

**Candidate  
Information  
Booklet  
Promotion**

**IRC225600**

**Grade 7  
General Service Promotion Board  
Northern Ireland Civil Service**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be returned to  
HRConnect no later than 12  
noon (UK time)  
on  
*Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018***

Applicants are advised to download and  
keep a copy of this booklet for future  
reference - it will no longer be available  
here after the above date.

**IMPORTANT - E-mail communication between HRConnect and you**

During the competition HRConnect will issue all correspondence via email to the work email address held on your HRConnect employee record. You should therefore check your email account regularly to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. You are responsible for ensuring that this email address is correct and kept up-to-date.

If your email address changes throughout the lifetime of this competition please ensure you notify HRConnect as soon as possible. To update your email address please call HRConnect on 0800 1300 400 or email HRConnect at [nics@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:nics@hrconnect.nigov.net) (if emailing please ensure that you include your employee number and competition reference number – IRC225600).

All correspondence is automatically sent to your work email address. If you are out of the office, for example on sickness absence/annual leave, and are applying for this competition you should make arrangements with your line manager to ensure that all important documentation is accessed and forwarded to you at home.

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## INTRODUCTION

This Candidate Information Booklet details the arrangements for the Grade 7 General Service Promotion Competition. Please fully read this document in advance of submitting your application form. Central Trade Union Side has been consulted.

Grade 7 is an important grade in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and makes a significant contribution to the development and delivery of policy, setting direction, engaging people and delivering results across the NICS.

**The closing date for receipt of applications is 12 noon on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018.**

**Note: Late applications will not be accepted.**

For further information on the policy governing this assessment please refer to the Career Opportunities and Promotions policy. Section 4 of the policy is specific to General Service Promotion Boards. This policy is referred to throughout this candidate information booklet and can be accessed via the HRConnect portal.

- Click on 'HR Handbook'
- Click on 'HR Policy A-Z'
- Click on 'Career Opportunities and Promotion (1.05)'

If you do not have access to the HRConnect portal you can also access the policy on the following website.

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/NICS%20HR%20Handbook%201%2005%20Career%20Opportunities%20and%20Promotion%20Policy%208.pdf>

**Thank you for your interest in this assessment.**

## ELIGIBILITY

This competition is open to staff in all disciplines in the next lower grade substantively (i.e. Deputy Principal (DP) and analogous) who consider that they meet the competences for Grade 7 at **Annex A**. Before making an application please consider how your knowledge, skills and experience relate to these competences.

A list of analogous grades is attached at **Annex B**.

Non-permanent staff employed directly by the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) on a fixed term contract or on a temporary basis are eligible to apply. However those candidates listed as suitable for promotion but not posted before the non-permanent contract expires will be removed from the list.

Former NI Legal Service Commission (NILSC) staff may apply for NICS General Service promotion boards, up to two grades higher than the current substantive grade. These protected terms will apply to staff that were members of NILSC on 31 March 2015 and transferred under TUPE arrangements to NI Legal Services Agency on 1 April 2015. The protections will no longer apply should the member of staff be substantively promoted in the intervening period i.e. since 1 April 2015.

All staff who were in the NI Court Service at all grades below Grade 7 on 11 April 2010, (i.e. the day before devolution) who consider that they meet the specified selection criteria/competences are eligible to apply. It should be noted that this protected term will no longer apply to any staff member who has been promoted in the intervening period i.e. since 12 April 2010.

All staff who consider that they meet the above eligibility requirements and want to apply can complete an application form online.

To apply please go to [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk) and click on 'Internal Opportunities and Secondments' tab.

### **Analogous Grades**

Before applying, staff in analogous grades should ensure they fully explore the implications of promotion to Grade 7 should they be successful and change discipline. This may in some cases impact on pay/allowances paid.

## THE SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will assess applicants against the competencies for Grade 7. General guidance on preparing for the assessment process is included at **Annex C**.

