



Northern Ireland

Civil Service

# Administrative Officer (AO)

## IRC303169

Completed application forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than **12 noon (UK time) on Friday 6th September 2024.**

Please retain a copy of this booklet for your reference throughout the selection process.

### Candidate Information Booklet



## CONTENTS



### COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HRCONNECT AND YOU

We will issue as many competition communications as possible by email. Please provide a valid email address for this purpose. Please check your email account and junk folder to make sure you don't miss any important messages from us.

**Completed applications must be submitted no later than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 6th September 2024.**

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**Pg 03**  
**Welcome**

---

**Pg 04**  
**About the NICS**

---

**Pg 05**  
**About the Role  
and Key Responsibilities**

---

**Pg 07**  
**Terms and Conditions**

---

**Pg 12**  
**Diversity & Inclusion**

---

**Pg 15**  
**Selection Process**

---

**Pg 28**  
**Guidance for Applicants**

---

**Pg 30**  
**General Guidance**

---

## WELCOME

We are delighted you are interested in joining the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). This is a fantastic opportunity.

Whether you are directly serving our customers, assessing benefits claims, processing other types of applications, providing administrative support to teams, or delivering services or projects across the NICS, you will be part of an organisation that touches the lives of citizens in NI and across the UK every day.

This competition will be used to fill a number of current vacancies. It may also be used to fill further vacancies which may arise during the lifetime of this recruitment exercise. Training will be made available to successful candidates on appointment.

All NI Civil Servants are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

For this competition, merit lists will also reflect location and working pattern preferences.

The closing date for applications is **12 noon (UK time) on Friday 6th September 2024.**

**Late applications will not be accepted.**

Please read carefully through the information contained within this Candidate Information Booklet and retain it for reference throughout the selection process.

**We wish to ensure all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments in accordance with our obligations under Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 to complete any of the assessments.**

**If you have any questions, or require any documentation in an alternative format e.g. braille, easy read, large print, audio etc. you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net)**

We wish you every success in your application.



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## ABOUT THE NICS



The NICS comprises nine Departments that support the Northern Ireland Executive and Ministers. We do this by developing and implementing government policies and legislation and delivering key public services in areas such as health, public finances, social development, justice, education, regeneration, environment, culture, agriculture, economic development, employment, and transport.

In addition, the Public Prosecution Service is staffed by civil servants.

You can find more information on the government arrangements here, including the [functions of the Departments](#) on the Northern Ireland Executive website. *(Clicking on this link will open a new window/tab)*

All NI civil servants are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. They are expected to carry out their role with dedication and a commitment to the NI Civil Service's core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.

## ABOUT THE ROLE AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Administrative Officer roles are key positions, many of which involve working on the front line, delivering public services to our customers.

The specific duties you undertake will vary depending on which NICS Department you are posted to. You will be expected to deliver services using modern technology. Administrative Officers, particularly those in customer facing roles, have to be able to cope with pressures faced in a busy front line work environment. You will need to be a good communicator, a good team player and be able to work accurately, while managing your time efficiently.

### **We're looking for people who can:**

- Communicate well both orally (face to face or by telephone) and in writing with a range of diverse people, customers and claimants, providing advice and explaining policies, procedures and decisions taken;
- Handle tricky and difficult situations with people/customers, including potentially challenging customer situations by telephone, face to face, in writing, and/or using other digital methods;
- Research, understand and interpret information which may sometimes be complex, to make decisions/recommendations and to provide timely explanations to people/customers; and

