

**Candidate  
Information  
Booklet**

**IRC237557**

**Forest Service Industrial Placement  
Student 2019**

**Department of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be submitted to  
HRConnect no later than 12  
noon (UK time) on  
*Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019***

**Please retain a copy of this  
booklet for your reference  
throughout the selection  
process.**

# **Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

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**A thriving and sustainable economy,  
environment and rural community**

## **Communication between HRConnect and you**

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account, including junk mail folder, to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has responsibility for food, farming, environmental, fisheries, forestry and sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland. The Department assists the sustainable development of the agri-food, environmental, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, having regard for the needs of the consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

DAERA provides a business development service for farmers and growers and a veterinary service for administration of animal health and welfare. The Department's College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) delivers training and further and higher education courses in the agri-food sector. DAERA is responsible to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in Great Britain for the administration of schemes affecting the whole of the United Kingdom. The Department also oversees the application of European Union agricultural, environmental, fisheries and rural development policy to Northern Ireland.

The Department is currently preparing for BREXIT working closely with our partners in Northern Ireland and with colleagues in the other UK Administrations.

## **DAERA VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS**

### **Vision**

“A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone”

### **Strategic Outcomes**

1. Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors.
2. A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy.
3. A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.
4. A well-led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes.

### **DAERA Top Management Group comprises:-**

- Forest Service, Rural Affairs and Estate Transformation
- Central Services and Contingency Planning
- Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
- Environment Marine and Fisheries Group; and
- Food and Farming Group

## **DAERA has two Executive Agencies:**

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Forest Service

The Department also sponsors a number of NDPBs including the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI).

The Permanent Secretary of DAERA is Dr Denis McMahon.

## **FOREST SERVICE**

Forest Service manages 62,000 hectares of forest. This is about 5% of the land area and about half of the forests in Northern Ireland. Many of these have statutory environmental designations and make significant contributions to the NI biodiversity strategy. Forests are an important part of the Northern Ireland landscape and have a distinct role in attracting almost 5 million visits each year for recreation and tourism products, so that most visitors rate their experience as being excellent or very good. At the same time the Agency supplies 400,000 m<sup>3</sup> of sustainably grown timber for industrial use, it takes a commercial approach to forest development for timber and recreation, it earns £10 million annually.

The Agency is also responsible for protecting the plant health status of forests and agriculture.

The Agency is a multidisciplinary organisation whose staff are employees of DAERA and are drawn mainly from forestry, agriculture and administrative disciplines.

- Business Management
- Forestry and Woodland Management
- Arboriculture and Urban Woodland Management
- Environment, Biodiversity and Wildlife Management
- Recreation Management and Planning
- Public Consultation and Participation
- Harvesting and Marketing
- Forest Engineering
- Forest Regulation
- Policy Development and Strategic planning.

Forest Service works closely with organisations that specialise in the particular professional competency areas below and an understanding of these will be useful to employees in the course of their career.

- Timber Conversion
- Tree Nursery Management,
- Forestry and Arboricultural Research, and
- Forestry and Arboricultural Teaching.

The Agency is subject to the overall direction of the Minister, who determines the policy framework within which the Agency operates, the level of resources made available each year, and the scope of Agency activities. The Minister approves the Business Plan, sets the key performance targets and monitors the Agency's performance.

The Agency's role is to develop and implement forest policy and enhance plant, tree and bee health in support of the DAERA vision and strategic outcomes. The Agency's specific contribution includes the production and supply of timber and other forest products; the maintenance of adequate reserves of growing trees; and the management and development of forests so as to contribute to the protection of the environment, biodiversity and the mitigation of, or adaptation to, climate change. The strategy for delivering policy is under review.

The Agency has targets to increase the area of forest in Northern Ireland. The Agency also manages forests to provide a wide range of services consistent with national forestry standards<sup>1</sup>. It encourages public enjoyment and recreational use of its own forests, promotes the social benefits of other forests, and safeguards plant, tree and bee health.

