

**Candidate
Information
Booklet
Promotion**

IRC113514

Deputy Principal Statistician

**Northern Ireland Statistics and Research
Agency (NISRA)**

Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

**Completed Application Forms
must be returned to HRConnect
no later than 12 noon (UK time)**

on

Friday 6th January 2012

Important information on how HRConnect will communicate with you.

We have been working towards changing our processes to issue electronically as many of our competition communications as possible. We have now completed this piece of work and would therefore advise you that you should check both your internal and external white mail and e mail accounts to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition.

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INTRODUCTION

A promotion board to assess the suitability of internal candidates for promotion to Deputy Principal Statistician will be held by HRConnect on behalf of NISRA, commencing Monday 12th December 2011.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

- 1) be officers in the substantive Assistant Statistician grade;

OR

- 2) a) be officers in substantive Assistant Statistician analogous grades (Annex A refers);

AND

- b) (i) have at least a second class honours degree, which has included training in statistics and/or research methods; or

(ii) have at least a second class honours degree and a Royal Statistical Society award of at least Ordinary Certificate level; or

(iii) have a postgraduate qualification which has included training in statistics and/or research methods;

AND

- c) have at least 2 years experience within 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.

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: please give details of the qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). **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 (but not those employed through an agency), 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.

Application Arrangements

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the eligibility criteria. Applicants from the substantive Assistant Statistician grade will not be required to provide evidence in this respect as belonging to this grade is deemed to be sufficient.

Applicants from the substantive Assistant Statistician grade will only be required to complete eligibility criterion 1 on the application form. Applicants from analogous grades must complete all other parts.

Applicants who apply under criterion 2 should note that:

- **You should ensure that (if applicable) you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.**
- **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.**
- **The Department will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.**
- **If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.**
- **ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post.**

Further information on the Core Competences for this grade is available at the back of this booklet (Annex B).

COMPETITION PROCESS

The competition, following completion of the Application Form, will comprise of the following key elements:

1. Line Manager's Assessment (20%)
2. Practical Assessment (30%)
3. Interview (50%)

All candidates who obtain a pass at the LMA stage will be invited to the Practical Assessment and Interview. The final score will comprise the LMA score (20%), Practical Assessment (30%), and Interview (50%).

There is a total of 420 marks available across all elements. Candidates need to achieve an overall passmark, across all elements of 240 marks, including having met the minimum standards at interview as detailed on page 7.

Application Arrangements

All staff who consider that they meet the eligibility requirements may apply. CVs should not be submitted. Staff who have been formally excluded from promotion selection, e.g. as part of disciplinary proceedings, are not eligible to apply.

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

The Department may decide to progress to the next stage of the competition only those applicants who appear, from the information available, to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability.

For those applicants who apply under Eligibility Criterion 2 an eligibility sift will take place.

Line Manager's Assessment

A Line Manager's Assessment (LMA) must be completed by the candidate's Line Manager for all candidates who apply in order to determine if they can progress to the Practical Assessment and Interview stages. This will also contribute 20% to the candidate's total 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 the Practical Assessment and Interview.

All applicants who have not been interviewed for promotion for a minimum of six years, when the board is convened, will automatically be invited to Practical Assessment and Interview, subject to rule 4.7 of the Career Opportunities and Promotion Policy, if they meet the eligibility requirements. 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 next stage.

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

Practical Assessment

The Practical Assessment will take the form of written tests which have been specifically designed to test candidates' professional knowledge and understanding of basic research/statistical concepts and methodological procedures. **This assessment will contribute 30% to the total competition score.**

The first paper will consist of 58 multiple choice questions, to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of basic statistical and social research concepts. There is only one correct answer for each of the questions. Each correct answer will attract three marks, failure to answer the question will result in zero marks and (please note) incorrect answers will be 'negatively marked'– ie one mark will be deducted for each incorrect answer. The time for the first paper will be one hour.

The second paper will contain 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. The time for the second paper will be two and a quarter hours; it will have two sections, one with eleven questions, and the other with four, longer, questions. The number of marks available for each question will be stated in the paper.

