

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC238332

**Research and Data Analysis
Placement Student**

**Northern Ireland Statistics and
Research Agency (NISRA),
Department of Finance (DoF)**

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 22nd March 2019***

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

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

www.nisra.gov.uk

NISRA Facebook

NINIS Twitter

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.

Contents	Page
Foreword	3
Background	4
Key Responsibilities	5
Terms and Conditions	6
Eligibility Criteria	8
Assessment Process	10
Guidance for Applicants	12
General Information	14

FOREWORD

A note from the Chief Executive of the NI Statistics and Research Agency

NISRA is an organisation of some 300 specialists including statisticians, analysts, social researchers and ICT technicians and 130 administrative staff. We work across all government departments and many other public bodies. We record all births, deaths and marriages through the General Register Office and carry out all of the major household and business surveys in Northern Ireland including the Census of Population, which will next take place in 2021.

Whether the issue is one of health, education, transport or the economy, we have teams conducting analysis and social research in that area. Placement students from this competition can be expected to be posted to any area of our business including, Census, the Probation Board, Departments of Justice, Education and for Communities, though this is not an exhaustive list.

Our overarching purpose is to provide the Northern Ireland citizen with insight on the true nature and condition of our society. Government at all levels needs to justify public expenditure on policies that are effective and efficient. NISRA provides much of the evidence required for the formulation, development and evaluation of that policy and we pride ourselves on our professionalism in providing the evidence base for social debate and informed decision making.

This is a challenging role demanding commitment to excellence in data collection, processing and analysis, information security and the highest standards of output quality. If you want to be a part of this essential work and to grow and develop personally and professionally then we are looking for you

Siobhan Carey
Chief Executive

BACKGROUND

About the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency is an Executive Agency of the Department of Finance (DoF).

NISRA provides statistics, research and registration services and is responsible for taking the Census of Population.

NISRA's core purpose is:

- to provide a high quality, cost effective registration, statistical and research service that informs the policy and democratic processes; and
- to provide a window on Northern Ireland's society and its economy by providing evidence to inform decision-making.

Around 430 staff work in NISRA along with approximately 300 field staff. More than half of the 430 staff are statisticians and social researchers (all of whom are graded as Statisticians). The remainder are administrators or IT staff. Statisticians are drawn from a range of academic disciplines including: maths, statistics, psychology, geography, computing, data science, engineering etc. NISRA staff work primarily in Government Departments but are also located in other Agencies, Non Departmental Public Bodies and local councils.

Although career management of staff in NISRA is centred in the DoF, staff can expect to work in a number of different departments throughout their career. The jobs on offer will normally be based in Greater Belfast including Bangor area.

Information about NISRA can be obtained on the Agency's website at www.nisra.gov.uk and on Facebook and Twitter at;

<https://www.facebook.com/nisra.gov.uk/>

<https://twitter.com/nisra>

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Placement students will become part of a NISRA team delivering trusted analytical and research support to their respective departments or agencies. Typical duties may include:

Assisting with Data Acquisition

- Surveys – including questionnaire design, sampling
- Administrative data
- Scoping new and innovative data sources
- Evaluations and focus groups
- Assisting with data collection and validation

Assisting with Data Analysis and Research

- Descriptive and inferential analysis of data and research
- Statistical modelling and forecasting
- Exploration of new data science techniques

Assisting with the Presentation and Dissemination of Data and Research findings effectively.

- Statistical and Research publications
- Dissemination of findings using infographics, and innovative data visualisation tools

The above list is not exhaustive but gives a good indication of the main duties of the post. The emphasis on particular duties will vary over time according to business needs.

Guidance and support will be provided at all times by other members of the team, enabling the placement students to develop a fuller awareness of their business environment and how it meets the requirements of customers both within the NICS and members of the general public.

Across NISRA a range of software packages are utilised including R, SPSS, SAS, MS SQL Server, ArcGIS, QGIS and Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint etc). Experience in the use of any of these is preferable but not essential.

Some areas of work will be specific to the particular branches within which the students are placed and training in these areas will be provided.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There will be opportunities for Placement Students for the 2019/2020 academic year throughout NISRA.

There are 6 temporary full time positions for undergraduate students working towards a relevant qualification. Further placements may be made from this competition.

Location

The posts are primarily based in the Greater Belfast and Bangor area.

Salary

The salary for this job will be £17,526 per annum.

Appointment

Successful candidates should be prepared to take up post during summer 2019 and no later than September 2019.

Appointments will be for a duration of no more than 51 weeks from the date of commencing employment.

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

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance will be 25 days.

Hours of Work

Normal hours of work are full-time: 37 hours per week, Monday to Friday.

Subject to business requirements, a flexi-time system is in operation and this provides employees with flexibility regarding when they start and end their working day. It also allows employees to accrue flexi-hours as credits. These can be taken as flexi leave in addition to the annual leave and the public and privilege holiday entitlement.

Vetting

An appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the vetting requirements for the post. The level of vetting required for this post is basic

Further Information

If you wish to learn more about these posts before deciding to apply, you may contact Jacquie Hyvart on 02890388449 or Jacquie.Hyvart@nisra.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

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must:

1. be students **currently** studying for a degree which has at least one module in either statistics, data analytics, social research or quantitative research methods;

AND

2. have successfully completed at least their second year examinations of their degree by the end of the 2018/2019 academic year*;

AND

3. have the opportunity to undertake a one year placement for the 2019/2020 academic year or are able to defer final year until the 2020/2021 academic year.

***Applications will not be accepted from students who have completed or will complete their degree in 2019.**

The Panel holds the right to determine the relevance of the degree.

The onus is on the applicant to provide the panel with details of modules / studies etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

Applicants are asked to provide the following details on their application form:

- name of Tutor/Professor or other responsible person from whom a report may be sought;
- contact telephone number and/or e-mail address for Tutor/Professor; and
- University address, including Department.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward for interview, the following shortlisting criteria will be used:

1. Criteria 1 will be enhanced to 2 or more modules in statistics, data analytics, social research or quantitative research methods.

1. Criteria 1 will be enhanced to 3 or more modules in statistics, data analytics, social research or quantitative research methods.

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.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be explored at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- 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. Please do not include your name in the employment history or eligibility criteria sections.
- The NICS Competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

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

1. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For all staff, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well reasoned, justifiable decisions.

Marks available: 30

2. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the NICS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks available: 30

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: 30

Total Marks Available: 90

Overall Pass Mark: 45

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 15th April 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

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, tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709, text phone 0044 (0) 28 71 372077

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.

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

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 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.

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For these posts in NISRA 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.

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.

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.

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**