

**Candidate Information Booklet**

Open competition for appointment to position of:

**Senior Executive Officers - General**

**Location:** 3 Shelbourne Buildings, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4

**Closing Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

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## About the Competition:

We are seeking to establish a Senior Executive Officer panel to fill vacancies across a number of departments within the HEA. These positions will be filled on a full-time basis and may be permanent or fixed term. This panel will remain in place for two years.

## About the Higher Education Authority:

The 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 Irish universities, technological universities, institutes of technology and a number of other designated colleges providing annual funding of c.€1.7bn. It has responsibility for the oversight of governance and effective accountability 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) and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (Forum) operate under the aegis of the HEA. The IRC has a mandate to enable and sustain a vibrant and creative research community. The Forum is responsible for leading and advising on enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education.

Further information about the HEA, the IRC and the Forum is available on their respective websites at [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie), [www.research.ie](http://www.research.ie) and [www.teachingandlearning.ie](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie).

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

## Context for the Position Senior Executive Officers – General:

The HEA is seeking to fill several permanent and fixed-term contract positions. In addition, we are seeking to create a panel at Senior Executive Officer level which will be established from the interviews, this will be in place for two years. The HEA may appoint those individuals on the panel to either permanent or fixed term positions throughout the years, depending on the recruitment needs of the organisation. These positions may be filled on a permanent basis, longer term, fixed term contract (1+ years) or for shorter periods to assist with specific projects (3-12 months). The HEA reserves the right to align successful candidates to appropriate sections in the organisation dependent on their skills and experience.

In addition to core generalist roles, the HEA is currently seeking staff with experience in Governance, Legal Administration, Social Media Management and Human Resources.

## Panel

Qualification and placement on a panel is not a guarantee of appointment to a position.

### **Senior Executive Officers- General Role:**

The post of Senior Executive Officer is a middle management grade in the HEA, equivalent to the civil service role of Higher Executive Officer. Postholders report to a Senior Manager/Assistant Principal Officer (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.

### **Requirements:**

#### **Essential:**

- NQF Level 8 qualification or higher in a relevant discipline or NQF Level 7 qualification with at least 3 years relevant experience.
- At least 18 months of relevant managerial experience.
- Proven experience in managing a project.
- Excellent report writing skills as well as strong verbal and written communication, including the ability to engage clearly, succinctly, and with confidence.
- Strong team player who works with coworkers to accomplish organizational goals.
- Superb analytical and problem-solving abilities, able to contribute strategically to the design and execution of programs and make judgments according to their level and line of work.
- The capacity to handle various tasks under pressure and meet deadlines.
- A track record of working independently and accepting responsibility for projects.
- The capacity to successfully gather opinions and information, synthesize it, and understand it.
- Highly proficient with numbers and pays close attention to accuracy and precision to ensure that work is done to a high quality.
- Strong team player who works with coworkers to accomplish organizational goals.
- Track record in identifying opportunities for improvement and creating efficiencies within a team.
- The capacity to question and challenge information and data, as well as strong analytical abilities.
- Proven proficiency in Microsoft Office programs, such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

#### **Desirable:**

- Knowledge of, and interest in issues relating to higher education.
- Good understanding of the research system and landscape in both Ireland and internationally.

- Experience working in the public and civil service and familiarity with public policies.
- Experience working in the area of governance and compliance; understanding of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)
- Proven track record in project evaluation as well as program and/or funding scheme management
- Developing relationships and engaging with relevant stakeholders in the HEA, Government Departments, Higher Education Institutions and relevant third parties.
- Legal qualification or experience as a paralegal or legal executive including drafting experience. Experience in the review of primary and secondary legislation would be particularly desirable.

For further details on the competency framework requirements at SEO grade please see link below:

**[Senior Executive Officer Competencies \(publicjobs.ie\)](https://publicjobs.ie)**

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

### **Other Eligibility Criteria:**

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

A citizen of the European Economic Area. The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; **or**

(a) A UK citizen;

(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 of Senior Executive Officers - General is to a variety of permanent and fixed term positions in the Higher Education Authority.

#### **Part I (Conditions which particularly apply to this position):**

- 1. Pay:** The Senior Executive Officer (HEO) standard salary scale for this position is as follows (rates effective from 1st March 2023):

**PPC - €53,955 €55,532 €57,106 €58,680 €60,259 €61,831 €63,407 €65,682<sup>1</sup>  
€67,951<sup>2</sup>**

PPC (Personal Pension Contribution) scale (for officers who are existing civil or public servants appointed on or after 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

1. **Annual Leave:** Annual Leave will be 29 working days, rising to 30 working days after 5 years. This leave is exclusive of public holidays.
2. **Hours of Attendance:** Working hours will be in accordance with the standard arrangements for the HEA and will equate to 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.
3. **Location:** This position is currently based at 3 Shelbourne Buildings, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4. A hybrid policy is in place to facilitate blended working.

## **Part II (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 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<sup>st</sup> 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 Education 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<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>st</sup> 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 completing the application form for this competition and submitting to Mr. Mark Carroll at [seorecruit@hea.ie](mailto:seorecruit@hea.ie) no later than 5pm on **the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023**. Please read the application form carefully. Use the STAR formula to answer all competencies except for the Specialist Knowledge and Expertise competency. Answer all competencies using bullet points as mentioned on the application form. Applications may not be accepted if the STAR formula is not followed as instructed in this booklet and application form.

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

## Candidates with disabilities:

If you have a disability or need reasonable accommodations made during the selection process, we strongly encourage you to share this with us so that we can ensure you get the support you need. Reasonable accommodation in our selection process refers to adjustments and practical changes which would enable a disabled candidate to have an equal opportunity for this competition.

Examples of adjustments we provide include the use of assistive technology, extra time, scribes, and/or readers or a range of other accommodations. Please be assured that having a disability or requiring adjustments will not impact on your progress in the selection process; you will not be at a disadvantage if you disclose your disability or requirements to us. Your disability and/or adjustments will be kept entirely confidential.

If you would like to talk about your application or any accommodations that may be of benefit during the recruitment process, please contact our Disability Liaison Officer, Nicola Patten, at [npatten@hea.ie](mailto:npatten@hea.ie)

Should you be successful, the disclosure of a disability for this stage of the process will not be passed onto the employing department unless you request that we do so.

## 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 applications, appear to be the most suitable for the position(s). An expert board will examine the applications 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 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.

### **Panel:**

At the end of the selection process a panel of qualified candidates is formed from which vacancies may be filled. The panel will be used to fill suitable vacancies, permanent and fixed-term contract. 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.

### **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 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive.

When your application 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) or visit [https://hea.ie/about-us/data\\_protection/](https://hea.ie/about-us/data_protection/).