

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC234078

**Director of the Northern Ireland
Bureau in China (Grade 5)**

The Executive Office (TEO)

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 7th December 2018***

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

The Executive Office (TEO)

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	7
Terms and Conditions	9
Eligibility Criteria	13
Assessment Process	15
Guidance for Applicants	19
General Information	21

FOREWORD

An exciting opportunity exists for appointment to a unique role representing the Northern Ireland Executive in China. This is a strategic senior position within the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The post of Director of the Northern Ireland Bureau in Beijing is pivotal in developing the Executive's engagement with the Chinese Government, regional administrations within China and other representative bodies with which Northern Ireland is developing long-term strategic partnerships.

The Executive's Programme for Government (PfG) 2011-2015 placed growing our economy at its focal point and this remains at the heart of the Executive's Draft Programme for Government 2016 - 2021. Promoting Northern Ireland as an outward-looking region and an attractive place to invest and to visit is a key focus of the PfG. Intrinsic to achieving this is increasing exports bringing investment, jobs, visitors, new skills and best practice to Northern Ireland. The promotion of Northern Ireland internationally and the development of mutually beneficial relationships (including cultural and social linkages as well as trade and investment) with targeted countries and regions are, therefore, important strategic targets and crucial to the successful implementation of the Executive's PfG. The UK's exit from the EU will change the context for the role materially, and we need to be strongly placed to assist NI Ministers when they return to make the most of all available opportunities in the new context.

Recognising this importance, in 2014 the Executive agreed an International Relations Strategy to provide a focus and framework for the development of Northern Ireland's international engagement and development. The Strategy targets key countries around the world, prioritises areas of international collaboration and commits Executive Ministers to a protocol on international visits. A significant objective within this Strategy was the establishment of an Executive Bureau in the People's Republic of China.

The opening of the Bureau in China formally took the relationship between the two countries to a new diplomatic, business and political standing. The post of Bureau Director presents a unique opportunity for the successful candidate to work closely with a variety of political representatives and to further develop relationships within the Chinese Government.

This is an interesting and challenging role. In addition to the ability to communicate effectively with key decision makers in government and business, it will require energy and drive and a passion to embrace Chinese culture. If you are seeking an exciting and rewarding career opportunity, I would invite you to apply for this post.

David Sterling, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

BACKGROUND

Northern Ireland Bureau in China

The First Minister and deputy First Minister agreed to open an Executive Office (Bureau) in Beijing, China, to strengthen government to government relationships and influence Chinese, central, provincial and municipal governments to look positively and support our objectives for working with China. The outcome of this is that this will lead to tangible benefits for NI including increased trade, investment, education, tourism, science & research exchange and best practice in agriculture and health.

China, as the world's second largest economy, provides an opportunity for Northern Ireland in terms of the potential for growing our government and economic interests by accessing a market of 1.3 billion people and generating new investment in our infrastructure, science and research. China's economic power and global influence has made it a priority for the diplomatic offices of many countries and regions. In this competitive environment NI needs to be proactive and establish its presence by promoting our unique capabilities, target regions and organisations where we have the potential to add more value and combine and commit our resources to long term relationships.

The first Director was appointed in September 2014 to establish relationships with government and key stakeholders and to set up the office and its operations. The NI Bureau China was officially opened by Ministers in December 2016.

The Bureau's Director needs to be able to engage at a senior level with Chinese institutions to raise Northern Ireland's profile, promote our capabilities and influence policy, programmes and decisions in favour of Northern Ireland's Programme for Government objectives. The Director will also advise the UK mission to China on all aspects of NI Executive devolved policy and on areas of reserved policy that have an impact on Northern Ireland.

The NI Bureau Director will be responsible for managing and enhancing the full diplomatic and government to government protocols with the Government of the People's Republic of China including provincial and municipal governments. He/she will be responsible for developing and implementing NI's strategy for China, making in-country decisions on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive and providing direction and guidance to NI Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Departments and public agencies on strategies and actions with regard to China. The role will also involve building an Executive presence, creating an awareness of Northern Ireland, developing a network of contacts and advising the Executive, its departments and its stakeholders on areas for engagement and opportunity with China.