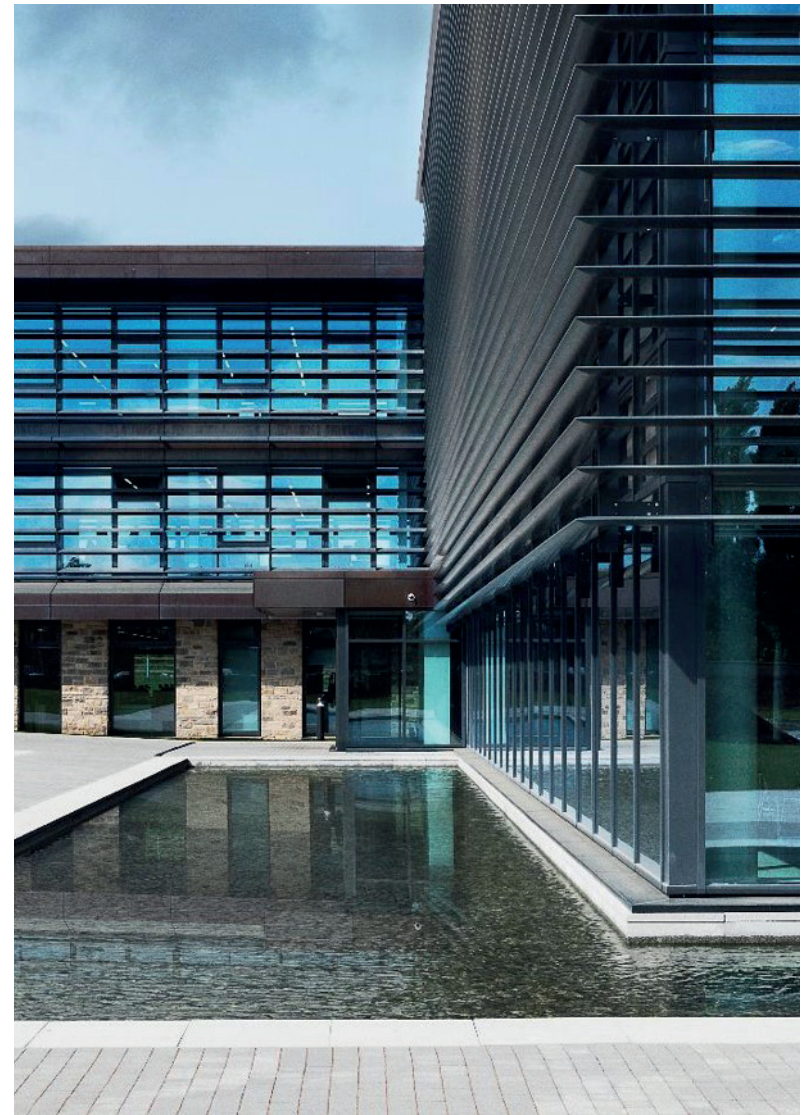
- Use a range of computer systems to action tasks, payments and deal with telephone queries.

### **As an Administrative Officer you might be:**

- Providing customer service in a telephony or customer facing environment to a diverse range of customers both internal and external, including participating in telephone and/or public office rota duties where the post demands;
- Gathering, checking, assessing and interpreting information to make decisions/recommendations against clearly defined criteria, regulations, procedures and deadlines. For example, benefit claims/rebate applications, processing waste permits, bankruptcy orders, land registration applications, collecting rates, pursuing debt and recovering rates through appropriate legal processes and assisting line management at Court;
- Making decisions regarding benefit or other types of entitlements by examining the facts/information available;
- Assessing claims/applications and dealing with customer enquiries via face to face, telephone, written or electronic means;
- Participating in a team in a target driven, customer facing environment to support the delivery of customer service, quality and performance;

## ABOUT THE ROLE AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintaining relevant recording systems, databases and spreadsheets. Searching and interrogating those systems to produce information to assist decision makers;
- Processing straightforward financial transactions including the lodgement of monies and processing invoices in adherence with Departmental and Account NI procedures;
- Providing general administrative support where required, for example, ordering stationery, organising meetings and taking minutes, booking venues and hospitality, making travel arrangements. Duties may also include management of the branch calendar, diaries, or on-call rotas;
- Handling and communicating personal data in accordance with departmental policies; and
- May at times have a mentoring role for a small number of Administrative Assistant /Administrative Officer staff.



## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### Salary

The salary for these posts will be within the range £24,225 - £25,732 (under review). Your starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. If you are currently a civil servant, normal pay on promotion / re-grading arrangements will apply.

### Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance is 25 days, increasing to 30 days after 5 years.

### Security Vetting

The majority of AO posts within the NICS require Baseline Standard. However, some posts in the NICS involve staff having access to sensitive personal information either about citizens or employees. For this reason, employees in these roles are required to obtain a higher level of vetting. You will be required to provide additional personal information for the higher vetting levels.

For example Enhanced AccessNI clearance will be required for areas working in Regulated Activity or a Counter Terrorist Check may be required for some AO posts.



You will be asked in your application form if you would be prepared to undertake a higher level clearance.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **Hours of Work**

The normal hours of work are 37 hours per week (Monday to Friday), excluding meal breaks. Most offices work flexi-time.

A variety of working patterns are available. You should indicate on the form if you wish to be considered for posts with a Standard Working Pattern, Alternative Working Pattern or both.

### **Standard Working Pattern**

Most offices work flexi-time between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

### **Alternative Working Pattern**

Some posts require successful candidates to work a range of specific working patterns between the hours of 8am and 8pm on any day between Monday and Friday and in some business areas 9am to 5pm on one Saturday in four. Once appointed, should this working pattern need to change you will be given 13 weeks notice.

