

Information Booklet

Open competition for appointment to the positions of
Finance Manager (SEO)
(Irish Research Council)
Senior Executive Officer (HEA)

Closing Date: Friday, 17th of May 2019

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**Title of Positions: Senior Executive Officer Finance,
Irish Research Council (IRC),
1 permanent post**

**Senior Executive Officer Generalists
Higher Education Authority (HEA)
2 permanent posts**

Employer: Higher Education Authority

Location: 3 Shelbourne Buildings, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4

About the competition

Posts have the same term and conditions as Higher Executive Officer in the civil service.

We are seeking to fill one permanent position in the Irish Research Council and two in the Higher Education Authority. In line with the terms and conditions of permanent posts, the successful candidates may, at a later date, be assigned to duties appropriate to the grade in either the HEA or IRC. We anticipate there may be further posts, permanent and fixed-term contract to fill later in the year. Accordingly, it is also proposed to establish a panel that will last 12 months.

About the Higher Education Authority

The mission of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is to create a higher education system that maximises opportunities and ensures a high-quality experience for students. The HEA is the statutory funding body for the universities, institutes of technology and a number of designated higher education institutions and advises the Minister for Education and Skills on the development of Irish higher education.

Arising from the National Strategy for Higher Education, the HEA is now playing a key role in leading the higher education system in the achievement of higher levels of performance. The HEA advises the Minister for Education and Skills on the objectives to be set for the higher education system and performance indicators to be applied. It is the HEA's responsibility to ensure that institutional objectives are aligned with national objectives, that appropriate metrics are in place to measure performance and that funding allocations reflect performance. We are the lead agency in the creation of a coordinated system of higher education institutions with clear and diverse roles appropriate to their strengths and national needs.

The HEA performs an advocacy role for higher education to students, Government, employers and the general public and we input into the national policy agenda through the provision of high quality, research and evidence based policy advice to the Department of Education and Skills and other agencies and Departments with significant interaction with the higher education system.

The HEA has a key role with the Department of Education and Skills in implementing the National Access Plan for 2015-2019

About the Irish Research Council

Established in mid-2012 under the Government's Public Sector Reform Plan, the Irish Research Council, a merger of two former councils¹, is an associated agency of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and operates under the aegis of the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The Council supports excellent research and enhances the provision of highly skilled human capital by providing competitive funding across all disciplines for Masters and PhD scholarships and for Postdoctoral Research Fellowships. The Council also funds Principal Investigator-led research with a social, cultural and societal significance and participates in a range of EU-funded projects. In delivering on its mission to 'support excellent research and recognise creative individuals with innovative ideas, thus enabling a vibrant research community which enriches Irish research, the economy and society', the Council also partners on a number of initiatives with enterprise, employers, government departments and civic society.

Context for the positions:

The HEA has been assigned additional responsibilities including:

- Management of the Human Capital Skills Initiative
- Implementation of the recommendations of the report of the expert group: HEA national review of gender equality in the Irish Higher Education institutions

The HEA is now seeking to fill newly sanctioned and existing vacant positions at SEO level.

¹ Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS); Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET)

Job Description – Senior Executive Officer Generalists, Higher Education Authority (HEA)

The post of Senior Executive Officer is a middle management grade in the HEA. Postholders would be reporting to a Senior Manager (or equivalent) in a section and would be responsible for a wide range of activities including;

- Management of programmes and funding allocations to higher education institutions (HEIs)
- Reviewing reports from HEIs in relating to funding provided and submissions received in respect of targeted funding programmes managed by the HEA.
- Evidence based analysis and assisting in the development of policy papers and/or reports
- Preparation of material for reply – Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information Requests etc.
- Representation of the HEA at meetings, conferences etc.
- Supervision of staff

The current positions the HEA is seeking to fill are in Policy and Planning and a new Human Capital Skills Initiative. However, in accordance with the organisation's staff mobility policy, existing staff in the HEA or IRC may express an interest to move to either of these roles thereby freeing up an SEO role elsewhere in either the HEA or IRC.

