

**Candidate  
Information  
Booklet  
Promotion**

**IRC31854  
Deputy Principal Statistician  
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be returned to HRConnect  
no later than 12 noon (UK time)  
on  
*Friday 30 October 2009***

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## INTRODUCTION

A promotion board to assess the suitability of candidates for promotion to Deputy Principal Statistician will be held by the Department of Finance and Personnel during November 2009 - January 2010.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Knowledge, skills and experience required:

### Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications be:

- (a) officers in the Assistant Statistician grade; **or**
- (b) officers in Assistant Statistician analogous grades (Annex 1 refers) who meet the criteria for this competition **and** who are, by the closing date for self-nomination, in possession of :
  - (i) at least a second class honours degree which has included training in statistics and/or research methods; **or**
  - (ii) at least a second class honours degree and a Royal Statistical Society award of at least Certificate level; **or**
  - (iii) a postgraduate qualification which has included training in statistics and/or research methods;

### **And have**

- (iv) at least 2 years experience out of the last 5 years, of working in an area [including postgraduate research] where statistics and /or research methods formed a substantial component\* of the work.

\*'Substantial component' has been defined as follows: at least 80% of the time spent working, dates need to be stated.

*Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.*

**Relevant or equivalent qualifications:** *give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.*

Non-permanent staff employed on fixed-term contracts or on a temporary basis who meet the eligibility requirements outlined above are eligible to apply, but if not posted before the non-permanent contract expires will be removed from the list.

Applicants will be subject to CSC7/04 (ICSC6/04) which allows for the exclusion of candidates with an unacceptably high sick absence record. Candidates who are in receipt of, or who receive a written or final written warning will be affected by the terms of the CSC/ICSC.

**Please note:**

**It is essential that you clearly demonstrate in your application form how and to what extent (including dates where applicable) you meet each of the eligibility criteria for the post.**

**You must provide sufficient details to allow the panel to assess how well you meet these requirements.**

**Only evidence presented against each specific criterion will be considered when deciding eligibility against that criterion. The panel will not 'read across' to relate information provided under one criterion to satisfy the conditions of another. It is not acceptable to provide a list of various posts you have held nor is it sufficient to simply state that you meet the requirements of the criteria.**

**If you do not clearly demonstrate in your application form that you meet all the eligibility criteria you will not progress to the next stage.**

**Only the details provided by you in Part 3 of your application form (eligibility) will be available to the sift panel.**

## COMPETITION PROCESS

The competition will comprise of the following key elements :

Application Form;  
Line Manager's Assessment;  
Practical Assessment; and  
Interview.

### Application Arrangements

All staff who consider that they meet the eligibility requirements may apply using the appropriate application form. CVs should not be submitted. Staff who have been excluded from promotion selection are not eligible to apply.

A decision not to apply on this occasion will not, of course, prevent anyone from doing so in future competitions.

### Line Manager's Assessment

A Line Manager's Assessment (LMA) must be completed by the candidate's line manager for all candidates who apply, to determine if they are eligible to progress to the practical assessment stage. This will also contribute to the candidate's overall competition score. The LMA is based on the selection competences for the higher grade excluding the Professional & Technical competence.

For this competition candidates must achieve a total LMA score of 48 or above out of 84 to be invited to practical assessment. Those candidates who score below 48 **will not** progress to practical assessment. For all candidates who progress to the final stage of the competition, **the LMA will represent 20% of the total marks available.**

All staff who have not been interviewed for promotion for a minimum of 6 years when a board is convened, will automatically be admitted to the practical assessment, subject to rule 4.7 of the Career Opportunities and Promotion Policy, if they meet the eligibility requirements and apply. A Line Manager's Assessment must be completed for such staff and will be used as part of the overall selection process. However, these staff do not need to have achieved a total LMA score of 48 or above to proceed to the assessment stage.

The Line Manager's Assessment will not form part of the panel documentation.

### Practical Assessment

The practical assessment will take the form of a written test which has been specifically designed to test candidate's professional knowledge and understanding of basic research/statistical concepts and methodological

procedures, and to test candidate's ability to apply such concepts and procedures in work related situations [Annex 3]. **This test will contribute 30% to the total competition score.** Performance on this test will be used to determine which candidates will be invited to interview. The number invited to interview will be based on 2.5 times the number of anticipated Deputy Principal Statistician vacancies over a two year period. The test will be held week commencing 23 November 2009.

## **Interview Procedures**

Candidates will be interviewed by a panel consisting of 3 people. The application form will not be made available to the Panel for purposes of interview. Neither will panel members have access to your performance management reports, practical assessment or LMA score.

In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria, applicants will also be expected to demonstrate the following selection competences at interview.

