



An tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí **Public Appointments Service**

INFORMATION BOOKLET

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

**Careers in the Irish Diplomatic Service
Third Secretary (Graduate Entry Diplomatic Grade) &
Development Specialist Officer
in the Department of Foreign Affairs**

Closing Date: 3pm on Thursday 8th October, 2020

It is intended to hold a recruitment competition for the purpose of recommending persons for appointment to the above positions in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

This competition will be conducted in compliance with the Codes of Practice prepared by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA). These codes are available on www.cpsa.ie.

The Public Appointments Service and the Department of Foreign Affairs are committed to a policy of equal opportunity. The Department of Foreign Affairs undertake to build a diverse workforce, representative of Irish society and to create an inclusive work environment where differences are respected and all individuals are valued. Applications are welcome from candidates identifying with minority communities and those with a broad variety of backgrounds and experiences.

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS SERVICE
CHAPTER HOUSE, 26 – 30 ABBEY STREET UPPER, DUBLIN 1
www.publicjobs.ie

Email: thirdsecretary2020@publicjobs.ie

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs is to promote and protect abroad the values, interests and economic well-being of Ireland and its people. The high level goals of the Department are:

- To serve our people at home and abroad and to promote reconciliation and cooperation
- To protect and advance Ireland's interests and values in Europe
- To work for a fairer, more just, secure and sustainable world
- To advance Ireland's prosperity by promoting our economic interests internationally
- To strengthen our influence and our capacity to deliver our goals

Detailed information about the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs is available on www.dfa.ie

Through this competition, PAS will establish a panel of suitably qualified individuals from which vacancies may be filled for each of the following roles:.

- **Third Secretary** is the recruitment level for the Irish diplomatic service and is the first step towards more senior and responsible posts in the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Department is seeking graduates who have the necessary personal qualities, skills and attributes to undertake the demanding and varying responsibilities of the position, including representing Ireland abroad, and to progress to the most senior positions in the diplomatic service and the development stream.

- The **Development Specialist Officer** role is the recruitment level for the development stream in the Department of Foreign Affairs. To apply for this position you must hold a minimum Level 8 qualification (first or second class primary Honours Bachelor) level specific to the area of international development. [CLICK HERE](#) for further information about the role of the Development Specialist Officer.

Please note that you will apply for the Third Secretary / Development Specialist Officer role, or both, on the same application form. If applying for either / both of these, please ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements and submit only one application indicating the stream(s) you wish to be considered for. The onus is on the candidate to select the correct stream(s).

Third Secretary Self-Selection Questionnaire

This short questionnaire encourages you to review how your interests, skills and experiences match the challenging requirements at Third Secretary level.

Please work through the statements below, and decide on the answer that best reflects your level of agreement with each statement in the context of where you are in your current career, where:

‘SA’- Strongly Agree ‘A’- Agree ‘D’- Disagree and ‘SD’ - Strongly Disagree
with each statement.

Use your current and past experiences and your expectations for the future to help you decide on your response. You may feel that some of the statements are not relevant to you or you may find it difficult to choose an appropriate answer, however try to choose the most relevant option presented. Answer all statements in advance of proceeding with your application.

How about a career with the Department of Foreign Affairs?

	SA	A	D	SD
I like to research subjects thoroughly				
I feel comfortable pulling together information to form a persuasive argument				
I have demonstrated the ability to analyse complex information and to put forward practical recommendations for action				
I like to identify the different parts of a project and plan all the things that have to be done				
I am extremely resilient and can cope when dealing with extremely challenging situations				
I am good at establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with other people				
I feel that I am persuasive and convincing in presenting a case				
I have demonstrated the ability to deal effectively with people, even those in significant distress				
I feel that I can contribute to the development of policies, understanding the implications of decisions				
I want to perform at the highest standard throughout my career				
I have excellent written skills				
I can maintain my composure in a pressurised environment				
I can persevere even when faced with obstacles or setbacks				
I enjoy learning new skills that will enhance my work performance				
I make it my business to keep up to date with current affairs issues both at home and abroad				
I have a good understanding/ overview of the role and functions of the Department of Foreign Affairs.				
I enjoy learning new languages and know that I will be required to attain them quickly				
I feel competent in one or more languages other than English and Irish				
I enjoy travel and am comfortable living away from home for long periods of time				
I feel I have the high levels of emotional strength needed to provide assistance to individuals facing a range of issues including accidents, bereavements, imprisonment, hardship, crime etc.				
I am interested in trade and economic markets and understanding the variables impacting on same				
I have a strong interest in Irish public affairs and in international relations				
I have a strong interest in other cultures and people				
I have an excellent understanding of the current situation in Northern Ireland				
I have an appreciation of all aspects of Ireland's role in the EU				
I am aware of the Overseas Development Assistance Programme (Irish Aid) pledged by Ireland				
I know the countries that Ireland has most trade with and the approximate value to the Economy of exports across different sectors.				