It is anticipated that the practical assessment will take place in Belfast on 16th February 2012. Due to the timescale for this competition, reschedule requests cannot be accommodated.

List of the topics covered in the tests

Sampling; questionnaire wording; descriptive statistics; types of variables; distributions (binomial, normal, t); statistical significance; standard errors; confidence intervals; hypothesis testing (Chi-squared test, Mann-Whitney test, Wilcoxon matched pairs test, z-tests, t-tests); correlation; simple linear regression (ordinary least squares) including R^2 ; moving averages; probability; weighted averages; data validation; disclosure control; designing a research project.

Sample questions for Paper 1 and Paper 2 are provided in Annex C.

The score in this part of the selection process will not be used for shortlisting purposes. All candidates will proceed to the Interview stage of the competition.

Interview

It is intended that interviews will take place week commencing 27th February 2012. Due to the timescale for this competition, reschedule requests cannot be accommodated.

Candidates will be interviewed by a panel consisting of 3 people – two NISRA Grade 7's and a NISRA Grade 6 Statistician – the Grade 6 Statistician will act as Chair. There will be three panels in total.

The interview panels **will not** have access to Performance Management Reports, LMA scores or Practical Assessment scores.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate the following competences at Interview:

Competence	Marks available	Minimum Standard
1. Strategy/ Policy	21	72
2. Services	21	
3. Resources	21	
4. People	21	
5. Information and Communication	21	
6. Programme and Project Management	21	
7. Specialist/Technical Knowledge and Skills		48
7.1.1 Professional issues	21	
7.2.1 Collection of statistical and/or research data to meet customer requirements	21	
7.2.2 Analysis and interpretation to meet customer requirements	21	
7.2.3 Presentation and dissemination of statistical data and/or research findings	21	

More detailed Information on each of these competences is attached at Annex B.

Candidates must achieve the minimum standards of 72 and 48 at interview as shown above.

Competence Based Interviews

Members of the selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas. The same lead questions will be used by the three Interview Panels. At the end of each interview the panels will assess the information presented by the candidate against each competence and a total Interview Score will be derived accordingly.

Candidates will be required to achieve a minimum standard in the P&T competence in its own right and in the other six competences combined.

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that 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 fulfil 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.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences. 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.

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.

Applicants from the substantive Assistant Statistician grade will only be required to complete eligibility criterion 1 on the application form. Applicants from analogous grades must complete all parts.

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. (if applicable)
- 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 competence. It is your *unique* role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.

Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing the application form.
- All **relevant** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to HRConnect. HRConnect will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.
- Only the eligibility sections will be made available to the eligibility sift panel for sifting.
- 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.
- **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.**
- Please note - 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.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Further Appointments From This Competition

Where a further position in the NICS is identified during the lifetime of the competition which has the same duties, requirements etc. 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.

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible. Please check both your internal and external white mail and email accounts to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition.

Merit Order

For those candidates that meet the minimum standards at interview, HRConnect will add the score achieved at Interview (which will represent 50% of the total marks available) to the score in the Practical Assessment, (which will represent 30% of the total marks available) and to the score in the LMA (which will represent 20% of the total marks). Candidates will then be listed in merit order within each panel according to their total overall score. Where candidates within a panel achieve the same total overall score, the Interview score will be used to determine the rank order amongst candidates.

Vacancies will be filled by 'top slicing' the top candidates from each panel with each 'slice' being determined by the ranking of the successful candidates.