### **DAERA Portal Operations Working Pattern**

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: (37 hours net) to be worked as part of a shift arrangement which will include regular night duty and will include weekends and public/privilege holidays. It is expected that the four-week shift pattern will provide coverage for 3 shifts every 24 hours i.e. early, late and overnight shift with rest days. Time spent travelling to and from your post is not included as part of your shift.

If successful, you will only be considered for a post within one of your selected working patterns, subject to availability. If appointed, your name will then be removed from the list of successful applicants for your other selected working patterns. This pattern will be stated in your letter of offer.



## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### NI Courts and Tribunals Service

Some AO posts will be based within the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS). The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service is an Agency of the Department of Justice of Northern Ireland and plays a vital role in actively contributing to the Department of Justice's mission to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other by working in partnership with other criminal justice partners to deliver efficient and effective court services and support an independent judiciary.

The majority of the NICTS posts operate a flexi-time scheme, usually between the hours of 8am and 6pm. The flexi-time scheme allows you to have an element of flexibility over your working hours. It involves flexible start and finish times around 'core working hours' (when attendance is required) and within the limitations of the 'bandwidth' (the earliest and latest times between which hours can be worked) and allows you more choice over your working hours, subject to the operational requirements.

The majority of posts within NICTS are wholly court based and not suitable for hybrid working.

### NI Prison Service

Some AO posts will be based within the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). The Northern Ireland Prison Service is an agency within the Department of Justice. It is responsible for the operation and delivery of services within the Northern Ireland prison system.

There may be posts within NIPS that are not suitable for hybrid working.

You should indicate on the application form if you wish to be considered for posts within NICTS and/or NIPS. Employees within NICTS and NIPS will be required to obtain a higher level of vetting.

### Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. You'll find further details on the [Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme \(Northern Ireland\) website](#)

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### Location

The NICS has offices across Northern Ireland, the main NICS office locations are outlined in the table.

In your application form, you may **select up to three** travel to work areas where you are prepared to work. **You should ensure you can, and are willing to, travel to the location.**

If successful, you will only be considered for a post in **one** of your selected areas and, if appointed, your name will be removed from the list of successful applicants for your other selected areas.

Area	City/Town
<b>Area 1: Belfast</b>	Belfast
	Lisburn
	Bangor
	Antrim
	Downpatrick
<b>Area 2: Derry/Londonderry</b>	Derry/Londonderry
	Ballykelly
	Limavady
<b>Area 3: Craigavon</b>	Craigavon
	Armagh
	Portadown
<b>Area 4: Coleraine</b>	Coleraine
	Ballymoney
<b>Area 5: Omagh and Strabane</b>	Omagh
	Strabane
<b>Area 6: Newry and Banbridge</b>	Newry
	Banbridge
<b>Area 7: Ballymena</b>	Ballymena
<b>Area 8: Cookstown and Magherafelt</b>	Cookstown
	Magherafelt
<b>Area 9: Dungannon</b>	Dungannon
<b>Area 10: Enniskillen</b>	Enniskillen

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### Hybrid Working

It is envisaged that some element of home working and/or remote working may be possible, in line with the NICS Hybrid Working Policy and subject to business need following a specific training period.

### Probation

Confirmation of appointment is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory the appointment may be terminated.

### Career Development

The NICS offers attractive career prospects across a wide variety of roles and professions. NI Civil Servants have access to a wide range of job opportunities, including secondments with external organisations, and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing their career.



## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

### **The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.**

The NICS values and welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace. Diversity and inclusion is reflected in and embedded across the entire range of NICS employment policies and practices, such as: Transitioning at Work Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Special Leave, Adoption Leave, Reasonable Adjustment Guidance and Alternative Working Policy.

The following groups are under-represented at this grade in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. We therefore particularly welcome applications from:

- Protestants and men;
- People under the age of 35;
- People with a disability; and
- People from minority ethnic communities.

All applications for employment are treated strictly on the basis of merit.





## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

### **Our vision of the NICS of the future is:**

- An organisation where everyone plays an active part in improving the lives of people in NI;
- A well-led, high-performing and outcomes-focused organisation;
- A great place to work, where everyone can reach their full potential; and
- An inclusive workplace in which diversity is truly valued.

We aim to ensure every individual is valued and accepted for who they truly are. While more work is planned, some examples of our commitment to diversity and inclusion are:

- Establishing Race and Ethnicity, LGBT, Gender and Disability champions. Our Champions are there to support colleagues and encourage a culture of inclusion in the NICS;
- Supporting peer to peer staff networks, such as Women's Network, LGBT Network, Cancer Support Group and Autism Support Group;
- Working with disability charities to become one of the lead partners with Employers for Disability in NI;

- Committing to all of the NICS becoming Just A Minute (JAM) Card friendly;
- Signing up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter;
- Taking part in PRIDE as an employer; and
- Taking part in Belfast Mela, the city's annual celebration of global cultures.