The assessment will comprise of the following key elements:

- Stage 1 - Assessment tests
- Stage 2 - E-Tray exercise
- Stage 3 - Interview

### Online Assessment Tests

A balanced portfolio of bespoke online assessment tests will be used to determine suitability for appointment. These tests are complementary and provide a standardised and objective method of selecting for the role. The tests are designed specifically to test the competences and aptitudes required for effective performance at Grade 7 level and are relevant to a wide range of Grade 7 roles. Particular effort has been made to ensure that the tests are fair. The test battery comprises 4 tests as detailed below.

**Please be aware that the online assessment tests from this competition may be used for other competitions at this grade (including non-general service competitions). Where it is decided to use the tests in another competition at this grade, and you subsequently apply, your score will carry forward from this competition. Your score will be valid for a 12 month period from the date the result of your test is issued for this competition and you will not have the option to complete the test again during this period.**

### Stage 1 - Assessment Tests

The first testing assessment stage will take place at a testing venue and consists of 3 online tests as follows:-

***Management Decisions*** – In the Grade 7 role you will have to make a wide range of decisions including those relating to the projects you are working on and the variety of people you work with, such as your staff, managers, colleagues in other organisations and the public. In this exercise you will consider 15 situations that have arisen in fictional government departments, and for each scenario you will be presented with five possible responses to the situation. Your task is to rate, using a four-point rating scale, how appropriate each response is for the situation described. You don't require any knowledge of the work areas but will use your judgement to establish how an officer working at this level should proceed. You will have 40 minutes to complete the task.

**Analysing Information** – Grade 7s have to work with a variety of data such as financial information, survey results and resource allocations. In this task you will be presented with a range of fictional data that reflects the type of numerical information Grade 7s have to make decisions about. In some cases the task may be to make estimates or calculations, in others it may involve evaluating the information, making decisions about whether the information you have meets your needs, or what additional information you require. There are 25 questions with multiple choice answers and you will have 40 minutes to complete them. You are allowed to use a calculator for this test though some of the questions will not require the use of the calculator.

**Critical Thinking** – The clear and precise interpretation of written information is required across Grade 7 roles and this can take many forms including work with policies, guidance, legal and technical documents or correspondence with a wide range of stakeholders. In this test you will be presented with a variety of written passages that relate to the type of written information a Grade 7 might have to deal with. Each passage will have one or more questions related to it and your task will be to pick the most appropriate answer from a set of multiple-choice options.

In total you will be asked to complete 25 questions and will have 40 minutes in which to do this.

This battery of tests will be used to shortlist the number of candidates going through to the second stage of the assessment process. Candidates will be required to meet a minimum standard in each of the 3 tests in order to be considered suitable for promotion to G7. However, the number of candidates being brought through to the second stage assessment will be approximately 2.5 times the number to be interviewed.

Familiarisation Materials for Stage 1 will be available when you receive your invitation to the first stage assessment. The Familiarisation Materials explain the structure of each assessment and how to record your answers and navigate around the test. These materials will also provide examples of the type of question you will be presented with in the live test. You will be able to revisit these materials as many times as you want to before taking the test. We strongly recommend that all candidates make use of the Familiarisation materials prior to taking the live test.

## **Stage 2 – E-tray exercise**

The second stage assessment consists of an e-tray exercise. Designed specifically to measure the type of day-to-day issues that a Grade 7 would address, this work simulation puts you in the role of a Grade 7 in a fictional NICS department. Some information will be available on paper but much of the exercise, including receiving incoming e-mails and recording your responses, takes place on computer. The exercise assesses the NICS G7

competencies and is based on duties common to a range of G7 roles across different NICS departments. You will complete several tasks during the session, including producing a document, evaluating information and making decisions and recommendations on it.

You will have 2 hours to read the exercise material and complete the tasks.

This test will be used to shortlist the number of candidates going through to the final interview stage of the assessment process. Candidates will be required to meet a minimum standard in this assessment in order to be considered suitable for promotion to G7. However, the number of candidates being brought to the third stage assessment will be approximately 2.5 times the number of vacancies to be filled.

