

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

General Council Report 1515

(Meeting/s of 24 September 2008, 26 November 2008)

That in all future Interdepartmental Competitions for appointment to Higher Executive Officer and Assistant Principal, position is determined by the candidate's total score.

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Claim: That in all future Interdepartmental Competitions for appointment to Higher Executive Officer and Assistant Principal, position is determined by the candidate's total score.

1. Section 34 of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 lists the functions of the Public Appointments Service. These include acting as the centralised recruitment, assessment and selection body for the Civil Service and ensuring that standards of probity, merit, equity and fairness, consistent with the codes of practice set down by the Commission for Public Service Appointment are followed in the public interest in the recruitment, assessment and selection procedures.

2. In the conduct of competitions, the PAS must determine, having due regard to the requirements of the position concerned, the criteria for selection and the form of selection process to be adopted.

3. In respect of the procedures applying in the competitions referred to in the above claim, the first stage of selection for interdepartmental competitions for appointment to Higher Executive Officer and Assistant Principal involves three separate tests:

1. Verbal Reasoning,
2. Numerical Reasoning, and
3. Job Simulation/Scenarios Exercise.

4. In order to qualify candidates are required to achieve a minimum standard in each of the three tests. The order of merit/ranking at Stage 1 is determined

by the scores achieved in the Verbal Reasoning Test and the Job Simulation/Scenarios Exercise. Candidates are called forward to the subsequent stage based on this order of merit/ ranking.

5. The use of tests in this particular way reflects evidence gained from thorough reviews of the HEO and AP roles. At both levels there are a wide range of jobs. Systematic analysis has indicated that some degree of numerical reasoning competency is required to perform the jobs effectively, and anything higher than that level of competency is not a significant differential predictor of better performance in the grade.

6. The verbal reasoning test and the job simulation/scenarios exercise are used to form the order of merit/ranking and measure competencies such as research, analysis and decision-making, managing individuals and teams, openness to change, organising and planning, initiating and maintaining relationships and commitment to achievement. Analysis of the roles has shown that these competencies are critical to effective performance. Research has demonstrated that tests/exercises of this nature are good predictors of managerial performance. The Public Appointments Service reviews the selection process and the requirements for HEO and AP roles on a regular basis and should it be considered necessary, the selection process would be adjusted accordingly.

7. The matter was fully considered by the Department of Finance who, prior to finalising the procedures applying in the competitions referred to above consulted with the Public Appointments Service, the centralised body for recruitment to the Civil Service. In the light of the above the Department of Finance rejects the claim.

8. The Official side requested that disagreement be recorded on the claim.

9. This report recording disagreement was adopted on 26th November, 2008.

Aengus O'Riain
Official Side Secretary

Joan Byrne
Staff Side Secretary

Agreed report recording disagreement.

This report was adopted on 26th November, 2008.