### **Disability Requirements and Reasonable Adjustment Requests**

We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments during this recruitment process.

# Selection Process

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### THE SELECTION PROCESS IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Online Application;
2. Formal Screening of Applications;
3. Online Aptitude Tests;
4. Pre-Recorded Interview;
5. Merit List;

#### 1. ONLINE APPLICATION

- **Read the Candidate Information Booklet.**
- If you are interested in applying make sure you meet the eligibility requirements.
- Complete your online application making sure you supply a valid email address.
- You will be asked for some preferences (including location and working hours). If successful, you will only be considered for a post with one of your selected location and working patterns, subject to availability. If you are offered and refuse a post that matches your preferences, no further offers will be made.

#### 2. FORMAL SCREENING OF APPLICATIONS

- Applications deemed invalid at this stage will be withdrawn from the competition.
- We will complete a formal screening of applications progressing to ensure your application is valid. These checks will ensure applicants meet the age and nationality requirements for the role.

#### 3. ONLINE APTITUDE TEST

- Candidates progressing after validation will receive a link via email on **Friday 27th September 2024.**
- If you do not receive an email by **5pm on Friday 27th September**, please e-mail [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net) inserting 'AO test link not received' in the subject line.
- This link will take you to a website where you will have to validate your identity before completing a number of tests.
- The online tests can be done in your own time and at a place that suits you.

#### 4. PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEW

- The top performing candidates from the online aptitude tests will be invited to a pre-recorded interview.
- The interview will be based on the NICS Competency Framework. Details of these can be found on page 24.

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### 5. MERIT LIST

- Candidates who meet the required standard and pass mark for the Interview Stage will be deemed suitable for appointment and will be placed on a list in order of merit, with the highest scoring candidate ranked first. NICS will allocate candidates to vacancies in the order listed to their location preference.
- Candidates will be taken through pre appointment formalities.
- It is intended that the order of merit will remain active for a period of 2 years. However, there is a possibility, although remote, that circumstances may arise where it will be necessary to extend the list for a further period. This will only occur where practical reasons for doing so arise.





## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### ONLINE APTITUDE TEST – ALL APPLICANTS

Candidates who progress following validation will receive an email (sent to the email address you provided) with a link to the online tests on **Friday 27th September 2024**. You will have until **5pm on Monday 7th October 2024** to complete these.

The link will take you to a website where you will have to complete a series of tests. The online tests can be done in your own time and at a place that suits you. **However, please note that there are a number of tasks you must perform on the test site before you can take the live tests.**

If you do not receive an email by **5pm on Friday 27th September 2024** please e-mail [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net) inserting **'Administrative Officer test link not received'** in the subject line.

#### The online assessment will consist of four tests:

- **Verbal** - assesses your ability to understand and organise written material. This test is untimed and typically takes 15 to 25 minutes to complete.
- **Checking and Accuracy** - assesses how quickly and accurately you can spot mistakes in information. You will have 12 minutes to complete as many questions as you can.

- **Following Procedures** - assesses your ability to follow rules and apply criteria, and to do calculations correctly. The test is untimed and typically takes 15 to 25 minutes to complete.
- **Situational Judgement** – assesses your ability to make sound decisions in a range of practical situations, many of which involve dealing with other people. The test is untimed and typically takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

**Candidates will have to achieve a minimum score in each test with the top performing candidates progressing to interview.**

You do not need to complete all four tests at the same time or even on the same day. Individual tests do, however, need to be taken in a single sitting therefore you should ensure that when completing each test that you have sufficient time for the test itself plus additional time for reading and understanding the relevant instructions for each test.

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### PREPARING FOR YOUR ONLINE ASSESSMENT

**These tests are proctored.** Proctoring means that your identity will be verified in advance of starting the tests and that you will be monitored via your webcam during the tests.

You will need a computer, a working webcam and a reliable internet connection.

**You will need to use an up-to-date Chrome or Microsoft Edge browser on your PC. If you are using a Mac, you MUST use Chrome or Edge. Do NOT use Safari.**

Do not use a tablet, phone or Chromebook.

Once you have accessed the assessment website you **MUST** do the following before you can take the live tests – and you need to do these things well in advance of taking the live tests. We recommend that you access the site and start the process straight away. **All of these steps and the live assessments are completed on the same assessment website, which you will access using the link in your invitation email.**

Once you log into the test platform and complete the honesty and privacy statements, you will be taken to the Main Menu page, from which you can complete all the steps below.

