

**Candidate  
Information  
Booklet**

**IRC235919  
Economist – 51 Week Student  
Placement  
Department for the Economy (DfE)**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be submitted to  
HRConnect no later than 12  
noon (UK time) on  
*Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019***

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

## ***Department for the Economy***

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**DfE**

### **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 for the Economy works closely with the other Departments which have important contributions to make to economic policy and strategy, most notably Department of Finance, Department for Infrastructure, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Department of Education and the Department of Health.

### **VISION**

DfE's Vision is a globally competitive economy.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

DfE's Mission is to develop and implement agile policies and programmes which promote a competitive, sustainable and inclusive economy through investment in:

- skills;
- economic infrastructure;
- research and innovation; and
- business development.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

**The Department for the Economy will:**

- i. assist the development of businesses to compete successfully in the local and global economies and to create employment;
- ii. stimulate research & development, innovation and creativity;
- iii. support economic, social and personal development through relevant high quality learning, research and skills;
- iv. secure high quality inward investment;
- v. facilitate the development of economic infrastructure to provide a strong foundation for economic growth;
- vi. deliver a regulatory environment which protects consumers and workers while also encouraging business and commerce; and
- vii. work in partnership with others in supporting economic growth.

## STRUCTURE

The Department is organised into four separate Groups, detailed below, each under the management of a Deputy Secretary. Given the responsibilities of each of the Groups there is a strong culture of inter-Group working to deliver on the Department's vision and objectives.

(i) **Strategic Policy** – sets high level strategy and policy for the Department.

(ii) **Operational Policy - Delivery through Arms Length Bodies Group** - works closely with a number of DfE's Arms Length Bodies to deliver the Minister and the Executive's policies for the economy. A key aim for the Group is to facilitate better linkages between skills, education and the ways we can assist individuals and businesses in support of economic development.

(iii) **Operational Policy – Infrastructure and Regulation Group** – enables the economy through a focus on energy, telecoms and natural resources; providing the right regulatory environment for business, employees and consumers.

(iv) **Operational Policy – Investment Group** – all of the Department's money (approx £800 million) flows through the Group, via bidding and allocation to business areas. The Group works closely with the Higher Education sector to ensure provision of a quality experience for students and to facilitate the sector's aspirations to be world class and globally competitive.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The main duties and responsibilities of each post holder will include:

### Student 1

- Identify, review and summarise relevant research and policy reports on enterprise, trade and investment issues for the Quarterly Economic Digest.
- Maintain a central database of relevant research reports identified in both the Quarterly Economic Digest and the Quarterly Labour Market & Skills Digest.
- Draft literature reviews and analytical papers on economic and labour market issues.
- Gather and analyse data on key measures of economic competitiveness for small advanced economies.
- Assist with economic research projects and the delivery of the DfE Research Agenda.
- Develop economic knowledge and skills through reading relevant economic publications and attending seminars and conferences.

### Student 2

- Gather economic data and maintain a central database of information for DfE economic publications and briefing requests.
- Assist in drafting the Monthly Economic Brief and Economic Commentary publications.
- Provide economic data, analysis and charts to input into requests and queries from internal and external customers.
- Assist with analysis and research on Brexit and other topical economic issues.
- Assist in updating/monitoring of the rolling programme of evaluation and reviewing evaluation reports.
- Develop economic knowledge and skills through reading relevant economic publications and attending seminars and conferences.

**The key responsibilities listed are not meant to be comprehensive but to give a good indication of the main duties of each post. The emphasis on particular duties will vary over time according to business needs.**

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

There are currently 2 full time temporary positions for students who have not yet graduated but are working towards a relevant qualification.

Further appointments may be made from this competition should NICS positions become vacant which require the same eligibility criteria and have similar duties and responsibilities.

### **Location**

The posts are based in Adelaide House, Belfast City Centre.

### **Salary**

Salary payable will be the band minimum for the Administrative Assistant scale which is currently £ 17,526 per annum.

### **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)

### **Holidays**

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

### **Hours of Work**

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 42 hours per week which includes a 1 hour meal break (37 hours net) Monday to Friday. Most offices work flexi-time.

### **Vetting**

The successful candidates will be required to be cleared to Basic Level.

### **Appointment**

The successful candidates should be prepared to take up post during September 2019. Appointment will be for a duration of no more than 51 weeks from the date of commencing employment. It is anticipated that employment will commence from September 2019. A mid year review will take place to determine progress after six months in post.

## **Career Development**

The NICS is committed to career development and offers attractive career prospects across a wide variety of roles and professions. Career development is an integral part of the performance management system. Personal Development Plans identify learning and development needs with a view to enhancing skills and capabilities. NI Civil Servants have access to a wide range of internal job opportunities, including secondments with external organisations and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing their career.

## **Further Information**

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may telephone Carmel McConville on 02890 416986 or email [carmel.mcconville@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:carmel.mcconville@economy-ni.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about the competition process, or require any documentation in an alternative format, 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 students currently studying for a BA/BSc Honours Degree in Economics, or in a subject where the study of economics is a major component\*.

**\* 'Major component' is defined as: At least 50% of the course covers micro, macro and quantitative economics.**

**AND**

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

**\*\* The Panel is unable to accept applications from students who will complete their degree on or before 2019.**

**AND**

3. Have the opportunity to undertake a 51 week work placement for the 2019/2020 academic year.

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.
- University address, including Department.

This information will be used to confirm applicants' eligibility to undertake a one-year placement for the 2019/20 academic year. Candidates will only be appointed if confirmation is obtained from the College/University that they are required to return and complete their course.

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.

**Relevant or equivalent** qualifications: give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification 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.
- 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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

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

### **PRESENTATION**

As part of the selection process candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes, followed by questions from a member of the panel. The candidate will then be asked supplementary questions relevant to the presentation. Candidates will be presented with an information pack when they report for interview and will be given a maximum of 40 minutes to prepare for their presentation based on the information within the pack and their wider knowledge of the Northern Ireland economy. Candidates should therefore report for interview at least 60 minutes earlier than their scheduled interview appointment to allow time to prepare their presentation.

A flipchart and writing materials will be provided for candidates' use. No personal documentation may be brought in to the pre-interview room. Candidates will be allowed to bring any flipchart sheets and some short speaking notes into the interview room for assistance during the presentation (but note that use of the flipchart is not mandatory). No other materials or visual aids will be permitted.

The presentation will be utilised to score:

#### **Seeing the Big Picture**

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value.

#### **AND**

#### **Leading and 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: 40 Minimum standard: 25

## **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.

### **1. Collaborating & 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: 20

### **2. 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

### **3. 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: 20

**Total Marks Available: 100**

**Overall Pass Mark: 50**

## **INTERVIEWS**

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> March 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 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**