

FOI DOF/2024-0244

Request

FOI Request: IRC277837 - Deputy Principal

Can I please request the following information in respect of Competition Number IRC 277837 be provided to me at your earliest convenience:

1. I understand that previously two tranches (A+B) have been considered /progressed to interview from this competition and the last merit position called to interview in tranche B was 1011. Can you advise how many candidates have been considered in this most recent tranche (C?)
 - a) Of that number how many have been progressed to interview?
 - b) Can you provide the breakdown by gender, age under and over 40 and existing civil servants / non ? civil servants.
 - c) Of those rejected, how many were rejected on failed criteria?
 - d) Can you provide the breakdown by gender, age under and over 40 and existing civil servants / non ? civil servants.
 - e) How many were rejected for other reasons?

2. For tranches A and B can you provide detail for each tranche on the total number per tranche and :-
 - a) Of that number how many have been progressed to interview?
 - b) Can you provide the breakdown by gender, age under and over 40 and existing civil servants / non-civil servants.
 - c) Of those rejected, how many were rejected on failed criteria?
 - d) Can you provide the breakdown by gender, age under and over 40 and existing civil servants / non-civil servants.
 - e) Can you advise the names of the selection panel who considered the candidates in this current tranche?
 - f) Can you advise the names of the selection panel(s) for each of the previous tranches?
 - g) Can you advise how the sift for this competition differs from the previous DP external recruitment competition (IRC241560)?

I am aware that the NICS Competency Framework has not changed so cannot understand how sift processes have changed? (I was sifted into interview stage last time but sadly failed the interview on 1 criterion, so it seems strange that I no longer meet the same criteria?)

DoF Response

I can confirm the department holds the information requested, however some of the information is withheld under FOI exemptions, further details are provided below..

1. 995 candidates were sifted for interview in tranche C.
 - a) Information requested on the numbers progressed to interview is being withheld under Section 22 of the FOI Act as it is intended for future publication. By applying Section 22 Exemption of the FOI Act, we are required to carry out a Public Interest Test. This can be found attached as a separate document (Annex B).
 - b) Information requested is being withheld under Section 22 as per 1.a) This can be found attached as a separate document (Annex B).
 - c) All candidates rejected at sift stage were due to having failed criteria.
 - d) Information requested is being withheld under Section 22 as per 1.a) This can be found attached as a separate document (Annex B).
 - e) There were no other reasons for rejection at sift stage – all candidates rejected had failed criteria.
2. A total of 1011 candidates were sifted for interview in one tranche. Those who passed the sift were then invited to interview in tranche A and tranche B.
 - a) Information requested is being withheld under Section 22 as per 1.a) This can be found attached as a separate document (Annex B).
 - b) Information requested is being withheld under Section 22 as per 1.a) This can be found attached as a separate document (Annex B).
 - c) All candidates rejected at sift stage were due to having failed criteria.
 - d) Information requested is being withheld under Section 22 as per 1.a) This can be found attached as a separate document (Annex B).
 - e) The Grade 7 panel chair of the sift selection for tranche C was Head of Recruitment Branch, John Cuthbert along with a team of DPs from NICSHR.
 - f) The Grade 7 panel chair of the sift selection for the first tranche was Head of Recruitment Branch, Karen Wallace along with a team of DPs from NICSHR.

In relation to question e) and f) above, names of DP panel members have been withheld because it is exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act.

Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test - lawful, fairness and transparency test (attached as a separate document – Annex C), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.

- g) Every competition is distinct and treated as such, regardless of similar or identical criteria. The sift panel for each competition is equally independent and is not provided with any information relating to a candidate's previous application history or performance. What was deemed as acceptable by a sift panel during a previous competition, can equally be deemed to not meet the criteria in a subsequent competition.