If you have answered ‘Strongly Disagree’ or ‘Disagree’ to any of the items above, you may wish to consider whether this role is the one for you.

Third Secretary Eligibility Requirements

If, having completed the Self-Assessment Questionnaire and think this might be a role for you, please now also consider the following additional information about the role and eligibility requirements:

We are interested in providing you with some realistic and objective information about the role and work-life of a Third Secretary, in the expectation that this will further inform your approach to this selection process and inform you about what you can expect in the career if successful in the competition.

Additional Information about the Third Secretary role - skills and qualities required

At Headquarters, a Third Secretary will typically be involved in a range of public and foreign policy work, including preparation of analysis and research papers, preparing briefing material for Ministers and senior officials, organising and participating in meetings, liaison with Irish Embassies, Consulates and other diplomatic offices abroad and with other Government Departments and organisations. Administrative tasks would include the delivery of consular services and the provision of assistance to Irish citizens abroad.

Particularly for work abroad, certain personal qualities are required of a diplomatic officer. Given the requirement to serve for extended periods of time in a representative capacity in different countries, successful candidates must, in the first place, have **a high degree of adaptability, resilience and a commitment to work in foreign languages**. While this provides significant opportunities for opening up new horizons in one's personal life, it may also make considerable demands on family and personal life. Candidates should bear in mind that service abroad is an obligatory element of the diplomatic role and that Ireland currently has missions in 90 different locations worldwide, including in some very challenging environments.

Particular qualities are also required in one's professional life as a diplomatic officer. Working in a mission abroad may be particularly challenging (many missions have only two diplomats) and, as such, an officer must display **a high degree of resourcefulness, organisational ability, flexibility and alertness to opportunities to advance and protect Ireland's interests**. The day-to-day challenges could range from organising high-level Irish Government visits, promoting trade, reporting on EU and foreign policy issues, assisting Irish citizens in difficulties, managing mission budgets and development programmes and directing the work of local staff.

Highly-developed **interpersonal and communications skills** are essential in the work of a diplomatic officer abroad. To be effective, he/she must be able to persuade and influence and be ready to cultivate institutional and personal links at many levels in foreign countries and international organisations. This will frequently involve the hosting of small or large social functions. In addition, in order to promote a positive image of Ireland abroad, an officer must have a high degree of awareness of Irish political, economic, social and cultural life.

More specifically, in order to be effective in the role, Third Secretaries should be able to demonstrate:

- a keen interest in, and understanding of, Irish public affairs, foreign policy and international relations
- an ability to project key messages abroad about Ireland's economic and trade capacity, performance and business potential, and to deliver on economic, trade and cultural promotion opportunities

- an ability to contribute to the management and delivery of Ireland's programme of development cooperation
- a high degree of resilience and resourcefulness in dealing with particularly challenging situations, often involving Irish citizens in difficulty abroad
- a knowledge and/or aptitude for foreign languages

and should demonstrate the following abilities:

- Leadership Potential e.g. present a position and persuade others of its benefit; take personal responsibility for completing work and to put forward solutions to problems
- Analysis & Decision Making e.g. the ability to produce thorough and comprehensive evaluations of complex documentation or situations and suggest practical recommendations for action
- Delivery of Results e.g. plan projects in detail and anticipate problems; co-ordinate own duties / workload and that of others to ensure accurate project delivery to sometimes tight deadlines
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills e.g. communicate in a clear and accurate manner (orally and in writing) and be able to appreciate alternative points of view; build and maintain good working and social relationships with a wide range of people, so that co-operation can be maximised and conflict minimised
- Drive & Commitment / a strong Motivation for the Role e.g. apply energy and commitment to fulfilling own role within the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Specialist knowledge, expertise and self-development

Applications are welcome from candidates with further qualifications directly relevant to economic and trade promotion or relevant work experience, particularly abroad and in difficult or growth markets, as well as from candidates with qualifications and/or experience in development cooperation.

