

**CANDIDATES' INFORMATION BOOKLET**

**Senior Management Opportunities**

Open competition for appointment to positions of:

**Senior Accountant (Assistant Principal)**

**in the Higher Education Authority**

**Two posts**

**Closing Date: 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 4pm**

## About the HEA

**Higher Education Authority (HEA)** is a statutory agency under the aegis of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. It leads the strategic development of the Irish higher education and research system.

The Higher Education Authority is the statutory funding authority for the Irish universities, technological universities, institutes of technology and a number of other designated colleges providing annual funding of c.€1.6bn. It has responsibility for the effective accountability and oversight of governance of the HEA funded higher education institutions.

The Higher Education Authority plays a key leadership role in driving change in the higher education system and ensuring strong performance across institutions.

The **Irish Research Council (IRC)** operates under the aegis of the HEA. The IRC has a mandate to enable and sustain a vibrant and creative research community.

The IRC provides annual funding of c.€50m across all research disciplines and career stages.

Further information about the HEA and the IRC is available at [www.hea.ie](http://www.hea.ie) and [www.research.ie](http://www.research.ie)

The Higher Education Authority can offer suitable candidates a very satisfying and varied career, with competitive terms and conditions.

We would like to hear from high calibre individuals with an interest in finance, change management and public policy who are capable of contributing at a high level to the overall direction of the organisation. Ideal candidates will be experienced managers, with high levels of energy, drive, resilience and motivation and the proven ability to deliver objectives.

### Senior Accountant (Assistant Principal) Role:

The post of Senior Accountant (Assistant Principal) is a senior managerial grade in the HEA and is a critical post in terms of ensuring quality service to the HEA and its key stakeholders.

Senior Accountants (Assistant Principals) are key participants in the senior management of the HEA with a critical role in the HEA's financial control and in the financial oversight and monitoring of the higher education institutions. They will play a central role in driving organisational change and are ideally placed to make a significant contribution to shaping the future of the HEA. They report to the Head of Finance but will also advise and interact with other senior management.

The HEA is seeking to appoint **two** experienced senior qualified accountants.

Duties may include:

- Preparation and review of HEA budgets, management and statutory accounts

- Effective implementation of automated solutions including financial management system, automated workflows and collection of data.
- Liaison with internal and external auditors, tax advisors and other professional advisors
- Ensuring effective treasury management
- Management and oversight of accounts payable and procurement
- Processing and oversight of grant and supplier payments on a timely basis
- Financial monitoring of higher education institutions including reviewing financial reports, budgets, forecasts and borrowing framework
- Providing data including dashboards on KPIs on institutional and sectoral metrics
- Automation and standardisation of reporting from higher education institutions
- Co-ordination of annual Estimates to parent Department
- Interaction with institutions, their representative bodies, the Department and other stakeholders
- Providing reports for Board, Audit & Risk Committee and Finance & Governance committees
- Providing assistance and advice to other Sections and assist with other tasks as required

Please ensure that you fulfil the eligibility requirements for this competition as outlined below before submitting an application.

## Panel

At the end of the selection process a panel of suitably qualified applicants is formed from which vacancies may be filled. Qualification and placement on a panel is not a guarantee of appointment to a position. The panel will remain in place for a period of two years from the date of final interviews.

**Closing Date is Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 4pm.**

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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1. Candidates must hold a recognised professional accountancy qualification and must;
  - (a) Have significant management experience at an appropriate level, including leading teams and managing stakeholders.
  - (b) Have significant experience of some or all of the following: people management, project management, managing budgets, delivery of funding programmes, strategic and change management.
  - (c) Demonstrate that they possess the skills/competencies identified as being important for the role. These include:

Leadership  
Judgement, Analysis and Decision Making

Management and Delivery of Results  
Interpersonal and Communication Skills  
Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development  
Drive and Commitment to Public Service Values

For further details on the competency framework and definitions please see link below.

[http://www.publicjobs.ie/restapi/documents/Assistant\\_Principal\\_Officer\\_Level\\_Compencies.pdf](http://www.publicjobs.ie/restapi/documents/Assistant_Principal_Officer_Level_Compencies.pdf)

- (d) Candidates must demonstrate that they have some or all of the following:
- i. Financial management and analysis experience
  - ii. Experience of implementing procedures, processes and automated solutions
  - iii. Knowledge of governance and accountability frameworks for public bodies
  - iv. Proficiency in excel, including use of pivot tables and dynamic charts
- (e) Given that this is a senior role candidates must be willing to move to other Sections as opportunities arise.

## 2. **Other Eligibility criteria**

### **Eligibility to compete and certain restrictions on eligibility**

Candidates must, by the date of any job offer, be:

- (a)** A citizen of the European Economic Area. The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; **or**
- (b)** A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; **or**
- (c)** A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 visa; **or**
- (d)** A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4 visa **or**
- (e)** A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or Switzerland and has a stamp 4 visa

### **Principal Conditions of Service:**

#### **General**

The appointment is to a permanent post in the Higher Education Authority.

Part 1 (Conditions which particularly apply to this position)

1. Pay: The Assistant Principal standard salary scale for this position is as follows (rates effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021) :

PPC - €69,659 €72,268 €74,871 €77,483 €80,090 €81,593 €84,225 (LSI1) €86,865 (LSI2)

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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 for the position of Assistant Principal is 30 working days. This leave is based on a five day week and 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. However, given the current public health measures HEA staff are working remotely. This will be kept under review based on Government advice on return to work arrangements and anticipated remote working arrangements. The offices are well-served by Dublin Bus routes and are a five minute walk from Lansdowne Road DART station.

Part 2 (Other conditions which apply generally to appointees to this position)

1. Tenure: The appointment to the post is subject to a probationary period that will be no greater than 11 months.

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 the Higher Education Authority. 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 Higher Education Authority 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).

An individual who is on secondment will remain a member of the pension scheme of the employer they are seconded from and their pensionable remuneration will be based on his/her substantive grade i.e. the grade at which the individual is employed in the organisation he/she is seconded from.

- b) 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.
- c) At the time of being offered an appointment, the Higher Education Authority, in consultation with the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science 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;
- d) Retirement age shall be subject to relevant superannuation scheme provision and the statutory provisions set out in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 and the Public Service Superannuation (Age of Retirement) Act 2018;
- e) 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. 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.
  8. 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.

**9. Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants**

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

**10. 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 should be made by sending a current CV together with a cover letter outlining suitability for the post(s) by email to Padraic Mellett, Head of Corporate Affairs recruit@hea.ie no later than 4pm on **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021**. Applicants will be required to provide a declaration as outlined in paragraph 11.

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

In less than 1,500 words in total, the cover letter should demonstrate how the candidate meets the eligibility requirements documented above.

### **Selection Process:**

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

- Interview, either in person in the HEA's offices or via MS Teams/Skype/Zoom
- Satisfactory references (referees will not be contacted 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 for the position(s). 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 Higher Education Authority may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, the Higher Education Authority 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(s). An expert board will examine the application forms against a 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 that 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:**

Garda vetting may be sought in respect of individuals who are considered for appointment. The applicant may be required to complete and return a Garda Vetting form. 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 Higher Education Authority. If the applicant subsequently comes under consideration for another position, they will be required to supply this information again.

### **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.

### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. 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 GDPR. To make a request to access your personal data, please submit your request in writing to: Human Resources, Higher Education Authority, 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. Alternatively, you can email [dataprotection@hea.ie](mailto:dataprotection@hea.ie)