

FOI DOF/2026-0426

Request

Re: competition IRC306697 – Grade 6.

Thank you for your response to FOI DOF/2026-292. With reference to competition IRC306699, I would like to request the following additional information in relation to the use of the Grade 6 General Service Competition; management of Grade 6 temporary promotion arrangements and the classification of vacancies as “specialist” posts.

At the date of this request:

1. What is the current lowest merit position reached for appointments from competition IRC306699?
2. How many appointments have been made from IRC306699 to date?
3. How many candidates currently remain on the IRC306699 merit list?
4. How many staff are currently serving on temporary promotion at Grade 6 level across the NICS?
5. Of these temporary promotions, how many of these have been in place under 6 months; 6 to 12 months; 12 to 24 months; more than 24 months.
6. How many current Grade 6 temporary promotions have been extended more than once?
7. How many current Grade 6 temporary promotions are covering substantively vacant posts?
8. For current Grade 6 temporary promotions covering substantively vacant posts, how many of those posts have been considered for filling from IRC306699?
9. Where substantively vacant Grade 6 posts occupied by temporary promotees have not been filled from IRC306699, what reasons have been recorded?
10. What criteria are used to determine whether a Grade 6 vacancy should be treated as a General Service vacancy suitable for IRC306699 or as a specialist vacancy requiring a separate competition?
11. Since the creation of IRC306699, how many Grade 6 vacancies have been classified as specialist?

12. For each category of Grade 6 specialist vacancy, please identify the qualification, professional status, eligibility requirement or essential skill that prevented the vacancy from being filled from IRC306699.
13. What approval process is required before a department can classify a Grade 6 vacancy as specialist rather than suitable for filling from a General Service merit list?
14. Since IRC306699 was created, have any appointments been made from the list other than in strict merit order? If so, how many, and what was the recorded reason?

DoF response

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

1. What is the current lowest merit position reached for appointments from competition IRC306699?

The current lowest merit position reached for appointments from competition IRC306699 is 44.

2. How many appointments have been made from IRC306699 to date?

As at the date of the request, a total of 43 appointments have been made from competition IRC306699. Please note that NICSHR regards an appointment to have been completed when a successful candidate takes up post on their confirmed start date.

3. How many candidates currently remain on the IRC306699 merit list?

A total of 57 candidates currently remain to be placed from the merit list for competition IRC306699.

4. How many staff are currently serving on temporary promotion at Grade 6 level across the NICS?

The Department of Finance holds some data centrally with regard to NICS Temporary Promotion arrangements, such as the recorded reason and overall duration etc., however the management and recording of temporary promotions is the responsibility of individual business areas in Departments.

As at the end of June 2026 (the most recent figures available at the date of the request) a total of **66** staff across the NICS are on Temporary Promotion at General Service Grade 6. Of this total, 4 General Service Grade 6 TPs are within the Department of Finance.

5. Of these temporary promotions, how many of these have been in place under 6 months; 6 to 12 months; 12 to 24 months; more than 24 months

The table below provides the duration (in the categories you specified) of NICS General Service Grade 6 Temporary Promotion arrangements as at the end of June 2026 (the most recent figures available at the date of the request).

Temporary Promotion Duration	No. of Staff (General Service Only)
Under 6 Months	13
6-12 Months	17
12-24 Months	13
More than 24 Months	23
Total	66

Source: HRConnect Month End June 2026

6. How many current Grade 6 temporary promotions have been extended more than once?

NICS Temporary Promotion (TP) data held centrally by the Department of Finance does not allow the number of TP extensions to be identified. Following a manual data gathering exercise within the Department of Finance business areas, it is possible to provide information in relation to the 4 Temporary Promotion arrangements at General Service Grade 6 within DoF. Of the 4 TP arrangements, 3 have been extended on more than one occasion.

You may wish to contact other NICS Departments directly to request information.

7. How many current Grade 6 temporary promotions are covering substantively vacant posts?

Temporary promotions can be for several different business reasons, such as covering vacant posts, special exercises, etc, and the HR System allows line management to select a reason from a pre-defined set of values, of which “vacant post” is an option. It may be helpful to note that 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.

