

Northern Ireland Civil Service Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

Introduction

1. The GIS will apply to all NICS external recruitment activity where minimum essential criteria and some form of shortlisting apply.
2. The definition of disability for the purposes of this policy is set out at Annex 1.
3. As part of our commitment to the employment of disabled people, the NICS operates a positive action measure in its recruitment and selection processes that aims to encourage disabled people to apply for jobs and to address potential barriers to their recruitment. The measure is known as a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS).
4. This policy document sets out how the GIS will operate in the NICS and should be read in conjunction with the supporting guidance documents and frequently asked questions.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

5. The positive action measure under the GIS does not guarantee a job, but rather enhances the access of disabled applicants to the interview stage of a recruitment selection process, where they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, talents and abilities. All applicants continue to be assessed and marked on merit.
6. The aim of this policy is to guarantee greater access for disabled applicants to the interview stage of a recruitment competition. Where appropriate, all those who meet the definition of disability set out in **Annex 1** can choose to have their application considered under the GIS, which will provide a greater chance of proceeding to interview.

7. From an operational perspective, it is necessary to take account of the variety of recruitment processes in an organisation as large and as diverse as the NICS, as this will impact on how the GIS will operate.
8. All GIS applicants who have demonstrated they meet the minimum essential criteria (as determined from the information provided on their application) will proceed to the next stage of selection without being subject to additional criteria or assessment for the purposes of shortlisting where:
 - minimum essential criteria are identified, which all applicants (including those applying through the GIS) must meet;
 - the numbers involved make it possible, within the timescales allowed in the competition timeline, to give a guarantee of an interview to all GIS applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria.
9. However it may not be possible to guarantee an interview in the following circumstances:
 - the competition does not require minimum essential eligibility criteria; or
 - minimum essential eligibility criteria are assessed by use of a test / assessment for all applicants in large volume or corporate competitions and the numbers of those who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria are too high to guarantee an interview to all, so a limited number of interviews are offered on merit order based on test/assessment score.
10. In cases where an aptitude test is used to assess minimum essential eligibility and where the numbers involved make it impractical to interview all those who pass the test, a limited number of interviews is offered in merit order, based on test score. A positive action measure will be applied to ensure that the proportion of GIS applicants who proceed to interview in this way reflects the proportion who passed the test. For example, if 10% of all those who pass the minimum essential criteria test are GIS applicants, then at least 10% of those who proceed to interview will be GIS applicants, with remaining interviewees selected solely on the basis of their score in the test.

11. It may be that the appropriate proportion of GIS applicants proceeding to interview is achieved automatically through merit order based on test score but, where this is not the case, a sufficient number of GIS applicants will proceed to interview to ensure the quota is met, even if this means by-passing non-disabled applicants in merit order.

12. The planning for a competition should include consideration of how the GIS arrangements will apply in that competition. In particular, those designing the competition should be mindful of the potential numbers of applicants, potential GIS applicants and the panel(s) ability to assess and interview in the planned timescales. The relevant Candidate Information Booklet (CIB) should provide information on the GIS arrangements that will operate.

13. The operation of a GIS in the NICS will be reviewed annually to ensure there remains a sound evidence base for the scheme as a continued positive action measure.

Annex 1

Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term (i.e. has lasted, or likely to last, overall for at least twelve months) adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Physical impairment: this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs, etc.) caused through illness, by accident or from birth. Examples would be blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease. An impairment may have effects that are fluctuating or recurring (such as rheumatoid arthritis, epilepsy) or progressive (such as motor neurone disease).

Mental impairment: this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability and social functioning.

Substantial: put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

Long-term adverse effect: the effect has to have lasted, or be expected to last, 12 months or more, and the effect must be a detrimental one.

A normal day-to-day activity: this is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis, such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television.

The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical coordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;
- perception of risk or physical danger; or
- ability to take part in normal social interaction or in forming social relationships e.g. autism spectrum conditions.

The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 made some changes to the definition of disability and ensured that people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be covered by DDA as soon as they are diagnosed.