Requirements for Senior Executive Officer

- NQF Level 8 qualification or higher.
- Management experience with a track record of achievement
- Substantial experience in managing programmes and/or funding schemes.
- Ability to work in a timely and effective manner with other members of a team.
- Good analysis and decision-making skills
- High level of attention to detail so as to ensure that work is of a high standard.
- Good understanding of the higher education sector.
- Good communications (verbal and written).
- Good IT and project management skills (MS Excel and MS word).

Job Description – Senior Executive Officer Finance, Irish Research Council (IRC)

The post of Finance Manager is a Senior Executive Officer (SEO) role which is a middle management grade. The IRC is looking for a qualified accountant with a minimum of five years' experience in a similar role, preferably within the public sector. The post holder will be responsible for the management of a budget in the region of €40m, drawn from a number of sources. Specific tasks associated with the role include:

- Preparation of the Council's projected budget to allocate available funding among schemes and track ongoing commitments;
- Preparation of all drawdown requests from the Department of Education and Skills in respect of Council awardees;
- Liaison with Programme Managers in relation to commitments made under IRC funding schemes;
- Processing of all payments to institutions hosting Council awardees;
- Liaison with Comptroller and Auditor General during annual audit, working with the HEA's Finance unit;

- Implementation of existing and new Standard Operating Procedures for financial control in the Council;
- Oversight and tracking of refunds from Higher Education Institutions;
- Oversight of invoicing of enterprise funding partners and collection of monies due;
- Liaison on behalf of the Council with the Department of Education and Skills, the HEA and other relevant agencies, including the European Commission, with regard to financial, budgetary and other matters;
- Preparation of financial material for the Annual Report;
- Any other duties as appropriate pertaining to Council budgets and finances.

The person appointed will work closely with the HEA's Finance section.

Requirements for Senior Executive Officer

- Full membership of a prescribed accounting body, supervised by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority with minimum 4 years' experience
- Management experience with a track record of achievement
- Ability to work in a timely and effective manner with other members of a team.
- Good analysis and decision-making skills
- High level of attention to detail so as to ensure that work is of a high standard.
- Good understanding of the higher education sector.
- Good communications (verbal and written).
- Good IT and project management skills (MS Excel and MS word).

Panel

Arising from this competition two panels will be established which may be used for temporary or permanent vacancies that arise in the HEA and the IRC.

Principal Conditions of Service

Part 1 (Conditions which particularly apply to this position)

1. Pay: The salary scale for this position is as follows:

PPC - €48,028, €49,432, €50,833, €52,233, €53,637, €55,040, €56,441, €58,466, €60,486

PPC (Personal Pension Contribution) Scale (for officers who are existing civil or public servants appointed on or after 6 April 1995 or who are new entrants to the civil or public service and who are making a compulsory personal pension contribution).

Different pay and conditions may apply if, prior to appointment, the appointee is an existing civil or public servant appointed prior to 6th April 1995.

Increments may be awarded subject to satisfactory service and to changes in the terms and conditions relating to salary increments in the Civil/Public Service generally.

The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Salary: The appointment will be made on the salary scale at a point in line with current Government Pay Policy. New entrants to the Civil or Public Sector, as defined in Circular 18/2010, will commence on the first point of the salary scale. Different pay and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the appointee is a serving civil or public servant.

2. Annual Leave: Annual Leave will be 29 working days, rising to 30 days after 5 years. This leave is exclusive of public holidays.

3. Hours of Attendance: Working hours will be in accordance with the standard arrangements for HEA and will equate to no less than a 37 hours (net of rest breaks) per week.

No additional payment will be made for extra attendance as the rate of remuneration payable covers any exceptional extra attendance liability that may arise from time to time.

4. Location: This position is currently based at 3 Shelbourne Buildings, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4.