Lifetime of competition

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 criterion. 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
2nd Floor
The Metro Building
6-9 Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 9EX

Email: nics@HRConnect.nigov.net

Tel: 0800 1 300 400

Fax: 028 9024 1665

ANNEX A

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	

ANNEX B

1. STRATEGY / POLICY

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

1.1 Contribute to the formulation and implementation of policy.

OVERVIEW

Policy can be defined as the framework of rules or principles which govern the way organisations deal with key issues, eg Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Employment practices, etc. This unit is about the ability to assist with the formulation and implementation of policy and policy changes taking into account the effect of these changes on the work of the organisation.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Maintains a good knowledge and understanding of the policy relevant to the organisation and applies this knowledge to make necessary changes. Advises senior staff on the likely effects of proposed policy changes.
 - (b) Contributes to the formulation and development of policy within the organisation by collection and analysis of relevant data.
 - (c) Provides draft written policy for approval of senior staff.
 - (d) Implements organisational policy by ensuring that own work and the work of their teams is carried out in accordance with that policy.
 - (e) Provides advice and guidance to staff on the effects of policy and policy changes on their work.
 - (f) Monitors work practices and takes corrective action where practices are not being implemented in line with current policies.
- (NOTE: Organisation can be defined at Departmental, Divisional, Branch or Project level.)

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

1.2 Contribute to the formulation of strategy to guide the work of the organisation.

OVERVIEW

Strategy can be defined as long-term plans which guide the organisation in achieving its aims and objectives. This unit is about the ability to provide and analyse information to assist with the formulation of strategy.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Takes account of the organisation's internal and external environment when analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of the current position which may affect the strategy.
 - (b) Identifies key strategic issues and contributes to the creation of strategic objectives.
 - (c) Analyses issues, identifies factors and linkages and provides key information to assist in the drawing up of the strategy.
 - (d) Considers policy, resource and other constraints and assesses them on their impact when formulating strategy.
 - (e) Support the organisational culture that maintains the commitment of staff to the strategy by communicating effectively, addressing concerns and incorporating appropriate contributions.
- (NOTE: Organisation can be defined at Departmental, Divisional, Branch or Project level.)

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

1.3 Develop plans which assist with the implementation of the organisation's strategy.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the ability to develop detailed operational plans (typically one year) resulting in the structured progressive implementation of the organisation's strategy.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Identifies key implementation steps and incorporates these steps into plans.
 - (b) Develops implementation plans taking into account timescales, resources and risks.
 - (c) Obtains senior management agreement to plans prior to action.
 - (d) Communicates plans, checks understanding and gains the commitment of others to take action where appropriate.
- (NOTE: Organisation can be defined at Departmental, Divisional, Branch or Project level.)

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

1.4 Contribute to the review and evaluation of the organisation's performance.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the ability to analyse and evaluate the performance of the organisation against agreed plans. It also covers proposing and making necessary adjustments to plans in order to achieve strategic or operational aims and objectives.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Ensures systems are in place, which enable progress to be monitored against plans in order to achieve strategic or operational aims and objectives.

- (b) Monitors ongoing progress against plans, making adjustment, where necessary.
 - (c) Evaluates output performance against the agreed plan. Identifies areas for action, makes recommendations based on sufficient, reliable information and incorporates this information into the ongoing planning process.
 - (d) Shares relevant knowledge with colleagues.
- (NOTE:** Organisation can be defined at Departmental, Divisional, Branch or Project level.)

2. SERVICES

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

2.1 Maintain service delivery to champion customer requirements and monitor customer satisfaction.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the ability to manage operations bearing in mind the need to keep focused on quality, customer requirements and the need for continuous improvement.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Establishes, defines and reviews objectives, performance measures and customer requirements and ensures that monitoring systems, which utilise the departmental computer system, are in place and are correctly implemented and maintained..
- (b) Accurately evaluates disruptive factors and obstacles to the delivery of an efficient and effective service, and takes appropriate measures immediately, to minimise their effects.
- (c) Continuously monitors and improves operations and products, encouraging innovation, to satisfy customer needs.
- (d) Interacts personally with customers, partners and representatives of society to help understand and respond to their needs.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

2.2 Initiate, plan and implement change and improvement in services and systems to meet customer needs.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the ability to plan and implement changes in activities to improve Branch performance, taking account of the needs of staff and customers.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Communicates information on proposed changes to the appropriate people, with minimum delay and in sufficient detail for them to evaluate proposed impact on services.
- (b) Monitors change/improvement in services, products and systems in accordance with implementation plans and agreed delivery specifications in order to meet customer needs.
- (c) Evaluates the outcomes of change/improvement in services against expectations and previous service records.