Knowledge of Foreign Languages

Ability to work in a major foreign language such as Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish or Russian will be a distinct advantage and candidates will be given credit for knowledge in one of these languages at the final stage of the selection process.

Successful candidates who do not have a good working knowledge of a foreign language will be expected to acquire such knowledge. Progress in this area will be assessed during and towards the end of the 12 month probationary period and satisfactory progress will be a condition of confirmation of appointment as a Third Secretary.

Location of Vacancies

Appointments from this competition will be made, as the need arises, to fill positions at Headquarters in Dublin or in Limerick where part of the Development Cooperation and Africa Division is based. Candidates are required to indicate on the application form whether they are interested in being assigned to Dublin only or Limerick only or both Dublin and Limerick. Assignments will be at the discretion of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

You should only select locations where you would be prepared to work if offered an appointment. **Once you have submitted your location choice, changes will not be permitted.** No exceptions will be made.

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 location. Acceptance of a position will automatically eliminate you from being considered for positions in your other selected region.

A diplomatic officer can expect to work both in Ireland and at a number of Embassies, Consulates and multilateral missions abroad. After recruitment, a Third Secretary will work for a period at Headquarters followed by an initial posting to a mission abroad for about three years. During a career, postings (usually of four years duration) to six or seven different countries would not be unusual. **Candidates should remember that a key condition of service throughout a career in the diplomatic service is readiness to accept foreign postings.**

Eligibility Requirements (Third Secretary)

1. The competition is only open to persons who have Irish Citizenship on or before the closing date of 8th October 2020.

2. Applicants for this position must, on or before the closing date of 8th October 2020:

(i) hold a first or second class honours degree (minimum of Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications). Consideration may be given to relevant qualifications as deemed equivalent by the Public Appointments Service.

Or

(ii) have qualified as a Solicitor or as a Barrister.

Desirable

Working knowledge of foreign languages, especially Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian.

Experience of international relations, economic and trade promotion and development cooperation.

Selection for the position of Third Secretary involves a demanding application and assessment process that takes place over a period of time. The onus is on the candidate to ensure that they satisfy the essential eligibility requirements for the position. Candidates are required to confirm at application stage that they hold or will hold on or before **8th October, 2020** the required qualifications. Admission to the competition does not imply acceptance that a candidate is eligible. Successful applicants should be available to take up duty in early 2021.

Health & Character

Candidates must be in good health, capable and competent of carrying out the work assigned to them, and they must also be of good character. Those under consideration for a position will be required to complete a health and character declaration. References will be sought. Some posts will require special security clearance and will require completion of a form for Garda vetting purposes. In the event of conflicts of interest, candidates may not be considered for certain posts.

Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the Public Service by any Public Service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are not eligible to apply for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider Public Service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years. People who availed of the VER scheme are not eligible to compete in this competition. People who availed of the VRS scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013)

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the *Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants* dated 28 June 2012 as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER Scheme that persons will not be eligible for re-employment in any Public Service body [as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012] for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor).

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.

Declaration:

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a Public Service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Practical Matters

- Applications should be made online through www.publicjobs.ie.
- To apply, candidates must have a “User Account” on www.publicjobs.ie. If you have not already done so, you must click ‘Login’ on the publicjobs.ie homepage and 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.
- Candidates 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.

Username / Password issues

If you have forgotten your Username or Password please click on the following link:

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

How to contact PAS?

If you continue to have ‘User Name’ or ‘Password’ difficulties please email PAS at graduate@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.

- Candidates must use **their 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.
- 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 competition, as any email/text message notification will be sent to the email address/telephone number originally supplied by you.
- Interaction with candidates during the selection process will primarily be conducted online. PAS will send most communication 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. They must ensure that they regularly check their Messageboard and access all communications from the PAS.
- If invited to tests and/or interview, the onus is on each applicant to make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the PAS. If you do not attend on the specified date/time you will be deemed withdrawn from the competition.

Please note that in parallel with the Third Secretary, another separate stream for Development Specialist Officer (For details [CLICK HERE](#)) is being recruited using the same application. If applying for either of these, please ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements and submit only one application indicating the stream(s) you wish to be considered for. The onus is on the candidate to select the correct stream(s).

How to Apply

Click on the button 'Apply now' to access the application form. This button is located at the end of the job posting page Third Secretary and Development Specialist Officer on www.publicjobs.ie. You must complete the application form in full and click the submit button.