You will be sent a link for the Familiarisation materials if you pass Stage 1 and are invited to complete the Stage 2 assessment. The Stage 2 materials will outline the structure and content of the assessment and provide an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the way you can record your answers and navigate around the various locations in the assessment. Again, we strongly recommend that you make use of the Familiarisation Materials prior to taking the live assessment.

### **Stage 3 - Interview**

The final stage of the assessment process will be a criterion based interview. Candidates will be interviewed by a panel consisting of 3 members chaired by a Grade 3. Panel members will not have access to application forms, performance reports or assessment scores. Candidates will be asked one lead question against 6 competencies from the Competency Framework as follows:-

- Seeing the Big Picture
- Making Effective Decisions
- Leading and Communicating
- Collaborating and Partnering
- Delivering Value for Money
- Managing a Quality Service

Panel members may also use supplementary questions following each lead question to clarify and fully understand answers to the lead questions. Candidates will be required to meet the minimum standard for interview in order to be considered suitable for appointment to Grade 7.

## **Overall Assessment Scoring**

Following the interview process, HRConnect will add the score achieved at interview to the scores achieved at the online assessment tests and e-tray.

The weighting of each assessment stage towards your final mark will be as follows –

- Stage 1: Assessment tests – 36%
- Stage 2: E-Tray exercise – 24%
- Stage 3: Interview – 40%

## **Line Managers Assessment**

Given that there is a balanced portfolio of tests as part of the assessment process it has been agreed with CTUS that the LMA is removed on a trial basis the current round of General Service competitions. Therefore a LMA will not form part of the assessment process for this promotion competition. As a direct result, the 6-year rule does not apply to this competition. All eligible staff can therefore apply for this competition.

## **Equalisation**

The NICS uses a framework to equalise promotion opportunities across general service promotion competitions. The objective of this framework is to provide individuals with equal access to promotion opportunities at the relevant grade, irrespective of the department in which they are working. The co-ordination and monitoring of these arrangements is undertaken by HRConnect and NICS HR, in consultation with CTUS.

In accordance with the equalisation arrangements, HRConnect will publish departmental lists on the portal. The findings of the competition cease to be valid on the day on which a new competition is advertised, or two years from the date the last department publishes their main list.

Further information regarding the equalisation process can be found in sections 4.41 and 4.42 of the Career Opportunities and Promotions policy available on HRConnect.

## **Offers of Promotion**

Successful candidates, who refuse a post offered to them without giving an acceptable reason to NICS HR, will have their names removed from the list.

## **Assessment Availability**

It is estimated that the timing of the assessment will be as follows:-

Stage 1 - Assessment Tests will take place from w/c 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

Stage 2 - E-tray assessment will take place from w/c 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018.

Stage 3 - Interviews will take place from w/c 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Candidates will be asked on their application form for dates when they will not be available. If applicants work on a part-time basis they should also provide details of non-working days. HR Connect will endeavour to take this information into consideration when scheduling assessments.

**Reschedule requests will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances (e.g. seriously ill dependant or a death in the family). Please note that assessments will not be rescheduled due to work commitments.** You should also note that in circumstances where a request to reschedule is accepted you will be rescheduled to the next available date. This may be before your original date, and therefore the 10 days notice may not apply.

If candidates need to request a reschedule they must e-mail HR Connect with the reason for their reschedule request. In the e-mail subject line please insert the assessment reference number, your Department and the words "reschedule request". All reschedule requests will be forwarded to Corporate HR for consideration and decision.

If having received your invitation, you decide to withdraw from the assessment, please inform HR Connect as soon as possible, ideally within 48 hours of receiving your invitation. This timeframe will assist us in the timely rescheduling of your assessment.

## **Feedback**

Candidates will automatically be provided with feedback on their performance at each stage of the assessment process, i.e. following the online test, e-tray and interviews. There is therefore no need to request feedback separately at any stage of the competition.

