-Term contract and was subsequently appointed in a substantive capacity, eligibility may 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 closing date of **19th April, 2016**.
- i) Officers on probation are not eligible to compete except where they would have been eligible had they remained in their previous grade. Periods of special leave without pay should not be considered to break continuity of service for this purpose.

5. Officers on special leave with pay may apply if otherwise eligible. Officers on career-break may apply if their career break conforms to the terms of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 04/2013 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 33/1991 with this Department.
6. Grades equivalent to the Higher Executive Officer grade (i.e. have the same maximum pay scale or higher) are **not eligible to compete in this promotion competition**.

7. Regional Recruitment

It is proposed to establish regional panels as set out in the table below from which vacancies will be filled, should they arise.

On the application form candidates may select up to **a maximum of two** regions from those listed, i.e.:

<i>Carlow</i>	<i>Cavan</i>	<i>Clare</i>	<i>Cork</i>	<i>Donegal</i>	
<i>Dublin</i>	<i>Galway</i>	<i>Kerry</i>	<i>Kildare</i>	<i>Kilkenny</i>	
<i>Laois</i>	<i>Leitrim</i>	<i>Limerick</i>	<i>Longford</i>	<i>Louth</i>	
<i>Mayo</i>	<i>Meath</i>	<i>Monaghan</i>	<i>Offaly</i>	<i>Roscommon</i>	
<i>Sligo</i>	<i>Tipperary</i>	<i>Waterford</i>	<i>Westmeath</i>	<i>Wexford</i>	<i>Wicklow</i>

You should only select regions where you would be prepared to work if offered an appointment. Once you have submitted your region choice, changes will not be permitted.

If you are offered a position (whether you accept or not) you will, in the normal course, no longer be considered for any other position in that region. Acceptance of a position will automatically eliminate you from being considered for positions in your other selected regions.

Candidates should be aware that vacancies may not arise in all of the above locations while this panel is active.

8. Application process

Before you apply

- You must have a "User Account" on www.publicjobs.ie. If you have not already done so, you must register as a **'New User'** to create your Profile (register a New Account).
- If you cannot remember your profile details, please do not create a second profile as this could invalidate your application.

Username / Password issues

Forgotten your username or password?

If so, click on the following link:

<https://www.publicjobs.ie/candidateportal/home/forgottenDetails.do>

How to contact PAS?

If you continue to have 'User Name' or 'Password' difficulties please email PAS at heorecruitment2016@publicjobs.ie outlining your issue and giving your name and contact details, including a telephone number, where you can be reached.

Candidates should note that support will only be available during office hours until the closing date.

- You should not confuse registering (Creating a Profile) with submitting an application. Once you have created a Profile you must then access the application form, complete and submit it.
- You must use **your own** valid email address. Email addresses from third parties will **not** be accepted and may invalidate your application. PAS will only communicate application information with the candidate and not with any third party.
- **Username and Password**
It is important that you keep note of your username and password as you will need this information to access your Publicjobs Messageboard.
- It is strongly recommended that you do not change your email address or mobile phone number in the course of this recruitment campaign, as any email/text message notification will be sent to the email address/telephone number originally supplied by you
- **Publicjobs Messageboard**
Interaction with candidates during the selection process will primarily be conducted online. PAS will generally communicate through your Publicjobs Messageboard. Check your Messageboard on a regular basis as email notifications of updates/tests issued to your Messageboard may sometimes be filtered into your Junk/Spam email folders (or 'Promotions' in the case of gmail). You are also advised to check all these folders regularly.

PAS accepts no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by an applicant. You must ensure that you regularly check your Messageboard and access all communications from PAS.

How to Apply

The application form is available here:

<http://www.publicjobs.ie/publicjobs/campaignAdvert/28915.htm>

You must complete the application form in full and click the submit button.

Please note that in parallel with this Interdepartmental Competition a separate Internal Promotion competition for the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is also being conducted using the same application form. Only candidates serving in that department who meet the eligibility requirements (as set out in the relevant circular/ office notice) should apply. If applying for the Internal Promotion competition for the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Interdepartmental, please ensure that you submit only one application form, indicating you wish to be considered for both competitions.