If you are using the "Chrome" web browser and see a white page containing the message 'please wait...', when you attempt to download the PDF application form, shut Chrome down temporarily and double click on the PDF application form icon in the 'Downloads' folder. Alternatively, right click on the PDF form icon and select 'Open With' from the drop down menu, then select 'Adobe'. You should also ensure Adobe has been set as your default PDF reader.

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 you should consider adding *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 applications submitted online will be accepted into the competition. **Applications will not be accepted after the closing date. Only one application per person is permitted.** 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 PAS or other body is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements.

Closing Date

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is **3pm on Thursday 8th October, 2020**. Applications will not be accepted after this date.

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 these email folders (or 'Promotions' in the case of Gmail). In the event that the acknowledgement is still not received please email thirdsecretary2020@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.

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);
- Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information supplied in their application;
- A competitive preliminary interview(s);
- Interview(s) / Online Video Interview(s);
- Presentation/Analysis exercise;
- Group/Team exercise;
- Work sample test
- Any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate, including language proficiency tests

Applicants must successfully compete and be placed highest, in order to be considered for advancement to the next stage of the multi stage selection process. The number to be invited forward at each stage will be determined from time to time by the Public Appointments Service. More detailed information will be made available to the relevant candidates if they are invited to progress through the process.

Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the Public Appointments Service and ensure that the contact details specified on the application form are correct. The Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates. Successful candidates will be placed on a panel from which future vacancies may be filled.

Covid19

To be compliant with recent government guidelines for public safety, it is envisaged that the methods of assessment may differ to previous competitions in response to Covid-19. As such it is strongly advised that each candidate reviews any communication or familiarisation material sent to them prior to the commencement of each stage.

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received exceeds the numbers required to fill existing and future vacancies. While you may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the positions are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the Public Appointments Service may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, the Public Appointments Service provide for the employment of a shortlisting process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the position. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable, or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates who are, *prima facie*, better qualified and/or have more relevant experience.

During any shortlisting exercise that may be employed, the Public Appointments Service are guided by an assessment board(s) who examine the application forms and assess them against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. It is therefore in your own interests to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience on the application form.

Stage 1: On-line Assessment

To facilitate candidates' availability and circumstances, the stages of the selection process will be conducted online. The online assessments may be taken in a venue of your choice, wherever you have access to a mobile phone or computer and a reliable internet connection.

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 assessments.** You should ensure that you can complete the assessments in a quiet environment where you can concentrate without being disturbed for the duration of the assessment. It is advised to take the assessments on a device that you are familiar with.

It is important to note that the email address you provide when applying must be one that you can access at all times. Candidates will be given specific time windows in which to complete the assessments. A link(s) to the actual online assessments will be sent to candidates' messageboards on publicjobs.ie in advance of the test-taking window. Candidates who have not completed all of the online assessments 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 1 *'Important Information'*. If invited to progress through the selection process, a candidate may be required to sit tests in a supervised environment.

Information on each selection stage will be made available at the appropriate time to candidates being invited to that particular stage of the process. The PAS has no function or involvement in the provision of, and does not endorse, any preparation courses relating to the selection process.

Stage 2: Online Video Interview

Candidates being called forward to Stage 2 will undertake an asynchronous online video. Candidates may record their interview in a venue of their choice, wherever they have access to a computer, a webcam and a reliable internet connection. Further information will issue to those candidates nearer the time.

Stage 3: Precis Exercise

Candidates being called to Stage 3 will be required to complete a written exercise. This will be done online. Further information will issue to those candidates nearer the time.

Stage 4: Remote Interview

Candidates being called forward to Stage 3 of the selection process will complete an online interview. Candidates may attend their interview in a venue of their choice, wherever they have access to a computer, a webcam and a reliable internet connection. Further information will issue to those candidates nearer the time.

Candidates with Disabilities

The Department of Foreign Affairs welcome candidates with disabilities. Candidates who have indicated on their application or profile that they would like to avail of reasonable accommodations are asked to submit a psychologists/medical report. The purpose of the report is to provide PAS with information to act as a basis for determining reasonable accommodations, where appropriate.

These reports must be forwarded to the Assessment Services unit, Public Appointments Service, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1 by close of business on **Thursday, 8th October, 2020**. **You must email a scanned copy** of the report to asu@publicjobs.ie

If you have previously applied for a competition with PAS and submitted a report, please email asu@publicjobs.ie to confirm that your report is still on file.

PRINCIPAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

General

The appointment is to a permanent 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 Third Secretary Standard Salary scale will apply to this position.

Personal Pension Contribution

PPC (Personal Pension Contribution) salary for this position, with effect from 1st October 2020, is as follows:

€33,053	€35,546	€36,257	€39,378	€43,372	€46,112	€49,454
€52,505	€55,547	€58,578	€60,679 (LSI1)	€62,776 (LSI2)		

This rate will also 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(LSI-1) and 6(LSI-2) years satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

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

Important Note:

Entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration will not be subject to negotiation and may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Subject to satisfactory performance, increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy.

You will agree that any overpayment of salary, allowances, or expenses will be repaid by you in accordance with Circular 07/2018: Recovery of Salary, Allowances, and Expenses Overpayments made to Staff Members/Former Staff Members/Pensioners.

Knowledge of foreign languages

Successful candidates who do not have a good working knowledge of a foreign language will be expected to acquire such knowledge. Progress in this area will be assessed during and towards the end of the one-year probationary period and satisfactory progress will be a condition of confirmation of appointment as a Third Secretary. It will also be monitored and assessed on an on-going basis under the Performance Management and Development System applicable in the Civil Service.

Tenure and Probation

The appointment is to a permanent position on a probationary contract in the Civil Service.

The probationary contract will be for a period of one year from the date specified on the contract. Notwithstanding this paragraph and the paragraph immediately following below, this will not preclude an extension of the probationary contract in appropriate circumstances.

During the period of your probationary contract, your performance will be subject to review by your supervisor(s) to determine whether you:

- (i) Have performed in a satisfactory manner,
- (ii) Have been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- (iii) Are suitable from the point of view of health with particular regard to sick leave.

Prior to the completion of the probationary contract a decision will be made as to whether or not you will be retained pursuant to *Section 5A(2) Civil Service Regulation Acts 1956 – 2005*. This decision will be based on your performance assessed against the criteria set out in (i) to (iii) above. The detail of the probationary process will be explained to you and you will be given a copy of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's guidelines on probation.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs in this section, the probationary contract may be terminated at any time prior to the expiry of the term of the contract by either side in accordance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973 to 2005.

In certain circumstances your contract may be extended and your probation period suspended. The extension must be agreed by both parties.

- The probationary period stands suspended when an employee is absent due to Maternity or Adoptive Leave
- In relation to an employee absent on Parental Leave or Carers Leave, the employee may require probation to be suspended if the absence is not considered to be consistent with the continuation of the probation
- Probation may be suspended in cases such as absence due to a non-recurring illness

The employee may, in these circumstances, make an application to the employer for an extension to the contract period.

All appointees will serve a one-year probationary period. If an appointee who fails to satisfy the conditions of probation has been a serving civil servant immediately prior to their appointment from this competition, the issue of reversion will normally arise. In the event of reversion, an officer will return to a vacancy in their former grade in their former Department.

Hours of attendance

Hours of attendance will be fixed from time to time but will amount to not less than 43 hours 15 minutes gross per week. The successful candidate will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of his/her duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations.

Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance for the position 25 days per year; rising to 29 days after 5 years; and to 30 days after 10 years' service in the grade. This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave in the civil service, is based on a five day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Sick Leave

Pay during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service, will apply on a pro-rata basis, in accordance with the provisions of the sick leave circulars.

Officers who will be paying Class A rate of PRSI will be required to sign a mandate authorising the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to pay any benefits due under the Social Welfare Acts directly to the employing Department or Organisation. Payment during illness will be subject to the officer making the necessary claims for social insurance benefit to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection within the required time limits.

Superannuation and Retirement

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the Civil Service at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, an appointee who has never worked in the Public Service will be offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme"). Full details of the Scheme are at www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie

Where the appointee has worked in a pensionable (non-Single Scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment or is currently on a career break or special leave with/without pay different terms may apply. The pension entitlement of such appointees will be established in the context of their public service employment history.