- 1. Professional/Specialist/ Technical Knowledge & Skills** Develops and applies Professional/specialist/technical knowledge and skills to achieve agreed work objectives and meet customer requirements. Identifies suitable data sources and methodological approaches; applies appropriate statistical procedures and communicates effectively. Collects and manages statistical/research data in an efficient manner, making appropriate use of IT. Ensures that all professional work complies with best practice guidelines.

**Marks available = 84**  
**Minimum standard = 42**

- 2. Information and Communication** Efficiently manages information through organising and evaluating information to meet customer needs. Analyses information in order to make sound decisions whilst keeping others advised, informed and involved. Communicates in a way that is clear, concise, relevant, easily understood and timely, and considers the audience in the communication process. Ensures that the content of a message is accurate, covers all necessary points and meets the stated objective.

**Marks available = 21**

**This competence will be evaluated at the interview stage by means of a presentation exercise**

**3. People**

Develops the team's knowledge and skills to ensure the best possible results at work. Makes the best use of the team and its members so that they can achieve work objectives. Allocates work, agrees objectives and sets out plans. Develops, maintains and enhances effective working relationships with the Line Manager, team members and other colleagues. Minimises the potential for conflict and deals effectively with conflicts as they arise. Develops knowledge and skills so that objectives are met and performance improved. Makes a significant contribution to selecting the people needed to carry out work activities.

**Marks available = 21**

**4. Services**

Manages operations bearing in mind the need to keep focused on quality, customer requirements and the need for continuous improvement. Plans and implements changes in activities to improve branch performance, taking account of the needs of staff and customers.

**Marks available = 21**

**5. Resources**

Identifies resources, both financial and physical, required by the Branch and the ability to bid successfully for these resources. Efficiently manages resources through monitoring and controlling the way in which these resources are used and making recommendations on how they can be best used in the future.

**Marks available = 21**

**6. Policy/Strategy**

Assists with the analysis, development and the evaluation of policy and plans for implementation. Contributes to drawing up strategy. Sets objectives to ensure achievement of strategies. Analyses past performance and assesses the current

performance against agreed strategies and plans, recommends and makes improvements having considered the long-term implications.

**Marks available = 21**

- 7. Programme and Project Management** Contributes to the development and progression of business cases for programmes and projects that demonstrate benefit to the organisation and support in the achievement of its strategic objectives. Manages projects, ensuring project management systems are in place. Evaluates the success of projects, ensuring all knowledge is captured and documented to inform future similar projects.

**Marks available = 21**

The minimum standard for the six competences [2-7 above] combined = 63

## **CORE COMPETENCES**

The Deputy Principal Statistician grade is analogous to the Deputy Principal Grade. Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through the HRConnect portal or, on request, from NISRA HR.

Information on the Professional/Specialist/Technical Knowledge and Skills Competence is attached at Annex 2.

## **COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS**

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

## **INTERVIEWS**

It is intended that interviews will take place commencing January 2010.

## Presentation

To help assess the **Information and Communication** competence, candidates will be asked to make a presentation to the panel which will last around 10 minutes, including questions. [DN – I'm not happy with this, I think we have to say how long the presentation bit is going to be and how long the questioning bit is going to be] This presentation will be based on a standardised information pack which they will be provided with one hour prior to being interviewed. This presentation and subsequent questioning will cover 100% of the candidate's assessment on this competence at interview. Flipcharts, calculators and pens will be supplied.

## Interview Stage

At the end of the interview stage the panel will assess the information presented by the candidate against each of the competences. Candidates will be required to pass the P&T competence in its own right and the other six competences combined.

Following this process, HRConnect will add the score achieved at the interview stage, which will represent 50% of the total marks available, to the score achieved in the practical assessment, which will represent 30% of the total marks available, and the score achieved in the LMA which will represent 20% of the total marks. Successful candidates will then be listed in merit order according to their total overall score. Where candidates achieve the same total overall score, the interview score will be used to determine the rank order amongst candidates.

Competition Stage	Professional and Technical	Information and Communication	Total of other 5 competences
LMA	0	14	70 (14 x 5)
Practical Assessment	126		
Interview	84	21 [presentation]	105 [21 x 5]
Total out of	210	35	175

Staff who work part-time or job-share will be treated at interview in the same way as full-time staff. The availability of part-time/job-share posts will not be considered by the Interview Panel. When a part-time or job-share member of staff is recommended for promotion, every effort will be made to assign them to a suitable post.

## SELECTION PROCESS

### Making your application

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility criteria.

#### **Guidance for Applicants**

- 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.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either Typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat electronic application forms.
- 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;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write “I” statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria— This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your *unique* role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.