Part II (Other conditions which apply generally to appointees to this position)

1. Tenure: One appointment is a permanent position in the IRC. The other position is permanent and will be located in the HEA's Access Policy Office. Persons appointed to either position may be moved to other duties appropriate to their grade.

The appointee must serve a probationary period, which normally will last for twelve months. Should the appointee's services be satisfactory as regards health, conduct and efficiency generally during the probationary period, the appointee, on completion of the period will be finally appointed. Should the appointee's services be unsatisfactory, the appointment may be terminated at any time during the period.

2. Duties: The appointee will be expected to perform all acts, duties and obligations as appropriate to this position (which may be revised from time to time).

3. Outside Employment: The position is whole-time and the appointee must avoid involvement in outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of HEA. Clarification must be sought from management where any doubt arises.

4. Sick Leave: Sick leave with full pay may be allowed at the discretion of the Higher Education Authority in accordance with established procedures and conditions for the public service generally.

5. Retirement and Superannuation: The appointee will be offered public service pension terms and retirement age conditions in accordance with pension arrangements in the HEA depending on the status of the successful appointee:

a) In general, an individual who has no prior pensionable Public Service history in the 26 weeks prior to appointment will be a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (Single Scheme) which commenced from 1 January 2013 (Section 10 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 refers);

b) An individual who is on secondment will remain a member of the parent organisation's pension scheme and the pensionable remuneration will be based on his/her substantive grade i.e. the grade at which the individual is employed in his/her parent organisation;

c) An individual who was a member of a "pre-existing public service pension scheme" as construed by the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 and who does not qualify for membership of the Single Scheme will be a member of the HEA's Staff Superannuation Scheme and Associated Spouses and Children's Scheme;

d) At the time of being offered an appointment, the HEA in consultation with the Department of Education & Skills and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform if necessary, will, in the light of the appointee's previous Public Service (and/or other) employment history, determine the appropriate pension terms and conditions to apply for the duration of the appointment. Appointees will be required to disclose their full public service history. Details of the appropriate superannuation provisions will be provided upon determination of appointee's status;

e) In accordance with the provisions of the Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2004 staff may not retire before their 65th birthday unless it is on grounds of ill-health. Different retirement arrangements apply to staff employed in the public service prior to the aforementioned 2004 Act;

f) The following points should be noted:

- **Pension Accrual:** A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme will apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

- **Pension Abatement:** The Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 extended pension abatement so that a retiree's public service pension is liable to abatement on re-entering public service employment, even where the new employment is in a different area of the public service. However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER) or the Health Service Executive VER/VRS which, as outlined below, render a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to payment of that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment.

Special arrangements will, however, be made for the reckoning of previous service given by the appointee for the purpose of any future superannuation award for which the appointee may be eligible.

- **Department of Education and Skills Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers Circular 102/2007:** The Department of Education and Skills introduced an Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers. It is a condition of the Early Retirement Scheme that with the exception of the situations set out in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 of the relevant circular, and with those exceptions only, if a teacher accepts early retirement under Strands 1, 2 or 3 of this scheme and is subsequently employed in any capacity in any area of the public sector, payment of pension to that person under the scheme will immediately cease. Pension payments will, however, be resumed on the cesser of such employment or on the person's 60th birthday, whichever is the later, but on resumption, the pension will be based on the person's actual reckonable service as a teacher (i.e. the added years previously granted will not be taken into account in the calculation of the pension payment).

- **Ill-Health Retirement:** Please note that where an individual has retired from a Civil/Public Service body on the grounds of ill-health his/her pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill-health retirement within the pension scheme of that employment.

6. Pension Related Deduction: This appointment is subject to the pension-related deduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009. For further information in relation to public service superannuation issues please see the following website: <http://per.gov.ie/pensions>

7. Eligibility to compete: Candidates should note that eligibility to compete is open to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

8. Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER): It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

9. Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010): The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider public service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.

10. Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants:

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the public service by any public service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. Thereafter the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will be required prior to re-employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility) and the Minister's consent will have to be secured prior to employment by any public service body.