Key provisions attaching to membership of the Single Scheme are as follows:

- Pensionable Age: The minimum age at which pension is payable is 66 (rising to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028 in line with changes in State Pension age).
- Career average earnings are used to calculate benefits (a pension and lump sum amount accrue each year and are up-rated each year by reference to CPI).
- Post retirement pension increases are linked to CPI

Pension Abatement

- If the appointee has previously been employed in the Civil or Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during his/her re-employment that pension **will be subject to abatement** in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012. **Please note: In applying for this position you are acknowledging that you understand that the abatement provisions, where relevant, will apply. It is not envisaged that the employing Department/Office will support an application for an abatement waiver in respect of appointments to this position.**

- However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil or Public Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER), the Department of Health Circular 7/2010 VER/VRS or the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular letter LG(P) 06/2013, any of which renders a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment. Special arrangements may, however be made for the reckoning of previous service given by the appointee for the purpose of any future superannuation award for which the appointee may be eligible.
- **Department of Education and Skills Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers Circular 102/2007**

The Department of Education and Skills introduced an Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers. It is a condition of the Early Retirement Scheme that with the exception of the situations set out in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 of the relevant circular documentation, and with those exceptions only, if a teacher accepts early retirement under Strands 1, 2 or 3 of this scheme and is subsequently employed in any capacity in any area of the public sector, payment of pension to that person under the scheme will immediately cease. Pension payments will, however, be resumed on the ceasing of such employment or on the person's 60th birthday, whichever is the later, but on resumption, the pension will be based on the person's actual reckonable service as a teacher (i.e. the added years previously granted will not be taken into account in the calculation of the pension payment).

- **III-Health-Retirement**

Please note any person who previously retired on ill health grounds under the terms of a superannuation scheme are required to declare, at the initial application phase, that they are in receipt of such a pension to the organisation administering the recruitment competition.

Applicants will be required to attend the CMO's office to assess their ability to provide regular and effective service taking account of the condition which qualified them for IHR.

Appointment post Ill-health retirement from Civil Service

If successful in their application through the competition, the applicant should to be aware of the following:

1. If deemed fit to provide regular and effective service and assigned to a post, their civil service ill-health pension ceases.
2. If the applicant subsequently fails to complete probation or decides to leave their assigned post, there can be no reversion to the civil service IHR status, nor reinstatement of the civil service IHR pension, that existed prior to the application nor is there an entitlement to same.
3. The applicant will become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) upon appointment if they have had a break in pensionable public/civil service of more than 26 weeks.

Appointment post Ill-health retirement from public service:

1. Where an individual has retired from a public service body his/her ill-health pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill-health retirement under that scheme.
2. If an applicant is successful, on appointment the applicant will be required to declare whether they are in receipt of a public service pension (ill-health or otherwise) and their public service pension may be subject to abatement.
3. The applicant will become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (SPSPS) upon appointment if they have had a break in pensionable public/civil service of more than 26 weeks.

Please note more detailed information in relation to pension implications for those in receipt of a civil or public service ill-health pension is available [via this link](#) or upon request to PAS.

Pension Accrual

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one pre-existing public service pension scheme (i.e. non-Single Scheme) as per the 2012 Act shall apply. This 40-year limit is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

Additional Superannuation Contribution

In addition to pension contribution requirements under the rules of the appropriate pension scheme of which an appointee may be a member, this appointment is subject to the additional superannuation contribution in accordance with the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017.

For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme please see the following website: www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie

Secrecy, Confidentiality and Standards of Behaviour: Official Secrecy and Integrity:

During the term of the probationary contract, an officer will be subject to the Provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1963, as amended by the Freedom of Information Acts 1997, 2003 and 2014. The officer will agree not to disclose to third parties any confidential information either during or subsequent to the period of employment.

Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour:

The appointee will be subject to the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour.

Ethics in Public Office Acts:

The Ethics in Public Office Acts will apply, where appropriate, to this appointment.

Prior approval of publications:

An officer will agree not to publish material related to his or her official duties without prior approval by the Chairperson of the Authority or by another appropriate authorised officer.

Political Activity:

During the term of employment the officer will be subject to the rules governing public servants and politics.

Please note;

As an Employer of Choice and under the Programme for Government the Civil Service is exploring the opportunities for employees to work remotely.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Undertaking out-of-hours duty at Headquarters and at diplomatic offices abroad is an integral part of the Third Secretary role.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission to a competition

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result letter, is not to be taken as implying that the PAS is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements.

Garda Vetting & Security Clearance

You will be required to complete and return a Garda eVetting form should you come under consideration for appointment. This form will be forwarded to An Garda Síochána for security checks on all Irish and Northern Irish addresses at which you resided. However, should your application for the competition be unsuccessful this form will be destroyed by PAS. If you subsequently come under consideration for another position, you may therefore be required to complete a further Garda eVetting Form. Special Security Clearance is a requirement for appointments to certain offices or departments.