Verbal feedback will not be provided.

## **Appeals**

All appeals will be processed in accordance with the current appeals process which can be found in the NICS Career Opportunities and Promotions policy.

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

As an Equal Opportunity Employer we wish to ensure that all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in a selection exercise. We also wish to be able to consider any reasonable adjustments you may require should you be offered an appointment.

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

Please familiarise yourself with the assessment process for this competition as outlined in this Booklet. If you require any form of reasonable adjustment to complete any assessments outlined, please note this in the box provided on your application form. Please provide full details of the adjustment required.

Evidence to support your request, if available, should be sent to HRConnect at [NICS@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:NICS@hrconnect.nigov.net) as soon as possible following submission of your application. Please mark your correspondence with the competition reference number and title it 'Supporting evidence for reasonable adjustment request'. Please note if your application is progressed to the next stage of the competition, your adjustment request will be passed to the nominated assessor who may contact you directly to discuss your requirements.

## **Transgender Requirements**

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

**Applications should be submitted via [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk) (Internal Opportunities and Secondments) by 12noon on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018.**

**Note: Late applications will not be accepted.**

## Contact details

If you have any queries regarding the assessment process please contact HRConnect.

**Email:** [NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net](mailto:NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net)

**Tel:** 0800 1 300 400

**Fax:** 028 9024 1665

DOJ staff can contact HRConnect on the following details:

**Email:** [NIO@HRConnect.nigov.net](mailto:NIO@HRConnect.nigov.net)

**Tel:** 0800 1 300 500

**Fax:** 028 9024 3620

## **ANNEX A – NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

The NICS Competency Framework can be found by following the attached link:

[https://portal.hrconnect.nigov.net/portal/page/portal/NICS\\_PG/nics\\_hrhandbook/Policies/10.%20Performance%20Management/10.01%20Performance%20Management/NICS%20Competency%20Framework%202014.%20CP%20updated%20Sept%202017.pdf](https://portal.hrconnect.nigov.net/portal/page/portal/NICS_PG/nics_hrhandbook/Policies/10.%20Performance%20Management/10.01%20Performance%20Management/NICS%20Competency%20Framework%202014.%20CP%20updated%20Sept%202017.pdf)

## ANNEX B – GRADES ANALOGOUS TO DP

|                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|
| NON Deputy Principal 001 119                          |
| NON Agricultural Inspector Grade II 015 117           |
| NON Senior Agricultural Economist 013 119             |
| NON Accountant (DP) 001 122                           |
| NON Deputy Principal Information Officer 081 119      |
| NON Senior Scientific Officer 163 155                 |
| NON ICT Level 6 170 119                               |
| NON Spto (Civil Engineering Assistant) 036 133        |
| NON Forest Officer I 067 137                          |
| NON Deputy Chief Fisheries Officer 065 117            |
| NON Spto (Planning Officer) 133 133                   |
| NON Spto (Landscape Architect) 091 133                |
| NON Valuer I 189 131                                  |
| NON Environmental Health Officer 055 119              |
| NON Environmental Policy Advisor 061 119              |
| NON Deputy Economist 049 119                          |
| NON Accountant (DP) (SSA) 001 126                     |
| NON Deputy Principal (SSA) 001 111                    |
| NON Deputy Principal (CMED) 001 109                   |
| NON Curatorial Grade D 147 145                        |
| NON Spto (Architect) 019 133                          |
| NON Senior Psychologist 143 073                       |
| NON Deputy Chief Trading Standards Officer 195 132    |
| NON Spto Chief Enf Officer 159 133                    |
| NON Deputy Chief Driving Examiner 141 119             |
| NON Deputy Chief Examiner (SPTO) 141 133              |
| NON Spto (Civil Engineer) 035 133                     |
| NON Spto Transport Planner 182 133                    |
| NON Spto (M and E Engineering Assistant) 112 133      |
| NON Chief Clerk of Works (SPTO) 039 133               |
| NON Spto Electrical Engineer 119 133                  |
| NON Spto (Architectural Assistant) 020 133            |
| NON SPTO Technical Support (Capital Projects) 199 133 |
| NON Spto Inform Manager and Tech Manager 082 133      |
| NON Spto (Quantity Surveyor) 153 133                  |
| NON Spto (Structural Engineering Assistant) 178 133   |
| NON Spto (Structural Engineer) 177 133                |
| NON Spto (M and E Engineer) 111 133                   |
| NON Spto (Quantity Surveying Assistant) 154 133       |
| NON Spto Health and Safety Adviser 166 133            |
| NON Legal Assistant 171 124                           |
| NON Chief Law Clerk 099 119                           |
| NON Deputy Principal Statistician 048 119             |
| NON Auditor DP MIIA or BATS 001 264                   |
| NON Auditor DP (CIA or equivalent) 001 264            |
| NON Auditor DP (CMIIA or equivalent) 001 266          |