The Bureau's mission is to:-

- establish a relationship with the Chinese central, provincial and municipal governments that is mutually beneficial;
- proactively seek opportunities to promote our capabilities;
- explore areas where we can benefit practically.

In developing our relationship with the Chinese Government and promoting NI interests throughout China, the role will include building and maintaining productive working relationships with the UK and RoI ambassadors and diplomatic offices, and developing productive relationships with senior officers in key Chinese organisations and other international organisations operating in China. The Bureau will also be responsible for creating a positive image and promoting our achievements with potential partner organisations. This includes developing a strong 'corporate NI' message with our partner organisations, other public bodies operating in China and the region and with organisations representing the NI private sector.

The NI Bureau China has been established and operating successfully for 4 years now. The successful candidate will therefore be assuming responsibility for the Bureau and building on the previous work to achieve the objectives set out in this booklet.

Directorate Structure

The NI Bureau in China sits within the International Relations Group of The Executive Office. The Directorate is headed by a Director General (Grade 2), Andrew McCormick and comprises 5 Divisions as follows –

- European Division (incorporating the Office of the NI Executive in Brussels)
- NI Bureau in China
- NI Bureau in Washington
- North South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat (North)
- EU Future Relations

The Executive Office

The Executive Office (TEO) is a Department of the Northern Ireland Civil Service with a wide range of responsibilities. The Departmental aim is to contribute to and oversee the co-ordination of Executive policies and programmes to deliver a peaceful, fair, equal and prosperous society. The strategic objectives of the Department include:

- providing advice, guidance and support to the First Minister and deputy First Minister as Joint Chairs of the Executive and to Ministers and Departments concerning participation in the institutions of government;

- developing, overseeing and co-coordinating the delivery of the Programme for Government and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland; and
- promoting and monitoring implementation of cross-cutting policy and strategy in key areas including equality of opportunity, good relations, victims and survivors, regeneration, sustainable development, economic policy; international relations (on devolved issues) and civil contingencies.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of the NI Bureau will be responsible for managing the Northern Ireland Executive's relationship with China, developing the strategy for Northern Ireland's engagement with China, identifying and forming constructive relations with senior decision makers in key Chinese government departments, members of the central Chinese government with influence over foreign relations and key influencers in organisations in our targeted sectors.

Through their influence, the Director will be responsible for building and enhancing relationships between China and the NI Executive that will support our Programme for Government objectives. This will include influencing and securing participation in relevant government policy, programmes and actions; initiating and developing strategic visit programmes for NI Executive Ministers and Senior Officials incorporating meetings with senior Chinese government officials, Chief Executives of targeted organisations (e.g. Business, University, Investment Banks) and governors/mayors of major regional governments. He/she will also be responsible for initiating, managing and delivering a series of public diplomacy events and economic, cultural and social programmes to raise the profile of Northern Ireland in China amongst key decision makers.

The Director will be responsible for establishing and managing effective relations with the full UK mission in China, as well as the Embassy of Ireland and Consular posts in China.

MAIN DUTIES

The main duties of the post are as follows: -

- Taking forward and developing the Bureau's strategic approach to China, in order to deliver effectively the policies and programmes of the Executive including action plans for increased trade, investment, education, tourism, science & research, culture & heritage and exchange best practice in agriculture and health;
- Building on and enhancing strategic stakeholder relationships that will:
 - establish and maintain constructive relationships with senior members of the Chinese Government and CEOs of key Chinese Institutions;
 - identify and influence senior Chinese Government officials, leaders and CEOs to promote the interests of NI including market access and developing tangible programmes creating mutual benefits;
 - monitor the development of Chinese international policy through formal and informal contact and ensure that Ministers and Departments are fully aware of current issues and forthcoming initiatives relevant to NI's interests;
 - ensure that Northern Ireland interests are taken into account in the work of the British institutions as well as relevant Irish and

EU Institutions in China through influencing and negotiating with the relevant senior officials;