3. RESOURCES

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

3.1 Assist in identifying and bid for effective resource allocation for activities.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the ability to identify resources, both financial and physical, required by the Branch and the ability to contribute to a business case in a bid to successfully secure resources.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Supports estimates of costs and benefits with valid relevant information in order to secure effective resource allocation for activities detailed in the Branch plan.
- (b) Makes recommendations which clearly indicate the long-term benefits likely to be achieved from expenditure and which take into account possible future variations in levels of activities.
- (c) Negotiates resources requirements within reasonable timescales in a manner likely to maintain good relationships.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

3.2 Approve, plan, monitor, evaluate and control the use of resources.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the efficient management of resources. It covers monitoring and controlling the way in which these resources are used and making recommendations on how they can be best used in the future.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Produces plans and recommendations which anticipate events, foresee difficulties and clearly indicate what should be achieved from effective use of resources. Plans comply with Departmental policies, customer and legal requirements.
- (b) Maintains accurate and complete records of expenditure and keeps budget within agreed limits.
- (c) Fully assesses and correctly interprets information on use of resources and costs and takes effective action to reduce costs and improve value for money.
- (d) Informs the appropriate people with minimum delay where a budget under or overspend is likely to occur.

4. PEOPLE

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

4.1 Develop teams and individuals to encourage innovation, improve performance and meet business objectives.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about developing the team skills and knowledge to ensure the best possible results at work. It covers identifying the development needs of the team and its members, planning development and using a variety of activities to improve team performance.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Encourages and assists individuals to identify their own learning and development needs in line with Departmental requirement.
- (b) Ensures plans have clear, relevant and realistic development objectives. Reviews and updates plans with staff at regular intervals.
- (c) Makes arrangements for the delivery of appropriate and cost effective training and development taking account of existing knowledge and skill levels and Departmental requirements.
- (d) Reviews progress and performance at regular intervals throughout the appraisal year and uses results to plan future development.
- (e) Provides all staff with equality of opportunity to develop themselves to improve performance to meet business objectives.
- (f) Motivates and enables all staff to participate in improvement activities.
- (g) Provides opportunities that stimulate involvement and supports innovative and creative behaviour.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

4.2 Plan, allocate, monitor and evaluate work carried out by teams, individuals and self.

OVERVIEW

This covers making the best use of the team and its members so that they can achieve work objectives. It covers allocating work, agreeing objectives and setting out plans. It also involves monitoring and evaluating the work of the team and providing feedback to team members on their performance.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Allocates and delegates work to optimise use of available resources and existing competence of staff to ensure that Departmental objectives and priorities are achieved.
- (b) Regularly updates work objectives with the relevant individuals to take into account individual, team and organisational changes. Team and individual objectives and standards of performance are clearly defined, communicated and assessed.
- (c) Gives timely feedback on progress and work performance in sufficient detail, in a manner, level and pace appropriate to the individual/team.

Feedback recognises performance and achievement, offers constructive suggestions and encouragement for improving future performance.
(d) Identifies poor performance in a timely manner and brings it to the attention of the member of staff concerned and agrees an appropriate course of action.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

4.3 Create, maintain and enhance effective working relationships.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about developing, maintaining and enhancing effective working relationship with colleagues, customers and other stakeholders. It also involves minimising the potential for conflict and dealing with conflict should it arise.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Takes time to establish and maintain honest and constructive working relationships with colleagues, customers and other stakeholders. Shows sensitivity towards others, makes and honours promises and undertakings to others.
- (b) Provides opportunities for customers, colleagues and other stakeholders to discuss challenges or issues, encouraging them to offer their views and ideas and assists staff to contribute to the decision-making process.
- (c) Deals with any difference of opinion in ways which avoid offence and maintain respect. Promptly identify conflict with and between staff and take action to resolve it.
- (d) Actions and records employment or customer related matters in compliance with organisational and legal requirements.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

4.4 Assess own development needs and develop self to improve job performance and fulfil future potential.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about continuously developing knowledge and skills so that objectives are met and performance improved. This involves assessing current performance, identifying and prioritising development needs and taking action to meet them.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Establishes current level of competence and identifies development needs linked to business requirements.
- (b) Sets personal development objectives which are realistic, achievable and challenging in terms of anticipated competence and updates these at regular intervals.
- (c) Undertakes appropriate and agreed training and development activities to achieve agreed objectives.
- (d) Leads by example, demonstrating the importance of development by

scheduling time for development activities.