Once you have submitted your application form you should return to your publicjobs account and confirm that it has been successfully submitted via **'My Applications'**. At this point we advise that you add *publicjobs.ie* to your safe senders or contact list within your email account to avoid not receiving email because a *publicjobs* email has been blocked.

Only fully completed and submitted applications will be accepted into the campaign. The admission of a person to the competition, or invitation to undertake any element of the selection process is not to be taken as implying that PAS or other body is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements.

Only one application per person is permitted. Remember, you must include your PPS number when applying.

Closing Date

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is **midnight on 19th April 2016**

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within two working days of applying, please check your Junk/Spam folders as email notifications may sometimes be filtered into your Junk/Spam email folders (or 'Promotions' in the case of Gmail). In the event that the acknowledgement is still not received please email heorecruitment2016@publicjobs.ie including your name, candidate ID and contact details. Candidates should note that support will be available during office hours until the closing date.

9. Selection Process

The selection process for this competition will comprise a number of elements. These may include one or more of the following:

- Completion of an online Assessment Questionnaire;
- Online and/or paper-based assessment test(s);
- Short listing;
- Language tests (oral and/or written), e.g. in the case of applicants for Functional Bilingual positions in the Irish language;
- Interview(s);
- Presentation/Analysis exercise;
- Work sample test or any other tests or exercises that are deemed appropriate.

Applicants must successfully compete and be placed highest, in order to be considered for advancement to the next stage of the selection process. The number to be called forward will be determined from time to time by PAS.

Successful candidates will be placed on a panel(s) from which future vacancies may be filled.

Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the PAS and ensure that the contact details specified on the application form are correct. PAS will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates

Candidates should note that test scores attained at any stage in this campaign may carry forward, should they apply for future campaigns conducted by PAS within a 12 month period. This will be determined by PAS on a case by case basis.

Candidates with Special Needs

If you indicate on your application that you have special needs you will be required (if you have not already done so) to submit an original and detailed psychologists/medical report to **Andrea Wilson, Public Appointments Service, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1 by 19th April, 2016**. A determination will be made by PAS on appropriate accommodations, if any, to be made for individual candidates during the selection process.

Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition, (ii) health and the level of sick leave, (iii) performance of work in the present grade, (iv) verification that the candidate has received an Evaluation of at least “Fully Achieved Expectations” at the previous year’s PMDS End-of-Year Review, and (v) general conduct are not verified by the PAS until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment. Admission to the competition, or any of the selection stages of the competition, does not imply acceptance by the Public Appointments Service. In particular, candidates should note that the Personnel Officer will not have verified the above including 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 meets the eligibility criteria including health and sick leave.

In considering a candidate's suitability for appointment in terms of health and sick leave, the Public Appointments Service will comply with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 6/2014. Candidates having doubts on any aspect of their eligibility are advised to clarify their position with their Personnel Section before proceeding with their application.

STAGE 1

Online Assessment Tests

As indicated, the selection process may comprise a number of stages. Stage 1 will comprise online assessment tests. To facilitate candidates’ availability and circumstances these initial online assessments will be unsupervised and may be taken in a venue of their choice, wherever they have access to a computer and a reliable internet connection.

Online Test Taking Environment

It is important to note that taking these assessments within a secure IT network e.g. a network such as your work or college which may have firewalls or other security technology in place may cause you technical difficulties. You should consider taking your assessments in an environment where access to the internet is not restricted to the same level. **The onus is on you to ensure that you have full internet access to complete the tests.** You should ensure that you can complete the tests in a quiet environment where you can concentrate without being disturbed for the duration of the tests. It is advised to take the assessment tests on a PC or Laptop. Candidates should not attempt to take the test on smart phone, mobile or tablet devices.

Assessment Test Link

A link to the actual online assessment tests will be sent to candidates’ Messageboards in advance of the test-taking window. It is anticipated that candidates will receive a link to their Stage 1 on-line assessment tests by 6th May, 2016. If you do not receive this communication to your Messageboard by 7th May, 2016 you should email heorecruitment2016@publicjobs.ie

Candidates who have not completed the online tests before the deadline will be deemed to be no longer interested in this competition and their application will receive no further consideration.

Your attention is drawn to Appendix 2 'Important Information'. If invited to progress through the selection process, a candidate may be required to sit tests in a supervised environment. If their performance is outside the expected scoring range from their unsupervised test, it will call into question the validity of their unsupervised test scores and they may be excluded from the selection process.

