



**NATIONAL
APPRENTICESHIP
OFFICE** GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP

**Open competition for post of senior manager
for apprenticeship statistics in the
National Apprenticeship Office**

Information booklet

Closing date for applications: 29th July 2022 to recruit@hea.ie

Post: Senior manager for apprenticeship statistics

Status of position: Permanent, full-time

Organisation: Higher Education Authority, assigned to the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO)

Location: Hybrid working, offices for the NAO in Harcourt Street, D2

Grade: Assistant Principal Officer (APO)

1 About the National Apprenticeship Office

The National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) is a new body established jointly in January 2022 by SOLAS and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) on behalf of Government. The NAO will have responsibility for all aspects of the management, oversight and development of the apprenticeship system and for implementing the *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025*. When fully established, the Office will act as a single point of contact for employers, apprentices and providers in accessing information and guidance on apprenticeship.

The *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025* was published by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in April 2021. Following a seven-year period of expansion 2014-2021, the Action Plan sets out a roadmap for a single integrated system of apprenticeship nationally. Over 60 actions make up the Plan, covering core objectives on the quality and positive status of apprenticeships nationally; ensuring strong industry involvement; enhanced equity of access to apprenticeship opportunities; and a single cohesive apprenticeship system which includes 'migration' of 25 craft apprenticeships into a consortium-led model.

Preparations are underway within the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to create a legal status for the new NAO. It is expected that this process will be completed before the end of 2022.

A senior manager for apprenticeship statistics is being recruited via open competition to work in the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO). It is intended that the person appointed will be employed by the HEA pending legal establishment of the NAO.

2 The Apprenticeship Client Services System

The Apprenticeship Client Services System (ACSS) is the main system supporting apprenticeship nationally. It is a web-based system with an MS-SQL server database backend and is in place since 2006. It has had several upgrades and enhancements

in the intervening period, including applications which draw on the ACSS to support the system nationally. The ACSS has four main elements, as follows:

- (i) It holds the statutory Register of Apprentices, as set out in the 1967 Industrial Training Act
- (ii) It holds details of over 8,400 active apprenticeship employers
- (iii) It records details of on-and-off the job training for all craft apprentices, including details and processing of schedules for off-the-job training
- (iv) It captures details of progression and completion records for apprentices on consortia-led apprenticeships.

SOLAS is the data controller for the ACSS, however the primary inputters of data into the system are a network of c.60 'SOLAS Authorised Officers'. Apprenticeship coordinators overseeing the 40 consortia-led programmes also input progression and completion data for apprentices. At present data analysis and reports from the ACSS are generated using Microsoft Power BI.

An 'Apprenticeship Online Portal' interfaces with the ACSS to support payment of grants to employers; formal registration and approval of employers to employ apprentices; access to information for coordinators of consortia-led apprenticeships; and a function to enable all employers to track the training progress of the apprentices they employ.

Other apprenticeship systems that feed into the ACSS database include an 'Induction System' used to onboard new apprentices, the Institute of Technology/Technological University (IOT/TU) broadsheet website which captures results from IOTs/TUs and the curriculum and assessment revision system (CARS) which is used to manage existing and new versions of craft apprenticeship curricula.

3 The role of senior manager for apprenticeship statistics

The NAO wishes to appoint a permanent, full time senior manager for apprenticeship statistics. The person in this role will be instrumental in implementing the *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025*. They will drive delivery of actions related to data analysis and sharing, enhancing the quality and availability of data, building the survey capability and output of the NAO, enhancing relationships with key stakeholders, and supporting redevelopment of the ACSS as part of a single integrated apprenticeship system. The person appointed will liaise with the data analysis, digital and IT teams in SOLAS and HEA and with the data and statistics strategies being implemented by both organisations, including the planned publication schemes.

4 Job Description

The senior manager for apprenticeship statistics will:

- Compile statistical information from the Apprenticeship Client Services System (ACSS) which profile key outputs and outcomes and support responses to parliamentary questions and representations
- Manage publication of a range of apprenticeship statistics to support the work of the National Apprenticeship Office and key stakeholders, including employers and education and training providers
- Link data from the ACSS with other relevant administrative datasets, including from engagement with the Central Statistics Office (CSO), in areas that include the socio-economic profile of Irish apprentices, labour market outcomes for the apprentice population, and the economic profile of apprenticeship employers
- Support management and development of the ACSS with the IT unit in SOLAS and in liaison with the NAO statistics unit
- Work with key stakeholders (primarily Senior Training Advisors in ETBs) to enhance the quality of data held on the ACSS
- Oversee development, implementation of and reporting from periodic surveys of apprentices, employers and other key stakeholders
- Advise and support development of a new database for apprenticeship to replace the ACSS over the next 1-2 years
- Work with key stakeholders, in particular personnel inputting data to the system on data protection and data sharing arrangements
- Any other duties deemed appropriate for the position by the Director of the National Apprenticeship Office

Requirements

- A relevant qualification in a quantitative field such as statistics, economics, mathematics, or social science with a significant quantitative element
- Strong knowledge of statistical information gathering and analysis
- Knowledge of database management and development are essential
- Project and programme management experience
- Expertise in statistical analysis and/or data visualisation software such as Tableau, Stata, Power BI, MSSQL
- Experience working with large administrative microdata sets
- Statistical modelling or econometric analysis skills/experience
- Experience and expert knowledge of survey data collection and analysis
- Experience in establishing and operating information systems
- Familiarity with the education and training system in Ireland and/or abroad
- A track record of leadership and showing initiative
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills both oral and written
- Good judgement and analytical skills
- Results-focused

Key competencies for the role (4)

- Leadership/influencing skills
- Attention to detail
- Initiative
- Analysis and problem-solving

5 Pay and other employment arrangements

The salary scale for this position is as follows:

Grade of Assistant Principal Officer – PPC - €70,399 €72,991 €75,620 €78,258
€80,891 €82,409 €85,067 (LSI1) €87,734 (LSI2)

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.

Annual Leave: Annual leave will be 30 working days. This leave is exclusive of public holidays.

Hours of Attendance: Working hours are in accordance with the standard arrangements for government agencies including SOLAS and the HEA and will equate to no less than a 35 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.

Location Office premises for the National Apprenticeship Office are in the Harcourt Centre, Harcourt Street, Dublin 2. A hybrid working policy is in place, in line with Government guidelines.

Tenure This post is permanent. The appointee will be employed by HEA pending formal legal establishment of the National Apprenticeship Office. The appointee will work in the NAO from the outset.

Appointment to the post is subject to a probationary period of no greater than 11 months.

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

1. **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).
2. **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 the Director of the NAO or the HEA Head of Corporate Affairs where any doubt arises.
3. **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.
4. **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 Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & 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) 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.

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 28th 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 Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers Circular 102/2007:** The Department of Education 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.
5. **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>

6. **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.
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.
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.

6 How to apply for this post

Applications should be made by sending a current CV together with a cover letter (see guidance below) outlining suitability for the post applied for by email to recruit@hea.ie no later than **midnight on Friday 29th July 2022**.

Applications cannot be accepted after the closing date.

Cover letter: In no more than 600 words, please address the following three areas:

- 1 Your relevant specialist knowledge and expertise
- 2 Your interpersonal and communication skills
- 3 Your vision on what you will achieve in the post

7 Selection process

The selection may include shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application and by (i) interview and (ii) satisfactory references (referees will not be contact without the candidate's prior agreement). Candidates may be required to attend a second interview.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position the NAO 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 NAO may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Ends