As at the end of June 2026 (the most recent figures available at the time of the request) **30** Temporary Promotion arrangements at General Service Grade 6 across the NICS had a reason recorded as Vacant Post by the relevant line management. Of the 30 TP arrangements 3 are within the Department of Finance.

8. For current Grade 6 temporary promotions covering substantively vacant posts, how many of those posts have been considered for filling from IRC306699?

9. Where substantively vacant Grade 6 posts occupied by temporary promotees have not been filled from IRC306699, what reasons have been recorded?

8.&9. It is not possible to tell from NICS Temporary Promotion (TP) data held centrally by DoF how many of the TP arrangements identified at Q7 above have been considered for filling from Competition IRC306699. Following a manual data gathering exercise within DoF it is possible to provide information in relation to the 3 Temporary Promotion arrangements at General Service Grade 6 within DoF which had a reason recorded as Vacant Post by the relevant line management. Of these three TP arrangements, none have been considered for filling from Competition IRC306699 as they all require specific skills/specialist eligibility requirements not covered by Competition IRC306699

You may wish to contact other NICS Departments directly to request information.

10. What criteria are used to determine whether a Grade 6 vacancy should be treated as a General Service vacancy suitable for IRC306699 or as a specialist vacancy requiring a separate competition?

The Candidate Information Booklet for Competition IRC306699 outlines the key responsibilities and main duties of roles which are suitable to be filled from that competition as well as the specific eligibility criteria that were necessary for the competition.

When a Business Area needs to fill a Grade 6 General Service vacancy and submits a Funding and Headcount form (authorised in line with the relevant departmental approvals) to NICS HR, Competition IRC306699 will be considered unless the Business Area indicates that the vacancy requires specific skills/specialist eligibility requirements not covered by Competition IRC306699 which are deemed essential.

In such cases, the vacancy will be filled from a live competition for the same grade and discipline with the same eligibility criteria and duties and responsibilities if one exists OR if not, the vacancy will be referred to the Recruitment team to design a new competition to meet the specific skills/specialist eligibility requirements which are deemed essential.

11. Since the creation of IRC306699, how many Grade 6 vacancies have been classified as specialist?

Since Competition IRC306699 was launched (January 2025), a total of 15 Grade 6 General Service vacancies have been added to the NICS HR caseload which needed to be filled by separate competitions designed to meet the specific skills/specialist eligibility requirements that those particular vacancies required.

12. For each category of Grade 6 specialist vacancy, please identify the qualification, professional status, eligibility requirement or essential skill that prevented the vacancy from being filled from IRC306699

Of the 15 Grade 6 General Service vacancies which required specific skills/specialist eligibility requirements, 9 have already been advertised or filled. The eligibility criteria for those are set out in the table below.

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
Vacancies 1-3	Applicants must, by the closing date for applications: 1 Have a minimum of 2 years' experience of absorbing / grasping key climate change and / or science and/or innovation issues quickly; and applying innovative thought, lead work across functional boundaries to develop policy and implementation options collaboratively, whilst maintaining a focus on achieving key deliverables in a pressured and rapidly evolving environment. AND 2 Have a minimum of 2 years' senior management* experience of successfully leading and managing a high performing team in complex operational and/or policy areas, setting the strategic direction, managing change and improving service delivery, in addition to the effective management of resources and performance to deliver against key organisational outcomes, AND 3 Have a minimum of 2 years' senior leadership level experience demonstrating your effectiveness at providing expert and detailed advice to senior colleagues**, or taking decisions personally, on strategic issues concerning the organisation. AND 4 Have a minimum of 2 years' experience at senior management* level of effective and collaborative partnership working, demonstrating the ability to establish partnership networks, engage, manage and influence senior internal and external stakeholders to successfully achieve strategic outcomes. AND 5 Hold a relevant accredited Programme or Project Management qualification*** or be willing to achieve one within one year of appointment. *Senior management - defined as experience gained at the top management levels of an organisation; reporting directly to a Chief Executive or the Board of an organisation; a member of the senior management board of an organisation; in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, working at Grade 7 level.