- develop and implement programmes in China and NI that will enhance our image and help to secure more economic, education, research and cultural benefits;
- identify and participate in programmes from other stakeholders that will contribute to NI's objectives in China;
- promote civic connections between regions, providing advice and negotiating support from governments and cities for productive partnership arrangements;
- raise the positive profile of Northern Ireland and the Executive among Chinese policy makers and opinion formers, through soft power, public diplomacy, personal and social networking and promotional initiative;
- facilitate strategic business to business linkages between government departments and key stakeholders in NI (at senior level) and specific government organisations and business sectors in China;
- coordinate work across departments, agencies and other NI stakeholders to maximise the use of our resources in country and develop a positive 'corporate NI' presence;
- provide advice, practical assistance and support to businesses, councils, universities and other relevant organisations seeking to operate in China; and
- ensure development of appropriate good governance in relation to financial management, contracts and management information systems.

The above is given as a broad range of duties and is not intended to be exhaustive. It is important to note that the responsibilities may change to meet the evolving needs of the role.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This is a permanent full-time appointment and is a Grade 5 post within the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service (SCS).

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.

Duration of Appointment

Given the nature of this role it would be expected that the successful candidate will be placed in the NI Bureau in China for an initial period of 3 years with the possibility of further extensions, with the agreement of all parties. Once the agreed tenure in China is complete the successful candidate will return to Northern Ireland to take up another role within the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Secondment

This post may be filled by secondment of the successful candidate from his/her current employer. "Secondment" means a voluntary transfer from a permanent employer for a fixed period which does not sever the employment relationship of the person seconded with the permanent employer.

The duration will be agreed by all parties prior to the start of any secondment however the secondee would be expected to commit to a minimum of 3 years period. A secondment would be on a candidate's current terms and conditions of service.

It is advisable that candidates interested in a secondment option make their employers aware that, under NICS secondment arrangements, the successful candidate will remain an employee of their current employer. The necessary administration arrangements will be agreed with the Department and the employer before a secondment arrangement commences.

Timing of Appointment

The successful candidate will be expected to take up post in 2019.

Salary

Salary for the post will be within the Senior Civil Service Grade 5 Band range £68,961 - £79,058 (under review) within which annual pay progression will be in line with the NICS Senior Civil Service pay policy.

The successful candidate can expect to be placed at the minimum point of the payscale, although a higher starting salary within the range may be available if he/she has exceptionally relevant skills/experience. If the successful

candidate is an existing NICS civil servant, starting pay on transfer to a new substantive grade will apply

In order to comply with the disclosure requirements in our Annual Accounts, we will be required to disclose details of the total remuneration, including any taxable benefits in kind and pension benefits for this post in our annual accounts. Further information may be disclosed in line with any future disclosure requirements relating to the senior management of departments. It is a condition attaching to the appointment to any SCS post in Northern Ireland that appointees agree to these disclosure requirements.

A successful candidate will, on appointment, become a member of the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service. As a member of the SCS the postholder may in due course be transferred to other posts at the same level. An advance of salary of up to a maximum of 3 months' gross basic salary may be available prior to posting.

Location

The postholder will be based in Beijing, China.

Hours of Work

Evening work is a regular feature of the post and, in common with all SCS appointments, the postholder will be required to work outside normal conditioned hours where necessary, to fulfil the demands of the post.

This post has a Senior representational role that will require you to work in the evenings as a regular feature of the job and to incur related entertainment and other ad hoc expenses. It has been agreed by the Department that a Director Allowance will be payable to the successful applicant. This allowance is currently worth £4,500 pa and is liable to Tax and NI Contributions.

Travel

Extensive travel to key cities within China from the Bureau's base in Beijing is essential as well as journeys to and from Northern Ireland to engage with stakeholders based here.

Terms and Conditions (including Allowances)

NICS Terms and Conditions and Allowances will apply to this post.

A copy of the NICS Policy On Postings Outside Of The UK is available by contacting TandS@finance-ni.gov.uk

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance will be 30 days.

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

Language

While not essential for the conduct of official business, it is desirable that the postholder has a working knowledge of Mandarin. If the successful candidate does not, language training courses will be provided to bring them up to the standard desirable for the post.

Health Requirements

This appointment will be subject to a satisfactory medical and dental examination of the successful candidate (and his/her family if applicable) carried out by the Occupational Health Service of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

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 National Security Vetting to DV level and the successful candidate will need to have the required clearance before taking up post in China.

