

FOI DOF/2025-0072

Request

Re: FOI request - vacancies in Forensic Science NI.

1. I would like to request information on the number of vacancies in FSNI
2. the grade breakdown
3. if they are being covered by a TP
4. the duration that TP been in place
5. how the vacancy will be filled
6. what stage of the recruitment process the vacancy is at e.g. design stage, interview, etc
7. the estimated timescales for completion

DoF Response

I can confirm the department holds some of the information requested.

1. The number of vacancies in FSNI

Details of the total vacancies in each department is not held centrally by Department of Finance. Each Civil Service department is responsible for managing its resources – both financial and staff. Each department determines its individual workforce needs and is responsible for ensuring that any additional staffing resources are affordable. When a department identifies a vacancy that needs filled, the request is referred to NICS HR to initiate the process to fill the post. NICS HR liaises with all departments on an ongoing basis to seek to prioritise recruitment activity within allocated financial and staff resources.

As at the end of January 2025, (the most recent figures available at time of the request), NICS HR was managing a caseload of 21 vacancies in Forensic Science NI.

2. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Grade	Number of vacancies
G7	
NON Principal Scientific Officer (G7)	2
DP	
NON Senior Scientific Officer	1
SO	
NON Higher Scientific Officer	6
NON Staff Officer	2
EO1	
NON Scientific Officer	3
AO	
NON Administrative Officer	2
NON Assistant Scientific Officer	5
Grand Total	21

3 & 4. DoF does not hold the data to determine if the above vacancies are currently being covered by a temporary promotion.

The management and recording of temporary promotions are the responsibility of individual business areas in Departments. Temporary promotions can be for several different business reasons, such as covering vacant posts, special exercises etc. The HR System allows line management to select a reason for the temporary promotion from a pre-defined set of values, of which “vacant post” is an option. In some cases, it may be possible to cover a temporary vacancy by the level transfer of staff from another area of work or by prioritising / sharing the work amongst existing staff, taking account of each individual’s existing workload. A Business Area may have a vacant post that has not yet been requisitioned with NICSHR to be filled.

The table below provides the total number of DoJ FSNI staff on Temporary Promotion to fill a vacant post (as recorded by relevant line management), by TP Grade Name and Duration, as at the end of January 2025 (the most recent figures available at the time of the request).

TP Grade Name	Duration			Total No of Staff on TP due to *Vacant Post
	6-12 Months	1-2 Years	Over 4 Years	
Senior Civil Servant				
SCS Assistant Secretary			1	1
Senior Civil Servant Total			1	1
Staff Officer				
NON Higher Scientific Officer	1			1
Staff Officer Total	1			1
Executive Officer 1				
NON Scientific Officer	1	1		2
Executive Officer 1 Total	1	1		2
Administrative Officer				
NON Administrative Officer		1		1
Administrative Officer Total		1		1
Grand Total	2	2	1	5

Source: HRConnect download Month End Jan 24

*Vacant Post: Reason for Temporary Promotion as recorded by Employee's Line Management on the HRConnect system.

5. Of the 21 vacancies, it is currently intended that 10 will be filled by external recruitment competition and 1 by internal trawl. The method to fill for the remaining 10 vacancies has not yet been determined.

6 & 7. The stage of the recruitment process and estimated timescale for completion for the vacancies is set out below.

Grade	Number of vacancies	Stage	Timescale for completion*
G7			
NON Principal Scientific Officer	2	Design	Not known
DP			
NON Senior Scientific Officer	1	Offer	3-6 months
SO			
NON Higher Scientific Officer	1	Offer	End February 2025
	1	Offer	3-6 months
	4	Design	Not known
NON Staff Officer	1	Competition - initial stages	Not known
	1	New volume recruitment competition required	Not known
EO1			
NON Scientific Officer	2	Offer	Not known
	1	Design	Not known
AO			
NON Administrative Officer	2	Awaiting merit list from ongoing recruitment competition	Not known
NON Assistant Scientific Officer	1	Offer	End February 2025
	2	Offer	3-6 months
	2	Design	Not known
Grand Total	21		

*a vacancy is classed as completed when candidate is confirmed as being in post