|                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|
| NON Senior Map and Charting Officer 108 163         |
| NON Fire Surveyor (Spto) 063 133                    |
| NON Spto (Building Surveyor) 031 133                |
| NON Spto (Supplies) 175 133                         |
| NON Nurse Planning Adviser 122 119                  |
| NON Senior Medical Enforcement Officer (DP) 159 119 |
| NON Pharmaceutical Officer 129 118                  |
| NON Auditor DP MIA and BATS 001 266                 |
| NON Spto Decontamination Engineer 060 133           |
| NON Inspector (Health and Safety) 059 143           |
| NON YJA Retained DP 001 421                         |
| NIO Grade B1 Legal 171 B1                           |

## ANNEX C – GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### Applying

- All applications must be made through the online application website or through submission of an application form received from HRConnect
- **When completing an on line application, applicants must ensure that they hit the submit button at the end of the application form. Where an applicant fails to do so a late application will not be accepted.**
- After submitting an online application, applicants will receive an auto acknowledgement e-mail. If you do not receive an e-mail within 24 hours of submitting your application, please contact HR Connect.
- CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms will not be accepted.
- Applicants must not reformat electronic application forms.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- **All** 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 or by email will not be accepted.
- 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 and any unsaved work will be lost.

### Preparing for the Assessment Tests

- Familiarise yourself with the selection criteria for Grade 7.
- Think about the work of a Grade 7, not only in your own Department but across the NICS.
- Practise reading and analysing a large amount of information in a short time.
- **On the Day.....** Ensure you have read the instructions properly – the Administrator will provide you with an opportunity to ask questions before the exercise begins. Once the exercise has started, you cannot ask the Administrator any further questions relating to the content of the exercise.
- Manage your time effectively – be aware of your own capabilities and what you will be able to produce in the time available.

- Remember what is being measured, and ensure you provide the assessors with all the evidence they require.
- Remember that for the purposes of this exercise you are working alone.

### **Tips and Advice for the Interview**

In preparation for interview, you should think of any examples you feel are appropriate for Grade 7 and relate to the Grade 7 selection criteria/competences being tested. In preparation for your interview you may find it beneficial to write down your examples and the steps you took. Examples from your work are the most relevant to consider, however, you may also use examples from previous employment or from experiences outside work for example voluntary work. In all cases the emphasis should be on examples that demonstrate the NICS Grade 7 competences.

You should get used to discussing examples/answers in the first person and be as specific and as results-focused as possible.

Above all, remember that the interview panel is seeking evidence that you are capable of effective all round performance at Grade 7.

Some important pointers for the interview are as follows: -

- The interview process works best where you have strong examples that can withstand questioning around the Competence Framework.
- Remain focused and listen carefully to the question being asked.
- Try and respond only to that question.
- If you don't understand the question, ask for clarification.
- Answer the questions based on your own experience and by using the first person.
- Don't be afraid of silence for a few seconds while you think through your answer.

Sell yourself! Be positive and show your enthusiasm for the job.