### Application Form Submission

- We will not accept incomplete application forms, application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted application forms.
- Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1<sup>st</sup> class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to HRConnect.
- We will not accept any application where we are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.
- Applicants who send their application form electronically are also required to meet the closing deadline for receipt in this office.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online

## **Completing online applications**

- You cannot change your application once you've submitted it. Complete it carefully and double-check at review stage.
- Have all the details you're likely to need, ready to hand before you start - like qualification certificates, dates of past employment and your NI number.
- The application will "time out" if there is no keyboard or mouse activity for 2 hours.
- If you do lose your connection, search for the job again, click on it, and you should be able to resume your application, from where you left off.
- Where the application asks you to describe your qualifications, skills or experience, you might like to write up your answers beforehand in a word processor, and cut and paste them into the application.
- Whichever way you complete it, the application has a strict 4,000 character limit for such answers, including blank spaces. Anything over this limit will be truncated and ignored. Make sure you check your application carefully, before submitting it.

The application may use the term "survey" for some questions. Don't worry about the terminology, just follow the on-screen instructions.

## **Further appointments from this competition**

Where a further position in the NICS/NIO is identified during the lifetime of the competition which is considered similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration may be given to filling the position from this competition.

## **Disability Requirements**

Any candidate who because of a disability cannot complete the application form in its current format should contact HRConnect.

## **Order of Merit**

The selection panel will assess the information presented by the candidate at interview against each selection criterion. A score will then be allocated against each selection criterion and a total interview score derived accordingly. Following the interview process, HR Connect will add the score achieved at interview to the score(s) achieved in any other assessment(s) where applicable. Candidates will then be listed in merit order according to their total overall score. Where candidates achieve the same total overall score, the higher weighted element normally the interview score will be used as the method to determine the ranking order amongst candidates. HR Connect will publish the list on the portal and allocate candidates to vacancies

in merit order. The findings of the competition cease to be valid on the day on which a new competition is advertised or 2 years from the date of publication of the main list, whichever is earlier.

### **Feedback**

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

### ***Completed Application Forms should be sent to:***

#### **HRConnect NICS Recruitment Team (Non-Industrial)**

**Post:** HRConnect  
PO Box 1090  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
The Metro Building  
6-9 Donegall Square South  
Belfast  
BT1 9EW  
**Email:** nics@HRConnect.nigov.net  
**Tel:** 0800 1 300 400  
**Fax:** 028 9024 1665

## ASSISTANT STATISTICIAN ANALOGOUS GRADES

*Please note this list is not exhaustive*

Agricultural Economist	District Examiner
Agric Inspector Grade III	Higher Psychologist
Senior Fisheries Officer	Research Assistant
Fire Officer	HPTO (Quantity Surveyor)
Telecomms Tech Engineer I	HPTO (Quantity Surveyor Asst)
Forest Officer II	HPTO Enforcement Manager
Area Inspector	Higher Scientific Officer
Staff Officer	HPTO Safety Advisory Officer
Staff Officer (Accountant)	HPTO (Supplier)
Accountant Staff Officer (CSA)	HPTO (Struct Eng Asst)
(SO) MBA & BATS	Asst Area Transport Manager
Asst Agric Economist	Valuer II
Economist	HPTO (Water Supervisor)
Inspector Group 5	HPTO Projects Officer
HPTO Structural Engineer	HPTO Manager
HPTO (Building Surveyor)	Staff Officer (London)
HPTO (Civil Engineer)	Auditor (SO) MIIA or BATS
HPTO (Civil Engineering Assistant)	Chief Typing Manager
Clerk of Works (HPTO)	Higher Instructional Officer
Estates Superintendent HPTO	Staff Officer (MT)
Fire Officer I	SO Management Trainee
HPTO Graphic Designer	Accommodation Manager/ess
HPTO (Landscape Arch Asst)	Inspector Group 4
Higher Photographic Officer	Assistant Auditor Lg
Librarian	Careers Adviser
Higher Mapping & Charting Officer	Information Officer
HPTO Architect	Investigation Officer
HPTO (Planning Asst)	Senior Law Clerk
HPTO (Supt of Works)	Senior Meat Insp
HPTO Electronic Eng Asst	Systems Analyst
HPTO (Planning Officer)	Supervising Examiner
Curatorial Grade E	Nurse Grade G
HPTO Ferry Manager	

## PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALIST/TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

### UNIT OF COMPETENCE

- 7.1 Developing, updating and sharing specialist/technical knowledge and skills.

#### Overview

This unit is about developing and updating specialist/technical knowledge and skills to meet objectives, improve performance of self, and assist others by sharing this knowledge and skills, abiding by the Professional Codes of Practice. This involves assessing current performance, identifying and prioritising development needs and taking action to meet them.