Probation

Confirmation of appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory the appointment may be terminated.

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.

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 post before deciding to apply may telephone Joanne McCarthy on Joanne.McCarthy@finance-ni.gsi.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

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to be considered as a candidate in this competition, applicants must, by the closing date for applications, be able to demonstrate that they have ALL of the following:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the political context in Northern Ireland and the operation of the institutions of Government;

AND

2. Knowledge and understanding of the relevant significant economic, business, social and cultural issues in Northern Ireland;

AND

3. A minimum of 3 years experience within the past 7 years at senior management level* of developing policy / strategy to deliver specific outcomes;

AND

4. A minimum of 3 years experience within the last 7 years at senior management level* of establishing and developing strong stakeholder relationships and effective partnerships and building networks to deliver significant benefits;

AND

5. Successfully developed the international interests of an organisation at senior management level*, demonstrating how they have taken into account the implications of cultural differences in achieving desired outcomes;

AND

6. Evidence of a successful track record of working independently and exercising individual judgement to deliver key outcomes for an organisation.

Please note:

*Senior management level - includes providing detailed advice or taking decisions personally on strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which the individual is working either as an employee or advisor.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

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

1. The strength and breadth of the evidence provided in the candidate's response to Eligibility Criterion 5.
2. Evidence of having previously worked in China, or in a business, academic or administrative context with strong and demonstrable relevance to working in China (please note your response should indicate the nature, extent and duration of the work undertaken).

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

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, the title of which will be provided to candidates in the invitation to interview letter. The panel will also ask follow up questions after the presentation.

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 speaking notes into the interview to deliver the presentation. No other visual aids or handouts are permitted.

The presentation will be used to assess the Seeing the Big Picture and Leading and Communicating competences.

Please note: Notes must not be used during the interview stage of the assessment.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility (and if appropriate shortlisting) criteria, applicants will also be expected to demonstrate the following selection criteria/competences at interview:

1. 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. At senior levels, it is about understanding the political context and taking account of wider impacts, including the broader legislative agenda, to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen, support economic, sustainable growth and help to deliver the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities.

Marks Available: 30 (10 marks presentation) Minimum standard: 18

2. 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. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and to balance political, legislative, social, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

Marks Available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

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. At senior levels, it is about building a performance culture to deliver outcomes with a firm focus on prioritisation and addressing performance issues resolutely, fairly and promptly. It is also about leaders providing the focus and energy to drive activities forward through others and encourage staff to perform effectively during challenging and changing times.

Marks Available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

4. Achieving Outcomes through Delivery Partners

Being effective in this area is about maintaining an economic, long-term focus in all activities involving delivery partners (whether from the private, public or voluntary sectors). For all, it is about having a commercial, financial and sustainable mindset to ensure all activities and services are delivering added value and working to stimulate economic growth. At senior levels, it is about identifying economic, market and customer issues and using these to promote innovative business models, delivery partnerships and agreements to deliver greatest value; and ensuring tight controls of finances, resources and contracts to meet strategic priorities.

Marks Available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

5. 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. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision, managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the NICS.

Marks Available: 30 (10 marks presentation) Minimum standard: 18

6. 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. At senior levels, it is about delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, encouraging collaboration which may cut across departmental, organisational and wider boundaries. It requires the ability to build constructive partnerships and effective relationships with Ministers and their Special Advisers.

Marks Available: 20

Minimum standard: 12

Total marks available: 140

Overall Pass mark: 84

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.

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing 14th January 2019.

AVAILABILITY

Precise dates for the interviews will be arranged shortly.

Please note that this competition is being run to a very tight schedule and changes to the timetable will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 5.

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 acknowledgement 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

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.

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 the **Director of the Northern Ireland Bureau in China (Grade 5)** post in the NICS the level of vetting is Developed Vetting (DV). 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.

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

2. Counter Terrorist Check (CTC): as point 1 plus check of Security Service records.

3. Security Check (SC): as point 2 plus credit reference check.

4. Developed Vetting (DV): as point 3 plus subject interview and field investigation.

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.

As women are currently known to be under represented in this grade in the NICS, applications from women would be particularly welcome.

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**