Next Steps

Candidates will be ranked on the outcome of their online assessment tests and may be called to Stage 2 in accordance with their ranking. Should you come under consideration to proceed to subsequent stages of the selection process, information will be forwarded to you at the appropriate time.

Shortlisting

While you may meet the eligibility requirements for the competition, and have met the qualifying standards at the assessment test stage, the Public Appointments Service may decide that candidate application forms will be shortlisted against pre-determined criteria. It is therefore in your own interests to provide a detailed and accurate account of your relevant qualifications/experience on the application form.

Selection Process Indicative Dates

Closing Date	Tuesday 19 th April
Candidates with special needs to forward reports by	Tuesday 19 th April
Stage 1 Online assessment test	Fri 6 th – Tues 10 th May
Stage 2 Supervised tests	Early/mid June
Stage 3 Assessment Centre	July - September

10. Conditions of Appointment

Appointment to the post of Higher Executive Officer in the Civil Service will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. On appointment the appointee will serve a one-year probationary period in the post of Higher Executive Officer. Prior to the end of this probationary period a decision will be made on substantive appointment to the grade.

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

A candidate who accepts an offer of appointment as Higher Executive Officer, 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.

Officers not promoted at the expiry of the panels, will have no claim to promotion thereafter because of having been on the panels.

11. Codes of Practice

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

12. Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Codes of Practice.
13. The Codes of Practice may be accessed by visiting www.cpsa.ie or by contacting directly the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA), 18 Lower Leeson Street Dublin 2. The main switchboard for the Office is 00 353 1 639 5750.

14. General Arrangements in Respect of Appointments

Appointments from the panels will initially be in an acting capacity. An officer whose service is not satisfactory will be notified of the action to be taken. Where a decision is made not to confirm the appointee in the post of Higher Executive Officer, the appointee may 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).] In the event of reversion, an officer will return to a vacancy in his/her former grade in the former Department.

15. The Minister reserves the right to arrange that vacancies for Higher Executive 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.

16. Candidates Obligations

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

It is important to remember that this is a competitive process for a role where integrity is paramount. Sharing information on the test material, e.g. through social media or any other means, may result in you being disqualified from the competition.

Please note that all test materials are subject to copyright and all rights are reserved. No part of the test material (including passages of information, questions or answer options)

or associated materials may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, photographing, recording, written or otherwise, at any stage. To do so is an offence and may result in you being excluded from the selection process. Any person who contravenes this provision, or who assists another person(s) in contravening this provision, is liable to prosecution and/or civil suit for loss of copyright and intellectual property.

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

17. Principal Conditions of Service

General

The appointment is to an established post in the Civil Service and is subject to the Civil Service Regulations Acts 1956 to 2005, the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 and any other Act for the time being in force relating to the Civil Service.

Pay

The Higher Executive Officer (HEO) Standard Salary scale will apply to this position.

Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Pay Rate:

The salary for this position, with effect from 1st January 2010 is as follows:

€46,081,	€47,458,	€48,831,	€50,204,	€51,581,	€52,955,
€54,329,	€56,314	€58,294			
(NMAX)	(LSI1)	(LSI2)			

This rate will apply where the appointee is an existing civil or public servant appointed on or after 6th April 1995 and is required to make a personal pension contribution.

Long service increments may be payable after 3 (LSI1) and 6 (LSI2) years satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

Non-Personal Pension Contribution (Non-PPC) Pay Rate

The salary scale for the position with effect from 1st January 2010) is as follows:

€43,816,	€45,125,	€46,426,	€47,730,	€49,035,	€50,347,
€51,653,	€53,532,	€55,415			
(NMAX)	(LSI 1)	(LSI 2)			

This rate will apply where the appointee is a civil or public servant recruited before 6th April 1995 who **is not required** to make a Personal Pension Contribution.

Long service increments may be payable after 3 (LSI1) and 6 (LSI2) years satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

Important Note

Subject to satisfactory performance increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy. (See Haddington Road Agreement paragraph 2.19.)

Annual Leave

The annual leave for this position is 29 days, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service. This leave is on the basis of a five day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

18. Information on Panels

The information on panel(s) formed as a result of this competition will be made available to Personnel Officers in all Departments/Offices and Workforce Planning Unit in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. In addition, candidates may 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.