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
	Senior colleagues - defined as advice to a Chief Executive or a Board in an organisation; in the Northern Ireland Civil Service this would include providing advice to Ministers, Senior Officials and Departmental Boards. *Examples of a relevant Programme or Project Management qualification include: • PRINCE II Project Management • Managing Successful Programmes • Management of Risk
Vacancy 4	Applicants must have, by the closing date for applications: 1. At least two years' direct experience, gained within the last five years, of managing the processes involved in planning, monitoring and controlling public expenditure, for example the NI Budget, Estimates / Budget Bill or In-year Monitoring processes; AND 2. At least two years' direct and personal experience at a senior management level* of providing effective decision making in a complex** organisational environment; AND 3. At least two years' direct and personal experience at a senior management level* of successfully managing working relationships with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders operating at senior levels within their organisations. *Senior Management is defined as having a leadership role that has personal ownership and responsibility for the delivery of the service provided. This would typically be equivalent to responsibilities at a Principal Officer / Grade 7 level within the NI Civil Service. **Complex, in this context, is defined as an organisation delivering a wide range of objectives, which requires a high level of collaboration with multiple categories of stakeholders, including politicians.
Vacancy 5	Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
	1. At least 3 years' senior management* experience of successfully dealing with serious organised crime and financial investigations. AND 2. At least 3 years' senior management* experience of successfully leading and managing multi-disciplinary teams to deliver against objectives. AND 3. At least 2 years' senior management* experience leading a programme of change. AND 4. At least 2 years' senior management* experience of successfully collaborating and partnering with other stakeholders to deliver outcomes. AND 5. Possess a full current driving licence to enable the postholder to drive in Northern Ireland in order to fulfil their duties in full. The following clarification is provided: * Senior management is defined as experience gained at the top management levels of an organisation e.g., as a board member; reporting directly to a Chief Executive or a Board; or holding a post equivalent to that of a Grade 7/A within the Northern Ireland Civil Service/Northern Ireland Office.
Vacancy 6	Applicants must demonstrate by the closing date for applications that they: 1. Hold a degree in Engineering in an area relating to Building Engineering Services (Mechanical/Electrical) or equivalent* and have full registration as a Chartered Engineer with the Engineering Council. AND 2. At least 3 years' experience of having successfully discharged senior management responsibilities** either in: a) the design, operation or project management of the delivery of engineering building services which are likely to be found

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
	in a complex estate such as that found in health and social care e.g. medical gas installations, non-domestic heating systems, large scale domestic hot and cold water systems, electrical distribution systems, non-domestic building ventilation systems, life safety systems, low carbon sustainable engineering & energy management, medical device management and decontamination sterile services departments. OR b) the successful provision of professional advice in relation to estates infrastructure safety, medical device safety, sustainable development policy and best practice. AND 3. Have a successful track record of leading a team in either the delivery of, or the provision of expert advice in, a complex operational environment*** within a robust governance structure. AND 4. Have a successful track record of managing a team and delivering demonstrable and measurable improvement to service or patient safety outcomes. *Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant professional qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated. Relevant or equivalent professional qualification: 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 a well-informed decision can be made. Equivalent professional membership: give details of the professional membership held and reasons why you consider it to be equivalent to the membership required. The onus is on you to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that a well-informed decision can be made. Please note that the successful candidate must remain Registered/Chartered whilst in the post. Currently DoH refund professional fees. Checks will be completed with the appropriate professional body to confirm membership status. You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your professional membership at interview so please ensure you have these readily available.

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
	Discharging **senior management responsibilities includes providing detailed advice on or taking decisions personally or being party to decisions affecting, strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which an individual is working either as an employee or advisor. *** A complex operational environment may include one or more of the following: • A project/programme involving multiple disciplines and stakeholders; or • The development of a policy initiative that has impacted significantly on the improvement of service delivery or patient safety outcomes.
Vacancy 7	Applicants must demonstrate by the closing date for applications that they: 1) Are currently a chartered Quantity Surveyor* Please note that the successful candidate must remain Chartered whilst in the post. Currently DoH refund professional fees. Checks will be completed with the appropriate professional body to confirm membership status. AND 2) At least 3 years' experience of having successfully discharged senior management responsibilities** in an organisation involved in the construction sector with experience in either: a) the successful delivery of new build or refurbishment projects in line with modern methods of construction procurement and best practice; OR b) the provision of advice to internal/external stakeholders in relation to construction procurement policy and best practice. AND 3) Have demonstrable knowledge of procurement legislation, policy, and best practice as it applies to construction procurement across the public sector AND 4) Have a successful track record of managing a team and delivering demonstrable and measurable service benefits and improvements to customers.