#### Sub-unit of competence

##### 7.1.1 Professional Issues

- 7.1.1.1 Continuing professional development  
 (a) identifies gaps in knowledge  
 (b) keeps knowledge up to date and expands range
- 7.1.1.2 Promoting a methodological approach and the correct use of statistics and research findings  
 (a) facilitates/encourages development of opportunities to promote the use of Statistics  
 (b) develops statistical skills of colleagues
- 7.1.1.3 Professional Codes of Practice including relevant Protocols  
 (a) participates in National Statistics reviews and is familiar with concepts  
 (b) understands the implications of National Statistics in their work area
- 7.1.1.4 Wider professional issues  
 (a) keeps abreast of statistical/research developments in own and other departments and the wider profession through networks, conferences and other meetings  
 (b) communicates effectively with other members of NISRA and the profession at large

- 7.1.1.5 IT  
(a) demonstrates working knowledge of software and IT relevant to own work area and keeps up-to-date with IT developments  
(b) where appropriate has awareness of software and IT techniques in use in the wider business area

## **UNIT OF COMPETENCE**

7.2 Applying professional/specialist/technical knowledge and skills.

### **Overview**

This unit is about the ability to apply professional/specialist/technical knowledge and skills to achieve agreed work objectives and meet customer requirements

### **Sub-unit of competence**

- 7.2.1 Collection of statistical and/or research data to meet customer requirements
- 7.2.1.1 Knowledge about sources  
(a) has detailed knowledge of data sources in their work area and working knowledge of other data sources in related areas  
(b) has awareness of wider range of sources
- 7.2.1.2 Identifying data fit for purpose  
(a) can identify and assess suitability of other data sources  
(b) selects right data for purpose and manages acquisition of data
- 7.2.1.3 Surveys and data collection  
(a) can develop, design or manage surveys and other data collection techniques  
(b) can develop new uses of existing sources
- 7.2.1.4 Data quality and management  
(a) can assess most appropriate way to store data  
(b) can specify complex validation routines  
(c) can carry out complex data manipulation  
(d) can apply knowledge of wider range of software

- 7.2.1.5 Contract management  
 (a) manages a contract from tendering process through to successful completion ensuring that quality and timetable criteria are met  
 (b) effectively handles all budgetary issues connected with contract management and the need to obtain value for money  
 (c) takes action to correct quality and timetable issues with the contractor  
 (d) develops constructive working relationships with customers and negotiates effectively on straightforward issues
- 7.2.1.6 Liaison with external research community  
 (a) acts effectively as a departmental representative with the external research community  
 (b) provides good briefing on external research

### **Sub-unit of competence**

#### 7.2.2 Analysis and interpretation to meet customer requirements

- 7.2.2.1 Technical awareness and application  
 (a) understands how to apply statistical techniques and their underlying assumptions and limitations. Has broad appreciation of research methods and their application (including relevant software)
- 7.2.2.2 Provision of data and research fit for purpose  
 (a) understands/identifies customer requirements  
 (b) can suggest or recommend the most suitable sources, analyses and research  
 (c) produces appropriate analyses
- 7.2.2.3 Awareness of context  
 (a) understands the policy making process and the role that statistical staff can play  
 (b) takes active steps to keep in touch with current policy and subject issues
- 7.2.2.4 Interpretation  
 (a) knows when to investigate outputs further and offers explanations  
 (b) validates analyses against external sources and research

(c) uses appropriate techniques to draw out main messages, identifying irregularities and discrepancies in data

### **Sub-unit of competence**

7.2.3 Presentation and dissemination of statistical data and/or research findings

7.2.3.1 Explaining statistical concepts and findings  
(a) can present own work or give joint presentations covering work of team to bigger groups or wider ranges, including more senior people  
(b) tailors communication to audience needs

7.2.3.2 Disclosure and confidentiality  
(a) understands disclosure and confidentiality issues and knows the practical implications for own data and other data used

7.2.3.4 Means of effective and appropriate presentation  
(a) can draft articles and reports, choosing the most effective structure and commentary

**Practical Assessment - test paper summary**

The total time for the tests will be around three hours. There will be two papers. The first paper will consist of 60-70 multiple choice questions, to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of basic statistical and social research concepts.

The second paper will contain around 15 questions, to test candidates' knowledge of basic statistical and social research concepts and methodological procedures, and candidates' ability to apply such concepts and procedures in work-related situations. Some questions will involve, in part at least, undertaking calculations (all necessary formulae will be provided). Other questions will involve no calculations whatsoever, and will require candidates to write one or more paragraphs of prose.

A list of the topics covered in the tests, and examples of the type of questions in the papers, will be issued in due course.