**NOTE** – the final deadline for completing of the live tests is **5pm on Monday 7th October 2024.**

### APTITUDE TEST PROCESS

- **STEP 1: Check your webcam**
- **STEP 2: Verify your identity**
- **STEP 3: Study the Familiarisation material**
- **STEP 4: Take the live assessments**

#### STEP 1: Check your webcam

**NOTE** – you will need a working webcam to enable the proctoring to take place.

The onus is on candidates to ensure they have access to a webcam, regrettably no alternatives are available. Click the ‘Webcam test’ button. This will check if your webcam is working within the program. Also make sure that you are clearly visible and front on in the image and be aware that you need to remain clearly visible throughout the live assessment.

Do this well in advance of taking the live assessment and also do it immediately before taking the live assessment in case something has changed.

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### STEP 2: VERIFY YOUR IDENTITY

**IMPORTANT: DO NOT SEND ANY PHOTOS OF YOURSELF OR YOUR ID BY EMAIL. YOU MUST DO THIS THROUGH THE ASSESSMENT WEBSITE.**

Before starting the ID Verification process, you should click the yellow highlighted link at the top of the main menu page ('ID Verification and Proctoring – instructions, common issues and resolutions.pdf') and read the document. If you encounter a problem with your ID verification or starting a live test, please consult this document before emailing support.

**NOTE – you cannot start the live tests unless your ID has been verified.**

For this you will need to have a valid photo ID (Passports, driving licenses and electoral cards are acceptable photo IDs).

Using the webcam, you will need to take a webcam image of yourself and a webcam image of your photo ID (e.g. passport). You will be informed by email of the verification outcome using the email you provided at application.

We will check your ID and you will receive an email from [admin@assessmentintelligence.com](mailto:admin@assessmentintelligence.com) informing you of the outcome (**but do check your junk/spam folder and do log on to check your ID verification status if you feel you are waiting too long**).

You may be asked to re-take the photos and this is not uncommon, so please start the verification process early to ensure you have enough time to complete the process.

You can check your ID Verification Status by logging in. If you have not been notified within 24 hours of submitting images AND your online verification status is still showing as 'Submitted waiting approval', then you should email: [support@assessmentintelligence.com](mailto:support@assessmentintelligence.com) including your Candidate Reference Number and 'IRC303169' in the subject line.

We advise you to submit your webcam images as soon as possible. You should have submitted your images for identity verification by **5pm on Monday 30th September 2024** otherwise we cannot guarantee that the identity verification process will be completed in time for you to take the live tests before the final deadline.

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

**NOTE** – if the name on your photo ID will differ significantly from your name on your application, **you MUST inform HR Connect by emailing [Recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:Recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net) including your Candidate Reference Number and 'IRC303169' in the subject line.** Your email should explain the reason and include any supporting document (e.g., marriage certificate).

**NOTE** – you **MUST** complete the identity verification process online. **Under no circumstances send any images by email to [support@assessmentintelligence.com](mailto:support@assessmentintelligence.com)** – unless we specifically request it.

**Please note**, it is your responsibility to ensure that you submit your images in good time.

### STEP 3: STUDY THE FAMILIARISATION MATERIAL FOR THE ONLINE ASSESSMENT

There are Familiarisation programmes for the assessment. It is **ESSENTIAL** that you use the online Familiarisation material to check that your browser and the internet connection that you intend to take the live test on are compatible with the online tests.

Note that some network firewalls, e.g., on work networks may block access to the test site or prevent images from showing. **You should not take the test on a computer that is remotely connected to a work network as the link may be unstable.** It is **ESSENTIAL** that you access the Familiarisation materials using the computer and internet connection that you intend to take the live test on well in advance of the tests.

The Familiarisation material will give you a detailed description of the tests, include full instructions for completing the tests and provide example questions so that you know how to record your answers and navigate your way around the tests. You should be fully familiar with these things before taking the live tests in order to perform at your best.

### STEP 4: TAKE THE LIVE ASSESSMENT

The live tests will be available from **9am on Monday 30th September 2024** as long as you have submitted your images for ID Verification and they have been checked and approved.

- For best results it is **essential** that candidates are completing the online assessment in a test-like environment **without assistance**. Any possible distractions should be turned off, for example mobile phones, TV, music. Concentration is needed



## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

throughout the assessments, so when completing each test, ensure other people are aware that they should not disturb you until you are finished. **No responsibility can be accepted for any issues arising from where you choose to sit the tests.**

- Where there is reasonable evidence of cheating candidates will be withdrawn from the competition.
- Before starting a live test, you should close all other browsers and browser tabs. **You should not take the test on a computer that is remotely connected to a work network as the link may be unstable.**
- **The links to the live assessments will appear at the bottom of the page (below the Familiarisation links) from 9am on Monday 30th September 2024 once your identity has been verified.**
- Immediately before you click the start button to begin a live assessment, there will be an image of you at the bottom of the page. This should be a front-on view of you as you take the assessment. You need to make sure that you are clearly seen in this image before starting the assessment and that you will remain visible in the image during the assessment.
- During the assessment, you will see a small video stream from your webcam in the top left corner. Images from this stream will be monitored.
- We take great care with your webcam images and

retain them for as short a time as possible. The image of your photo ID is deleted as soon as your identity has been verified.