11. Declaration of previous public service employment history:

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement and/or the collective agreement outlined above. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment- in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

Competition Process

How to Apply

Applications for the Senior Executive Officer Generalists roles should be made by sending a current CV together, no longer than 3 pages, alongside a supporting statement of minimum 400 words and no more than 1000 words, outlining their suitability under the following headings:

- Preparation of policy papers and/or reports
- Supervising and motivating staff
- Management of programmes and funding allocations to higher education institutions (HEIs)

Applications for the Senior Executive Officer Finance role should be made by sending a current CV together, no longer than 3 pages, alongside a supporting statement of minimum 400 words and no more than 1000 words, outlining their suitability under the following headings:

- Preparation of budgets
- Oversight and tracking funds
- Implementation of Standard Operating Procedures

Applications should be made by sending a current CV together with a cover letter outlining suitability for the post by email to Padraic Mellett, Head of Corporate Affairs recruit@hea.ie no later than **5.30pm on Friday, 17th of May 2019**. Alternatively, applications can be sent by post to:

Mr. Padraic Mellett, HEA, Head of Corporate Affairs, Higher Education Authority,
3 Shelbourne Buildings, Shelbourne Road, Dublin D04 C2Y6.

Applicants will be required to provide a declaration as outlined in paragraph 11. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

Please specify if you are applying either the HEA Senior Executive Officer, Senior Technical Officer, IRC Senior Executive Officer Finance or all three competitions.

Selection Methods

The selection may include shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application

- interview - it is anticipated that interviews will take place in mid-June. An update will be provided on the vacancies page of the HEA website: <http://hea.ie/vacancies/>
- satisfactory references (referees will not be contact without the candidate's prior agreement)

The Higher Education Authority reserves the right to require candidates attend a second interview.

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the HEA may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, the HEA provide for the employment of a short-listing process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine the application forms against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of

undertaking the job, rather than there are some candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/ experience in your application.

Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 as amended applications will be treated in strict confidence.

Security Clearance

Police vetting may be sought in respect of individuals who come under consideration for appointment. The applicant will be required to complete and return a Garda Vetting form should they come under consideration for appointment. This form will be forwarded to An Garda Síochána for security checks on all Irish and Northern Irish addresses at which they resided. If unsuccessful this information will be destroyed by the HEA. If the applicant subsequently comes under consideration for another position, they will be required to supply this information again.

Other important information

The HEA will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

The admission of a person to a campaign, or invitation to attend an interview, is not to be taken as implying that the HEA are satisfied that such person fulfils the requirements of the competition or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important, therefore, for you to note that the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If you do not meet these essential entry requirements but nevertheless attend for interview you will be putting yourself to unnecessary expense.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position the HEA will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises the HEA may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process

Candidates' Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

Candidates must not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- canvass any person with or without inducements
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way

A third party must not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine/or imprisonment.

In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then:

- where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; and
- where he/she has been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, he/she shall forfeit that appointment.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by the HEA, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the HEA requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Quality Customer Service

We aim to provide an excellent quality service to all our customers. If, for whatever reason, you are unhappy with any aspect of the service you receive from us, we urge you to bring this to the attention of the unit or staff member concerned. This is important as it ensures that we are aware of the problem and can take the appropriate steps to resolve it.

Feedback will be provided on written request.

Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018

When your application form is received, we create a record in your name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature and should you be successful certain information you provide will be held by the HEA. Such information held is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts, 1988, 2003 and 2018. To make a request under the Data Protection Act 2018, please submit your request in writing to: Human Resources & Accounts, HEA, 3 Shelbourne Buildings, Crampton Avenue, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4, ensuring that you describe the records you seek in the greatest possible detail to enable us to identify the relevant record. A fee of €6.35 should accompany your request. Payment should be made by way of bank draft, money order, or personal cheque, made payable to the 'HEA'.