Careers in the Irish Diplomatic Service
Third Secretary (Graduate Entry Grade)
in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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

This campaign 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 is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

CONTACT: DAVID RAFFERTY
PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS SERVICE
CHAPTER HOUSE, 26 – 30 ABBEY STREET UPPER, DUBLIN 1
www.publicjobs.ie
**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 and Trade?**

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

The mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 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:

- Promote Ireland’s economic interests in Europe and internationally
- Deliver on Ireland’s global development commitments, focusing on poverty and hunger
- Advance reconciliation and co-operation on this island
- Contribute to international peace, security and human rights
- Provide consular and passport services for Irish citizens and engage with Irish communities abroad
- Strengthen the Department’s ability to deliver its goals

Detailed information about the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is available on www.dfat.ie

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 and Trade. The Department is looking for 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.

The Public Appointments Service is committed to a policy of continuous improvement in its approach to recruitment and selection. To apply you must have a minimum Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Consideration may be given to relevant qualifications as deemed equivalent by the Public Appointments Service. 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.

Role of the Third Secretary and skills and qualities required

At Headquarters, a Third Secretary will typically be involved in a range of public 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.

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, an officer 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 life. Candidates should bear in mind that service abroad is an obligatory element of the diplomatic role and that Ireland has missions in Western and Eastern Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia, Australia and the Middle East, 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 manage and deliver on 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 have the skills to:

- produce thorough and comprehensive evaluations of complex documentation or situations and suggest practical recommendations for action
- 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
- 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
- present a position and persuade others of its benefit
- take personal responsibility for completing work and to put forward solutions to problems
- apply energy and commitment to fulfilling own role within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Applications are particularly 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, Japanese, Chinese, or Russian as well as French, German and Spanish will be a distinct advantage and candidates may be given credit for such knowledge.

An officer who does 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.
Location of Vacancies

Appointments from this campaign will be made, as the need arises, to fill positions at Headquarters in Dublin or in Limerick where part of the Development Cooperation 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 either location. Assignments will be at the discretion of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

A diplomatic officer can expect to work both in Ireland and at a number of Embassies, Consulates and multi-lateral 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 one’s career in the diplomatic service is readiness to accept foreign postings.

Selection for the position of Third Secretary involves a demanding application and assessment process that takes place over a period of time. However, the Public Appointments Service will make the process as transparent as possible and will keep applicants informed as they progress through the selection process.

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 the 31st December 2015 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 2016.

SUMMARY CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Starting Salary: €29,922

Annual Leave: 25 Days

Hours of attendance: 43 hours and 15 minutes gross per week or 37 hours net of lunch breaks

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

For more detailed information please view the Conditions of Service here.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

1. The competition is only open to persons who are citizens of Ireland.

2. Applicants for this position must, on or before 31st December 2015:

   (i) hold a minimum of Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (Honours Bachelor Degree level) in any discipline

   Or

   (ii) have qualified as a Solicitor or as a Barrister (having attained a standard in the final examination that is acceptable to the Public Appointments Service as meeting the needs of the competition).

Desirable

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

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

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 debarred from applying 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, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.
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. Thereafter the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will be required prior to re-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) and the Minister’s consent will have to be secured prior to employment by any public service body.

Declaration:

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement and/or the collective agreement outlined above. 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.
HOW TO APPLY

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 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.

<table>
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<th>Username / Password issues</th>
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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 thirdsecretary@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.

- 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 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.

- 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.

- The 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.

**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 for Third Secretary on www.publicjobs.ie. You must complete the application form in full and click the submit button.

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 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 the 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**
Your online application must be submitted through www.publicjobs.ie not later than midnight on 15th October, 2015. 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 email thirdsecretary@publicjobs.ie
SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process may include the following:

- completion of online tests;
- shortlisting;
- a preliminary interview;
- presentation exercise;
- a competitive interview;
- any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate.

Successful candidates will be placed on a panel(s) from which future vacancies may be filled. It is envisaged that these vacancies will be filled in the first quarter of 2016.

Stage 1 On-line Assessment Tests

As indicated, the selection process may comprise a number of stages. Stage 1 will comprise on-line 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.

Irrespective of which of the Graduate Opportunities competitions you have applied for (i.e. Administrative Officer, Third Secretary or Trainee Auditor), you may only sit Stage 1 tests once. The scores you achieve will carry across all competitions for which you applied and for which come under consideration.

On-line Test Taking Environment

Please be aware 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 your home or other 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 on-line 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 Thursday 22 October, 2015. If you do not receive communication by 23 October, 2015 you should email thirdsecretary@publicjobs.ie immediately.
Candidates who have not completed the on-line 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 1 ‘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 on-line 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.

Candidates with Special Needs
Candidates who indicate on their application that they have special needs will be required to submit an original psychologists/medical report to David Rafferty, Public Appointments Service, Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1 by Thursday 15 October, 2015. 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 canvassing will disqualify

For further information please see link below:

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 (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. Note 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 s/he has not been appointed to a post, s/he will be disqualified as a candidate
- Where s/he has been appointed subsequent to the recruitment process in question, s/he 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 are satisfied that such a person fulfils the essential requirements.