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

If you lose internet connection while in the live test, you should immediately close your browser.

You will be able to continue the test without losing time and your previous answers will have been saved (except possibly on the last page you were on before losing connection).

If you experience any other issue while taking the live test, you should immediately close your browser and email: [support@assessmentintelligence.com](mailto:support@assessmentintelligence.com) including your Candidate Reference Number and 'IRC303169' in the subject line.

If you do need to close your browser or your computer crashes and restarts, you must start up a fresh browser and paste in the test link again.

If your browser starts up and reloads the test again automatically, you must close it down immediately and start from a fresh browser.

If your browser starts up and asks if you want to restore sessions or pages, you **MUST** decline.

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### FINAL DEADLINE

**IMPORTANT – you must complete all of the live tests by 5pm on Monday 7th October 2024** and we strongly advise that you complete them well in advance of the deadline. If you leave it towards the end of the assessment window and find you have a problem (e.g. with your computer or internet) you may not have time to resolve your problem and complete the tests before the deadline

You should have submitted your images for identity verification by **5pm on Monday 30th September 2024** otherwise we cannot guarantee that the identity verification process will be completed in time for you to take the live tests before the final deadline.

For further information on how we process this information, NICSHR's Privacy Notice is available via the link: [NICSHR Privacy Notice - Online Assessments](#)

### DISABILITY REQUIREMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT REQUESTS

We wish to ensure all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. If you require any form of reasonable adjustment, please note this in the box provided on your application form. You should include details of your disability and the specific adjustment you need. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments for any stage of this recruitment process.

#### [Further information on reasonable adjustments](#)

You will need to provide relevant evidence to support your request for a reasonable adjustment – for example, an Occupational Psychologist report or a GP's medical statement.

**Evidence to support your request should be sent to HRConnect at [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net) as soon as possible following submission of your application.** Please mark your correspondence with the competition reference number IRC303169 and title it '**Supporting evidence for reasonable adjustment request**'.

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

You may be contacted directly to discuss your requirements.

**It is essential that special arrangements concerning any adjustment requests are made in advance of starting the live test, as retrospective arrangements cannot be made after you have started.**

### GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME

As part of our commitment to the employment of disabled people, we operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS does not guarantee a job. However, its objective is to ensure a guaranteed number of disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview. Further information on the GIS can be found on the NICS Recruitment website – Information for Disabled Applicants.

In assessing whether applicants meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria, they are required to undertake a test. **All applicants must achieve the required minimum score in order to be invited to interview.** Should a large number of candidates achieve the required score, we may limit the overall numbers of interviews offered and those applicants who demonstrate they best meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the job (i.e. the highest scoring)

will be invited to interview. In this scenario, we will take positive action to ensure that the number of GIS applicants invited to interview will be in proportion to those who pass the test.

### PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEW

Following the online aptitude test, the top performing candidates will be invited to a pre-recorded interview, using four of the key competencies for the AO grade. It is intended that pre-recorded interviews will be conducted during November 2024.

Rather than being interviewed in a live setting by a panel, candidates will be sent a link and given one week to complete their video interview in a comfortable setting, at a time that suits them.

It is the applicants responsibility to ensure they have a stable internet connection and test their equipment before they commence with the interview to ensure the picture and sound quality are suitable.

When ready to commence the interview, candidates will be prompted to answer one lead question on each of four competencies from the NICS Competency Framework and will be given 3 minutes to respond to each question. Once completed, trained panel members will then assess the answers provided using a scoring matrix.

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

You are **not allowed** to bring notes or other personal documentation into the interview.

Guidance on the video interview process will be provided in the invite to interview. Candidates will have the opportunity to test the technology to ensure that it is working well and to become familiar with it before they are ready to commence the interview. You will need to ensure that your webcam is on at all times throughout the interview.

It is essential that you can clearly be seen throughout the pre-recorded interview. If you are unable to be seen, your interview will not be assessed, which will result in your application being withdrawn.

**Verifying your identity** – as part of the interview process you will need to have valid photo ID (Passports, driving licenses and electoral cards are acceptable).