**The key tasks to deliver the Minister's policies are:**

- 1) To promote forest expansion.
- 2) To provide a regulatory framework, inspection programmes and administrative process that monitor compliance with legislation on forestry, plant and bee health, and aid scheme rules.
- 3) To maintain the knowledge base needed to inform policy development the Agency's work; and
- 4) To manage the Department's forests sustainably by:
  - Working with industry to supply timber, regenerate forests
  - Working with local government and others to promote public access to forests and protect the forest environment; and
  - Ensuring that management practice complies with the UK Forestry Standard and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

The Agency is changing its internal organisation, consistent with the resources available, to better respond to forestry and plant health policy needs, and to consolidate and further develop its arrangements for partnership working with industry, local government and the charitable sector.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs>

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The post-holders will report to the appointed Forest Officer in charge of the Forest Management Area to which they are assigned and the main duties of the posts will include:

- Forest Operations
  - Harvesting duties including Forest mensuration and inventory work
  - Forest management & inspection
  - Recreation management
  - Forest Regeneration
  - Quality monitoring of work using Trimble & GIS
- Forest Planning
  - Involvement in preparation of forest plans using GIS
  - Involvement in stakeholder planning consultations
- Forest Policy, Regulation & grants
  - Involvement in Felling licence regulation
  - Afforestation grants
  - Involvement in FS internal UKWAS auditing
  - Involvement in Health & Safety monitoring and audit.

All necessary training will be provided by Forest Service.

Placement students will be offered training appropriate to the business needs. Training is likely to include health and safety awareness, Emergency first aid at work and manual handling awareness.

Optional training & City & guild assessment in forestry related skills such as basic chainsaw use & felling and Pesticide use may be offered depending on the work areas for post holders.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

There are currently four full time vacancies and the successful candidates will be employees of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and work in Forest Service, an Agency of the Department. These are temporary full time positions for students who have not yet graduated but are working towards a relevant qualification.

The placements are designed for students on sandwich courses\* and are open to all individuals who meet the criteria set out on page 9.

\* Sandwich courses are usually courses which include up to a year of work experience 'sandwiched' between two or three years of concentrated study. During this period the student usually goes on relevant work experience with an employer or organisation. Placements that are shorter than a year are eligible.

### **Location**

Forest Service has its Headquarters in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh and has several operational sites throughout Northern Ireland. Successful candidates will be expected to work in any of the activities outlined in the Key Responsibilities throughout Northern Ireland but will be posted to the Forest Service Headquarters in Enniskillen during their employment.

### **Wages**

The wages for these posts will be £327.13 per week. Currently pay is weekly.

### **Pensions**

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at [www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni)

### **Annual Leave**

In addition to the 12 public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days pro rata.

### **Transport**

As these posts require the postholder to travel on official duty. They may be required at times to drive an official vehicle and therefore must possess a valid driving licence that allows them to drive in Northern Ireland.

### **Working Hours**

The successful candidates will be required to work 37 hours per week, 5 days per week and normally Monday to Friday. In addition the duties may

occasionally involve some evening and weekend work when time off in lieu or overtime payment arrangements will be put in place.

### **Medical**

The successful candidates will be required to undergo and successfully pass the following medical examinations in advance of an offer of employment being made:

- Drivers;
- Lone working
- Hand Arm Vibration Assessment (HAVS);
- Audio metric (Hearing).

### **Vetting Requirements**

The appointment will be dependant on the individual satisfying the Access NI Basic Level security vetting requirements for the post.

### **Conflict of Interest**

It is a basic requirement of all Civil Servants that their private activities should not bring them in to conflict with their official duties. Conflict of Interest is not limited to the individual's own private, financial or other interests, as family, friends and associates may also have dealings which affect the Department's business directly or indirectly. Therefore to avoid any conflict or potential conflict and to demonstrate impartiality to the public at all times, an officer must not, without prior approval, engage in any activity which could be considered to be in conflict with official business. As such, to protect employees and the Department from public criticism, it will be mandatory for the successful candidate to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration on appointment.

### **Further Information**

Applicants wishing to learn more about the key responsibilities of the post before deciding to apply may contact Mr. Ben Searle at 028 9052 5476 or email [ben.searle@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ben.searle@daera-ni.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about the competition process you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: [recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net)

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1. Be currently studying for a third level qualification\* in Forestry or Arboriculture, which may offer the option of an unbroken work placement up to 51 weeks for the academic year;

**AND**

2. Have a full, current driving license which permits the license holder to drive in Northern Ireland or have this by the date of appointment.

\*Examples of relevant qualifications can be viewed on the Education & Careers page of the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) [webpage \(FdSc/HND/BSc\)](#) or for republic of Ireland institutions [Forestry Careers portal ROI](#) (Bsc/ ROI National framework of qualifications (NFQ) Level 6 or higher

N.B. Courses that do not lead to a professional qualification in forestry but have a small forestry content within them will NOT be eligible.

*This placement is not designed for those who have completed their Forestry studies. Candidates will only be appointed if confirmation is obtained from the college/university that they are required to return and complete the course.*

### **Relevant or equivalent qualifications**

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated. Where applicants have applied under the equivalent category or under a closely related subject category they must provide the necessary evidence in their application form. Such evidence should define the qualification and list the modules taken.