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
	*Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant professional qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated. Equivalent professional memberships: give details of the professional membership held, and reasons why you consider it to be equivalent to the membership required. The onus is on you to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that a well-informed decision can be made. You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your professional membership at interview so please ensure you have these readily available. Discharging **senior management responsibilities includes providing detailed advice on, or taking decisions personally or being party to decisions affecting, strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which an individual is working either as an employee or advisor.
Vacancy 8	Applicants must, by the closing date for applications: 1. Be accredited in the Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) methodology to Practitioner Level OR PRINCE 2 or equivalent. AND 2. Have a minimum of 2 years' senior management* experience of successfully implementing significant policy or strategy that delivered organisational or corporate objectives. AND 3. Have a minimum of 2 years' senior management* experience of successfully leading the governance and implementation of a significant programme of work and managing a high performing team. AND 4. Have a minimum of 2 years' experience at senior management* level of effective and collaborative partnership working, demonstrating the ability to establish partnership networks, as well as engage, manage and influence senior internal and external stakeholders to successfully achieve strategic outcomes. AND

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
	5. Have a valid UK driving licence which enables the post holder to drive in the UK *Senior management level includes taking decisions personally on strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation within which the individual is working. In a Civil Service context this would be expected to involve direct engagement with Ministers and Senior Officials and would normally be at Grade 7 level or above. 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. You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your qualifications at assessment so please ensure you have these readily available.
Vacancy 9	Applicants must demonstrate by the closing date for applications that they: 1) Are a current Registered Architect, Chartered Engineer, or Chartered Project Manager in a construction discipline.* AND 2) At least 3 years' experience of having successfully discharged senior management responsibilities** in a multi-disciplinary organisation (in either the voluntary, private or public sectors) which has been engaged in the design, procurement and construction of Major Complex Construction Projects*** AND 3) Have demonstrable knowledge of procurement legislation, policy, and best practice as it applies to design and construction procurement across the public sector. AND 4) Have a successful track record of managing a team and delivering demonstrable and measurable service benefits and improvements to customers. *Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant professional qualifications considered by the

Vacancies	Eligibility Criteria
	selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated. Relevant or equivalent professional qualification: 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 a well-informed decision can be made. Equivalent professional memberships: give details of the professional membership held, and reasons why you consider it to be equivalent to the membership required. The onus is on you to provide the panel with details of the professional membership so that a well-informed decision can be made. Please note that the successful candidate must remain Registered/Chartered whilst in the post. Currently DoH refund professional fees. Checks will be completed with the appropriate professional body to confirm membership status. You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your professional membership at interview so please ensure you have these readily available. **Discharging senior management responsibilities includes providing detailed advice on, or taking decisions personally or being party to decisions affecting, strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which an individual is working either as an employee or advisor. * **Major Complex Construction Procurement Projects are defined as construction of high value (in excess of £5 million), technically complex, high risk and important to the achievement of the organisation's key objectives and/or effective operations.

For the remaining 6 General Service Grade 6 vacancies, the competitions are at early stages in the design process and eligibility criteria have not yet been finalised, however, all will require some additional eligibility criteria over and above those demanded by Competition IRC306699.

13. What approval process is required before a department can classify a Grade 6 vacancy as specialist rather than suitable for filling from a General Service merit list?

The need for a Grade 6 vacancy to be filled by a separate competition designed to meet specific skills/specialist eligibility requirements is identified by Business Areas within Departments; they are the experts in the

requirements needed to perform the duties of the post effectively. The Candidate Information Booklet is designed in consultation with the relevant Business Area and is subject to consultation with TUS before the vacancy is advertised.

14. Since IRC306699 was created, have any appointments been made from the list other than in strict merit order? If so, how many, and what was the recorded reason?

All offers to candidates from the merit list for Competition IRC306699 have been made in strict merit order.

However, three candidates deferred their start dates for personal reasons, which means that their date of appointment may have been later than a candidate who was lower in merit order.