**You should familiarise yourself with the Competency Framework as this forms the basis of the interview selection process.**

Each of the four competencies assessed at interview will be scored out of 50 and candidates will be required to score a minimum of 30 in each to be considered suitable for appointment to the NICS.

**The overall pass mark will be 120 (out of 200) – 60%**

The core competencies we will assess are:

### MAKING EFFECTIVE DECISIONS

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective using sound judgement and evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For Administrative Officers, this might include some or all of the following:

- Making and recording effective decisions following the appropriate decision making criteria, framework or guidance;
- Asking questions when unsure what to do;
- Undertaking appropriate analysis to support decisions or recommendations;
- Investigating and responding to gaps, errors and irregularities in information;
- Speaking up to clarify decisions and query those constructively; and
- Thinking through the implications of own decisions.

**MARKS AVAILABLE: 50**

## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### COLLABORATING AND PARTNERING

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people. For Administrative Officers, this might include some or all of the following:

- Proactively contributing to the work of the whole team;
- Getting to know fellow team members/colleagues and understanding their viewpoints and;
- Seeking help when needed in order to complete own work effectively;
- Being open to taking on different roles;
- Trying to see issues from others' perspectives and checking understanding; and
- Listening to the views of others and showing sensitivity towards others.

**MARKS AVAILABLE: 50**

### MANAGING A QUALITY SERVICE

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service. For Administrative Officers, this might include some or all of the following:

- Communicating in a way that meets and anticipates the customer's requirements and gives a favourable impression of the NICS;
- Actively seeking information from customers to understand their needs and expectations;
- Acting to prevent problems and reporting issues where necessary;
- Gaining the knowledge needed to follow the relevant legislation, policies, procedures and rules that apply to the job;
- Encouraging customers to access relevant information or support that will help them understand and use services more effectively; and
- Taking ownership of issues, focusing on providing the right solution and keeping customers and delivery partners up to date with progress.

**MARKS AVAILABLE: 50**



## OVERVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS

### DELIVERING AT PACE

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. It is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way. For Administrative Officers, this might include some or all of the following:

- Working in an organised manner using own knowledge and expertise to deliver on time and to standard;
- Working with enthusiasm to get the job done;
- Taking responsibility for the quality of own work and keeping manager informed of how the work is progressing;
- Remaining focused on delivery;
- Maintaining consistent performance; and
- Participating in quality assurance of products or services.

**MARKS AVAILABLE: 50**

### INTERVIEW AVAILABILITY

Any reasonable adjustments due to disability should be conveyed to HRConnect at [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net).

It is intended that pre-recorded interviews will take place during November 2024.

Requests to reschedule interviews will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

In the event additional vacancies arise in the future, we may schedule further interviews.

If, having received your invitation to interview, you decide to withdraw from the competition please inform HRConnect as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of receiving your invitation. This will help us manage the competition more effectively.

# Guidance for Applicants

## **GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

### **APPLICATION FORM**

The application form is designed to ensure applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements. All parts of the application form must be completed before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

#### **Please note:**

- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, hard copy application packs are available on request. All applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online;
  - The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered;
  - We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms;
  - All applications must be received by the advertised closing date and time;
  - Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications;
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
  - When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available;
  - The session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes. If you do not save or change page within this time, you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost; and
  - You must click 'SUBMIT' once you have finished your online application. You will receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact HRConnect if you do not receive an acknowledgment email within 24 hrs.

## GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### HELP WITH MAKING YOUR APPLICATION

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local **Jobs and Benefits Office** - contact details are available on NIDirect.

The Careers Service provides an impartial, all-age careers information, advice and guidance service, to help young people and adults make informed choices about their future career paths. You can contact one of the Careers Service's professionally qualified Careers Advisors at Careers Service.

You can also get advice or assistance from local disability employment organisations. To find out more about local disability employment organisations contact **Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE)**, an umbrella group for individuals and organisations promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to access and maintain employment, (email [info@niuse.org.uk](mailto:info@niuse.org.uk), tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709.)



## GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### INTERVIEW PREPARATION

**If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind it does not require you to:**

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

**A competence-based interview does however require you to:**

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfill the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.
- 

**In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:**

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective? What were you trying to achieve?
- Action – what did you actually do? What was your unique contribution? and;

- Result – what happened? What was the outcome? What did you learn?

You may be asked to provide specific examples from your past experience to demonstrate the range of behaviours associated with the competences being assessed. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work/life experiences.

### THE MERIT PRINCIPLE

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments to the NICS are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at [www.nicscommissioners.org](http://www.nicscommissioners.org). We will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed and in accordance with your preferred working pattern and location preference.