(e) Reviews progress and performance with appropriate people and uses results to inform future development.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

4.5 Select personnel.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about making a significant contribution to selecting the people needed to carry out work activities. It applies to both the external and internal selection of people for permanent and temporary work.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

(a) Estimates personnel needs and supports this with appropriate research.

Identifies the required competences and attributes of individuals and teams.

(b) Ensures that written specifications identify job title, responsibilities, key objectives, competences and other details specific to the branch. Ensures that legal requirements are also met.

(c) Assesses and selects candidates in compliance with the organisation's procedures and legal requirements.

(d) Judges information obtained from each candidate against specified selection criteria and communicates selection recommendations to authorised personnel.

5. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

5.1 Seek, organise, evaluate and communicate information in order to meet customer needs.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the efficient management and communication of information within your areas of responsibility. It is about communicating information in a way that is easily understood, timely and has considered the needs of the audience.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Identifies accurately information requirements, collects information in time to be of use and communicates information in a suitable form to meet customer needs.
- (b) Regularly reviews a variety of sources of information for usefulness, reliability and value for money and takes opportunities to establish and maintain contacts with providers.
- (c) Organises information in an effective form to ensure sufficient detail can be retrieved promptly when required.
- (d) Identifies inadequacies in information and takes appropriate remedial action.
- (e) Actively listens and shows awareness and sensitivity in face-to-face communication.
- (f) Perceptively identifies appropriate timing, language and method of communications to suit the needs of the customer/audience.
- (g) Uses IT systems and software to seek, organise, evaluate and communicate information effectively and to improve the communication process.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

5.2 Analyse information to solve problems and make decisions. Communicate message/information to others in order to influence them and gain their commitment.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about analysing information in order to make sound decisions. It is also about communicating information ensuring that message is accurate and covers all necessary points, ensuring the objective is met.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Recognises and takes opportunities to offer and disseminate information and advice. Gives current, relevant and accurate information.
- (b) Communicates information and advice in a manner and at a level and pace appropriate to the receiver. Supports advice, as appropriate, by reasoned argument and evidence.

- (c) Uses appropriate methods of analysis to search informed and timely decisions on the basis of sufficient, relevant and accurate information.
- (d) Uses persuasive, compelling and well-founded arguments to influence others to accept a different point of view.
- (e) Gives advice and information that is consistent with organisational policy, legal requirements and resource constraints.
- (f) Acknowledges and discusses contributions and views of others in a constructive manner.
- (g) Presents complex issues succinctly orally and in writing capturing all important facts and points.
- (h) Uses information supporting decisions to persuade and influence others and gain their commitment.

6. PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

6.1 Contribute to the development and progression of business cases for programmes and projects within the organisation.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about contribution 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.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Contribute to the identification of key objectives for programmes/projects, which are linked to the organisation's strategic objectives, supporting the prioritisation of the benefits and assessment of associated risks.
- (b) Contributes to establishing the financial business case to support the programme/project.
- (c) Helps to define the performance measures and methods for monitoring, assessing and evaluating the progress of the programme/project in line with standard organisational reviews.
- (d) Supports the communication of the business case and recommendations for agreement with appropriate parties.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

6.2 Supports the management of projects.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the management of a specific project ensuring project management systems are in place.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Ensures the project teams understand the project objectives and the links to the strategic objectives and business case.
- (b) Uses Programme and Project Management techniques to clearly define tasks, prioritise and manage resources and key links between issues.
- (c) Communicates the performance measures and methods for monitoring, assessing and reviewing the progress of the project to the relevant stakeholders, ensuring peer reviews are organised in line with organisational requirements.
- (d) Engages with experts and stakeholders when required as part of the project.