Give the type of qualification and if you believe the qualification you are studying for is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

**Please note:**

- You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.
- It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.
- The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.
- If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.
- ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post.
- Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk)

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The selection process will include a presentation and a competence based interview -

### **Presentation**

As part of the selection process, applicants will be required to deliver a short work based presentation of **no more than 5 minutes**, the subject of which will be provided to candidates in the invitation to interview letter. Applicants should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview as no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. Applicants may bring prepared flip chart paper and prepared notes into the interview to deliver the presentation. A flip chart and flip chart markers will also be available in the interview room when delivering the presentation if required. Candidates are not permitted to deliver the presentation electronically, engage the panel as participants, nor provide any handouts or other materials to the panel.

The presentation will be used to assess the Seeing the Big Picture competence.

### **Marks available: 40**

#### **1. Changing and improving**

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it is about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways.

### **Marks Available: 20**

#### **2. Leading & communicating**

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens.

### **Marks Available: 20**

#### **3. Delivering at Pace**

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way.

### **Marks Available: 20**

**Total marks available: 100**

**Overall pass mark: 50**

## **COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS**

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

No notes or personal documentation may be brought into the interview room.

## **INTERVIEWS**

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

## **NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 1.

The NICS competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results.

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The framework outlines ten competencies, which are grouped into three clusters. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed via [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)

**It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of selection process. Should you require assistance in accessing the competency framework please contact HRConnect.**

## **GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

### **APPLICATION FORM**

Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before making your application and retain a copy for your reference. The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria. **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

**Please note:**

- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, hard copy application packs are available on request. All applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms, unless it is specifically requested in the application form and candidate information booklet.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date and time.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available.
- The session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- You must click SUBMIT once you have finished your online application. You will receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact HRConnect if you do not receive an acknowledgment email within 24 hrs.

## **Help with making your application**

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local Jobs and Benefits Office - contact details are available on NIDirect: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-offices>

You can also get advice or assistance from local disability employment organisations. To find out more about local disability employment organisations contact Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), an umbrella group for individuals and organisations promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to access and maintain employment, email [info@niuse.org.uk](mailto:info@niuse.org.uk), tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709, text phone 0044 (0) 28 71 372077

## **GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

### **INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

**If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:**

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

**A competence-based interview does however require you to:**

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfill the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

**In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:**

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve;
- Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution;
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience to demonstrate the range of behaviours associated with the competences being assessed. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

For professional and technical posts, questions may be framed in the context of professional elements of the post.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **The Merit Principle**

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments to the NICS are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at [www.nicscommissioners.org](http://www.nicscommissioners.org).

### **NICSHR Privacy Notice**

NICSHR are committed to protecting your privacy. HRConnect manage job applications on behalf of NICSHR, in line with the NICSHR privacy notice available via [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)

### **Offers of Employment**

Candidates will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

### **Changes in personal circumstances and contact details**

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect have up to date contact details.

### **Transgender Requirements**

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration, in confidence, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HRConnect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

### **Merit List**

**HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed.** It is presently intended that the merit list for this competition should remain extant for a period of one year. However you should be aware that circumstances may arise in the future where it will be necessary to extend the currency of the merit list for a further period. The merit list will only be extended where cogent practical reasons for doing so arise.

## **Disability Requirements**

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HRConnect.

## **Documentation**

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You will be required to bring documentary evidence of your qualifications / professional membership to assessment.

You should ensure that the required documents are readily available.

## **Right to Work and Nationality Requirements**

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom and satisfy the Nationality requirements for appointment to the NICS. Applicants must be either:

- (i) A UK national; or
- (ii) A Commonwealth citizen; or
- (iii) A British Protected Person; or
- (iv) An EEA national; or
- (v) A Swiss National; or
- (vi) A person who is not an EEA or Swiss national, but is a family member of an EEA national who has moved to the UK from another EEA Member State for an approved purpose.

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available via [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk).

## **Security**

### **1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard**

For these posts in the NICS the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport *OR*
- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) *AND* your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- c) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Further information regarding the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, including other acceptable documents is available via [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

We will organise a Criminal Record Check on all applicants to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is;

### **Basic Disclosure Certificate**

You should not put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni).

Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview/test, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment.

Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

## **Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form**

**Please note the Equal Opportunities monitoring section of the application form is mandatory in order to submit an application.**

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to the DoF website [www.finance-ni.gov.uk](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk).

**The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.**  
All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit

## **Feedback**

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair and in accordance with the principles of the Civil Service Commissioners Code. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.

**THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART OF  
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**