However you should be aware that circumstances may arise in the future where it will be necessary to extend the currency of the merit list for a further period. The



## **GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

merit list will only be extended where cogent practical reasons for doing so arise.

### **NICS HR PRIVACY NOTICE**

NICS HR are committed to protecting your privacy. HRConnect manage job applications on behalf of NICS HR, in line with the NICS HR privacy notice available via [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)

### **OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT**

Candidates will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

### **CHANGES IN PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONTACT DETAILS**

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes to personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect have up to date contact details.

## **TRANSGENDER REQUIREMENTS**

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration, in confidence, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HRConnect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and will not form any part of the selection process.

## **DISABILITY REQUIREMENTS**

We ask on the application form if due to disability you require any reasonable adjustments. Details of any disability are used only for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability, are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HRConnect where your requirements will be discussed in strictest confidence.

## GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### DOCUMENTATION

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with the invitation to attend for assessment. You should ensure that the required documents are readily available.

### RIGHT TO WORK AND NATIONALITY REQUIREMENTS

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom and satisfy the Nationality requirements for appointment to the NICS. Please note that **ALL** applicants for external recruitment will be subject to a Nationality validation check. Applicants must be either:

- (i) UK national; or
- (ii) National of a Commonwealth country; or
- (iii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or
- (iv) EEA nationals with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or
- (v) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service; or
- (vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or
- (vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals.

**ALL** candidates are required to state their nationality in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form

For candidates applying under categories iv – vii you are required to provide the following information in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form. Failure to provide the requested information WILL result in your application being rejected.

Category iv – Please provide your **‘Share code’** in the ‘Share code’ field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your ‘share code’ [here](#).

Category v - Please provide your **‘Share code’** in the ‘Share code’ field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your ‘share code’ [here](#). You are also required to provide your payroll number in the nationality response box to demonstrate that you are working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Category vi - Please provide your **‘Share code’** in the ‘Share code’ field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your ‘share code’ [here](#). Please provide confirmation in the nationality response box that you

## GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

hold indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK and that this was granted prior to 31st December 2020.

Category vii - Please provide your **'Share code'** in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your 'share code' here. In addition, please provide evidence in the nationality response box to support your application for applying as a family member of a relevant EEA and Turkish nation. Further documentary evidence may be request from HRConnect to support this;

'Family member of the relevant EEA or Turkish nationals' means:

- (i) That national's spouse\*; or
  - (ii) A direct descendant (child, grandchild etc.) of that national or his/her spouse who is under 21 years of age or is their dependent; or
  - (iii) A dependent relative in the ascending line (parent, grandparent etc.) of the EEA national or his/her spouse
- \*Note: 'Spouse' does not include a party to a marriage of convenience and in the case of EEA national vocational students family members are restricted to spouses and dependent children only.

(Public Service/reserved posts insert)

- (i) A UK national; or
- (ii) an Irish or non-UK Commonwealth citizen who was in post in the NICS on 31 May 1996, or was appointed from a competition with a closing date on or before 31 May 1996, and who has remained in the NICS since that time.

Where a candidate has a right to work status which has a time limitation, ongoing checks will be in place to ensure the right to work is maintained.

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available via [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk).

## GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### SECURITY

#### Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For AO posts in the NICS the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- Your passport OR;
- A document verifying your permanent National Insurance Number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version);
- A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Further information regarding the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, including other acceptable documents is available via [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

We will organise for a Criminal Record Check on all successful applicants to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is a Basic Disclosure Certificate.

You should not be put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni).

Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after the interview/test, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. A request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment.

Some posts in the NICS involve staff having access to sensitive personal information either about citizens or employees. For this reason, employees in these roles are required to obtain a higher level of vetting. If you are prepared to undertake a higher level clearance, you will be required to provide additional personal information for the higher vetting levels.

Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978. For a small number of posts the Counter Terrorist Check may also be required. This includes that at point 1 above plus a check of Security Service records.

## GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MONITORING FORM

**Please note that the Equal Opportunities monitoring section of the application form is mandatory in order to submit an application.**

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to the Department of Finance website [www.finance-ni.gov.uk](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk).

**The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.**

As Protestants and men are currently known to be under-represented in this grade in the NICS, and as young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are currently under represented in the NICS, applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.

**All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.**

### FEEDBACK

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is committed to ensuring the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair and in accordance with the principles of the Civil Service Commissioners Code. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview.

Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.



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**THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM  
PART OF CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect at the address below or by:

**Email:** [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net)

**Tel:** 0800 1 300 330

**Fax:** 028 9024 1665

**Address:** Beacon House  
27 Clarendon Rd  
Belfast  
BT1 3BG