19. Circulation and Further Information

HR 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

20. If candidates have any queries about this circular, they should contact their HR Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed directly to PAS.

21. The Civil Service is an equal opportunities employer.

Mise le meas



David Cagney

Civil Service Chief Human Resource Officer

Appendix 1:

Key Competencies for effective performance at Higher Executive Officer level:



Effective Performance Indicators

Team Leadership	Works with the team to facilitate high performance, developing clear and realistic objectives and addressing and performance issues if they arise
	Provides clear information and advice as to what is required of the team
	Strives to develop and implement new ways of working effectively to meet objectives
	Leads the team by example, coaching and supporting individuals as required
	Places high importance on staff development, training and maximising skills & capacity of team.
	Is flexible and willing to adapt, positively contributing to the implementation of change
Analysis & Decision Making	Gathers and analyses information from relevant sources, whether financial, numerical or otherwise weighing up a range of critical factors
	Takes account of any broader issues and related implications when making decisions
	Uses previous knowledge and experience in order to guide decisions
	Makes sound decisions with a well reasoned rationale and stands by these
	Puts forward solutions to address problems
Management & Delivery of Results	Takes responsibility and is accountable for the delivery of agreed objectives
	Successfully manages a range of different projects and work activities at the same time
	Structures and organises their own and others work effectively
	Is logical and pragmatic in approach, delivering the best possible results with the resources available
	Delegates work effectively, providing clear information and evidence as to what is required
	Proactively identifies areas for improvement and develops practical suggestions for their implementation
	Demonstrates enthusiasm for new developments/changing work practices and strives to implement these changes effectively.
	Applies appropriate systems/ processes to enable quality checking of all activities and outputs
	Practices and promotes a strong focus on delivering high quality customer service, for internal and external customers
Interpersonal & Communication Skills	Builds and maintains contact with colleagues and other stakeholders to assist in performing role
	Acts as an effective link between staff and senior management
	Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues
	Projects conviction, gaining buy-in by outlining relevant information and selling the benefits
	Treats others with diplomacy, tact, courtesy and respect , even in challenging circumstances
	Presents information clearly, concisely and confidently when speaking and in writing
Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development	Has a clear understanding of the roles, objectives and targets of self and team and how they fit into the work of the unit and Department/ Organisation and effectively communicates this to others
	Has high levels of expertise and broad Public Sector knowledge relevant to his/her area of work
	Focuses on self development, striving to improve performance
Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values	Strives to perform at a high level, investing significant energy to achieve agreed objectives
	Demonstrates resilience in the face of challenging circumstances and high demands
	Is personally trustworthy and can be relied upon
	Ensures that customers are at the heart of all services provided
	Upholds high standards of honesty, ethics and integrity

Appendix 2

IMPORTANT INFORMATION Terms and Conditions

Your attention is drawn to this important information. By accessing or attempting any assessment/test materials you are agreeing to be bound by the terms set out below.

1. All test and assessment materials are subject to copyright and all rights are reserved. No part of the tests/ assessment materials (including any text, questions and/or potential answer options) or associated materials (including practice and/ or familiarisation materials) may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means including electronic, mechanical, photocopying, printing, photographing, recording, written or otherwise, at any stage. To do so is an offence and may result in you being excluded from the selection process. Any person(s) who contravenes this provision, whether an applicant or other, or who assists another person(s) in contravening this provision, is liable to prosecution and/ or civil suit for loss of copyright and intellectual property.
2. Your attention is drawn the Commission for Public Service Appointment's Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service. In particular please note Section 5 - Responsibility of Candidates (see below).

Canvassing

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

Candidates' obligations

Candidates in the recruitment process must not:

- Knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- Canvass any person, with or without inducements
- Interfere with or compromise the process in any way.

A third party must not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

Penalties for failure to comply

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 and/or imprisonment.

If a person found guilty of such an offence was or is a candidate in a recruitment process, then:

- Where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate
- Where he/she has been appointed subsequent to the recruitment process in question, he/she shall forfeit that appointment.

3. The admission of a person to the competition, or invitation to undertake any element of the selection process is not to be taken as implying that the Public Appointments Service is satisfied that such a person fulfils the essential requirements.