If you have resided/studied in countries outside of the Republic of Ireland for a period of 6 months or more, it is **mandatory** for you to furnish a **Police Clearance Certificate** from those countries stating that you have no convictions recorded against you while residing there. You will need to provide a separate **Police Clearance Certificate for each country you have resided in**. Clearance must be dated after the date you left the country. Candidates should be aware that any information obtained in the Garda Vetting process can be made available to the employing authority.

It is your responsibility to seek security clearances in a timely fashion as they can take some time. Candidates may not be assigned to a position unless this information is provided and the security clearance is satisfactory.

Appointments from panels

At the end of the selection process a panel of qualified candidates is formed from which vacancies may be filled. This panel may remain in place for up to two years. Qualification and

placement on a panel is **not** a guarantee of appointment to a position. A panel is a list of qualified candidates ranked in order of merit from Stage 4 of the selection process.

Should a vacancy arise and their place reached, candidates undergo the final clearance stage of the selection process. Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position PAS or employing organisation will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary e.g. employer references, Garda vetting in order to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the selection process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Qualification and placement on a panel is **not** a guarantee of appointment to a position.

Reschedule Requests

Reschedule requests will only be considered under exceptional circumstances as deemed acceptable by PAS (e.g. Bereavement/Illness). Please note that PAS may request supporting documentation as evidence.

References

Should you be invited to attend for final interview you should bring previous employer references (original and one copy), where possible, with you on the day. A reference from your school/university may suffice if you have no previous work experience. The references should provide relatively recent information on your performance and behaviour in a work context. Please note, should you be successful at interview and come under consideration for a position, we will require a reference from your current employer prior to assignment. A statement of employment is **not** sufficient and will not be accepted as an employer reference.

Specific candidate criteria

In addition to fulfilling the eligibility criteria set out, candidates must:

- Have the knowledge and ability to discharge the duties of the post concerned;
- Be suitable on the grounds of health & character;
- Be suitable in all other relevant respects for appointment to the post concerned;
- If successful, they will not be appointed to the post unless they:
 - Agree to undertake the duties attached to the post and accept the conditions under which the duties are, or may be required to be performed; and
 - Are fully competent and available to undertake, and fully capable of undertaking, the duties attached to the position.

Non-Refund of Expenses

Any expenses incurred by candidates whilst undertaking or attending any elements of the selection process will not be refunded.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not complete and submit the Online Assessments before the specified date; or do not attend/undertake any subsequent stage of the selection process as requested, attend for interview or other test when and where required by the PAS or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the PAS require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Candidates are expected to provide all requested documentation to PAS, including all forms issued by PAS for completion, within five days of request. Failure to do so will result in the candidate being deemed to have withdrawn from the competition and their candidature will receive no further consideration.

Declining an offer of appointment

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it, the Public Appointments Service or employing organisation may at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, other than to those directly involved in the process. Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

Quality Customer Service

The Public Appointments Service aims 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.

Procedures where a candidate seeks a review of a Decision taken in relation to their application

A request for review may be taken by a candidate should they be dissatisfied with an action or decision taken by the Public Appointments Service (PAS). The PAS will consider requests for review in accordance with the provisions of **Section 7** of the Code of Practice *Appointments to Positions in the Civil and Public Service* published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (Commission). When making a request for a review, the candidate must support their request by outlining the facts they believe show that the action taken or decision reached was wrong. A request for review may be refused if the candidate cannot support their request.

The Commission recommends that, subject to the agreement of the candidate, where the office holder (in this instance the Chief Executive Officer of PAS) considers the matter could be resolved they should first seek to engage on an informal basis, before making use of the formal review procedure.

Procedure for Informal Review

- A request for Informal Review must be made within 5 working days of notification of the decision, and should normally take place between the candidate and a representative of the PAS who had played a key role in the selection process.
- Where the decision being conveyed relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for informal review must be received within 2 working days of the date of receipt of the decision.
- Where a candidate remains dissatisfied following any such informal discussion, he/she may adopt the formal procedures set out below.
- If the candidate wishes the matter to be dealt with by way of a formal review, he/she must do so within 2 working days of the notification of the outcome of the informal review.

Procedure for Formal Review of Selection Process

- The candidate must address his/her concerns in relation to the process in writing to the Chief Executive, outlining the facts that they believe show an action taken or decision reached was wrong.
- A request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the selection decision. Where the decision relates to an interim stage of a selection process, the request for review must be received within 4 working days.
- 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.
- The outcome must generally be notified to the candidate within 25 working days of receipt of the request for review.