UNIT OF COMPETENCE

6.3 Evaluates the success of a Project.

OVERVIEW

This unit is about the evaluation of the success of a project, ensuring all knowledge is captured and documented to inform future similar projects.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Evaluates key successes and challenges of the project.
- (b) Identifies the key lessons learnt from the project, analysing risks that were realised and their impact.
- (c) Ensures the successes, challenges and lessons learnt are documented and appropriately stored for future use.
- (d) Communicates success, challenges and lessons learnt to the appropriate stakeholders.

7. 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

7.2.3.3 Means of effective and appropriate presentation

- (a) can draft articles and reports, choosing the most effective structure and commentary

Annex C

Sample questions

Paper 1 - Multiple Choice Paper

[You will have approximately one minute to answer each question].

Example 1.

A teacher gave a reading test to her class and computed the mean, median, and mode for the test scores. Which **one** of the following statements cannot be an accurate description of the scores?

- a. The majority of the pupils had scores above the mean.
- b. The majority of the pupils had scores above the median.
- c. The majority of the pupils had scores above the mode.
- d. All of the above must be false statements.

[Answer: b]

Example 2.

A normally distributed set of scores has a mean of 45 and a standard deviation of 8. A z score of 1.25 corresponds to a raw score of

- a. 55.
- b. 10.
- c. 50.
- d. 60.

[Answer: a]

Example 3.

A coin is tossed four times. What is the probability that there are at least two heads?

- a. 0.50
- b. 0.60
- c. 0.67
- d. 0.69

[Answer: d]

Example 4.

A random sample of 500 voters in a constituency included 95 who said they would vote for party C. Which of the following is a 95% confidence interval for the proportion of voters who will vote for party C?

[The standard error of a sample proportion p is estimated by $\sqrt{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})/n}$ where \hat{p} is the observed value of the proportion and n is the sample size.]

- a. (0.19, 0.2075)
- b. (0.1556, 0.2244)
- c. (0.1725, 0.2075)

[Answer: b]

Second paper

Example 1.

[You will have approximately 7 minutes to answer this question].

Last year your statistical press release said that 72% of respondents were happy with the Department's performance overall. This year the release says that 74% are happy. Your press office has 'Department strikes the right note: public satisfaction up' as its proposed press release headline for the Minister's statement on the figures. You know that the sample last year was 1,009 and this year 920 people responded. (Simple random sampling was used in both years). How do you advise the press office?

[A good answer would state that the headline is misleading because of the margin of error (approximately +/- 3%) of the estimated proportion of people who are happy with the Department's performance. It is therefore not possible to conclude that the proportion of respondents who are happy with the Department's performance has increased.]

Example 2.

[You would have approximately 15 minutes to answer this question].

The Chief Executive of NISRA asks you to provide an in-depth report on the experiences that NISRA statisticians have had of training and development: he wants a report within three months. Outline how you would go about this task.

[A good answer might be along the following lines:

(1) Identify existing sources of information, e.g. HRConnect and Corporate Services Branch, to obtain statistics on courses attended by grade, and how staff rated these.

(2) Obtain relevant information from the most recent NISRA Staff Attitude Survey.

(3) Identify information gaps and undertake appropriate qualitative and quantitative research to fill these gaps.

Consider convening focus groups (probably grade-specific), to identify the issues (which would likely include the extent and quality of on-the-job training, the availability of courses, the relevance of courses, and funding). Devise and administer a questionnaire. Discuss whether this would go to all NISRA statisticians or a sample (explaining why), and whether you would opt for paper, online, telephone or face-to-face. Mention the kind of questions you would ask e.g. extent of satisfaction on scale of 1 to 5 with various aspects of training and development; open questions on what needs changed; background information on grade, DFP/outposted etc.

(4) Present results in written report with an executive summary.]