Complaints Process

A candidate may believe there was a breach of the Commission's Code of Practice by PAS that may have compromised the integrity of the decision reached in the appointment process. The complaints process enables candidates (or potential candidates) to make a complaint under **Section 8** to the Chief Executive Officer of PAS in the first instance, and to the Commission for Public Service Appointments subsequently on appeal if they remain dissatisfied.

- Allegations of a breach of the Code of Practice should be addressed in writing, and within a reasonable timeframe, to the Chief Executive Officer in the first instance. The complainant must outline the facts that they believe show that the process followed was wrong. The complainant must also identify the aspect of the Code they believe has been infringed and enclose any relevant documentation that may support the allegation. A complaint may be dismissed if they the complainant cannot support their allegations by setting out how the Public Appointments Service has fallen short of the principles of this Code.
- On receipt of a complaint PAS may determine to engage with the complainant on an informal basis.

For further information on the above procedures please see the Code of Practice *Appointments to Positions in the Civil and Public Service* which is available on the website of the Commission for Public Service Appointments, www.cpsa.ie

There is no obligation on the PAS to suspend an appointment process while it considers a request for a review. Please note that where a formal review of a recruitment and selection process has taken place under Section 7 of this Code of Practice, a complainant may not seek a further review of the same process under Section 8, other than in the most exceptional circumstances that will be determined by the Commission at its sole discretion.

Requests for Feedback/Test Rechecks

Feedback in relation to the selection process is available on written request. Feedback and rechecks may be requested for up to six months after completion of each stage of the competition.

However, please note that the Review Process as set out in the Code of Practice is a separate process with specified timeframes that must be observed. Receipt of

feedback/recheck is not required to invoke a review. It is not necessary for a candidate to compile a detailed case prior to invoking the review mechanism. The timeframe set out in the CPSA Code cannot be extended for any reason including the provision of feedback and/or the outcome of rechecks.

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 impersonate a candidate at any stage of the process.

Contravention of the Code of Practice

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, if a person found guilty of an offence was, or is a candidate at a recruitment process,

- they will be disqualified as a candidate and excluded from the process;
- has been appointed to a post following the recruitment process, they will be removed from that post.

Confidentiality of Information and Materials

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

Please note that all assessment and 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), associated materials and/or interview related information 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.

Use of Recording Equipment

PAS does not allow the unsanctioned use of any type of recording on its premises or any location where assessments/tests/interviews, etc. take place, e.g. video interviews, teleconference. This applies to any form of sound recording and any type of still picture or video recording, whether including sound recording or not, and covers any type of device used for these purposes. Any person wishing to use such equipment for any of these purposes must seek written permission in advance. This policy is in place to protect the privacy of staff and candidates/clients and the integrity of our assessment material and assessment

processes. Unsanctioned use of recording equipment by any person is a breach of this policy. Any candidate involved in such a breach could be disqualified from the competition and could be subject to prosecution under section 55 of the Public Service Management (Recruitment & Appointments) Act, 2004.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive.

When you register with publicjobs.ie or submit an application for a competition, we create a computer record in your name. Information submitted with a job application is used in processing your application. Where the services of a third party are used in processing your application, it may be required to provide them with information, however all necessary precautions will be taken to ensure the security of your data. If you are successful in the recruitment and selection competition, your application may be made available to the Human Resources section of the organisation to which you have been assigned.

To make a request to access your personal data please submit your request by email to: dpo@publicjobs.ie ensuring that you describe the records you seek in the greatest possible detail to enable us to identify the relevant record(s).

Information in relation to a candidate's personal data held by the PAS are set out on the Data Protection page of www.publicjobs.ie.

Appointments

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to these positions all such enquiries as are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate will be carried out.

Should the person(s) recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it, the Public Appointments Service or employing organisation may at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Other

Elements of the selection process may be undertaken by other parties. In such circumstances it will be necessary for your information to be shared between PAS and these parties in order for your application to be processed.

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

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify

Appendix 1

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Terms and Conditions

Your attention is drawn to this important information. By submitting an application, 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 or interview (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 and Public Service. In particular please note Section 5 - Responsibility of Candidates (see below).

Canvassing

Candidates should note that canvassing to enhance their candidature or encouraging others to do so 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 PAS are satisfied that such a person fulfils the essential requirements.