

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

**IRC270546
Principal Economist (G7)
Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)**

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 28th January 2022***

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

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)

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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FOREWORD

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Economist Profession has enjoyed a prolonged period of significant growth. It consists of over 120 Economists providing valued professional economic services right across Northern Ireland government. This competition is to fill a number of Principal Economist positions in the Economist Profession.

Economists within the Profession engage in a wide variety of important work areas including undertaking and managing analysis, research and evaluation to help shape policy development, inform investment decisions, and improve the delivery of public services in Northern Ireland.

This is an exciting and challenging time to work in the NICS Economist Profession as we support the Northern Ireland Executive in delivering on its priorities and the actions required to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. It is certainly a time of great change and opportunity. I am keen to continue to build on the Profession's strong reputation for objectivity and rigour and I welcome into the Profession individuals who share these core values.

As a Principal Economist you will be required to lead your team in providing advice and briefing on economic matters to Executive Ministers and Senior Officials. As such, these roles put you at the heart of the policy and decision making process and requires excellent judgement and strong leadership skills. If you think you have the experience, enthusiasm and energy required for this role, I would be very delighted to hear from you.

Tony Simpson
Head of NICS Economist Profession

NICS
ECONOMIST PROFESSION

BACKGROUND

NICS Economist Profession

The NICS Economist Profession is managed centrally within the Department of Finance's Strategic Policy Division by the Head of Profession. Economists are deployed across the NICS on long-term loan contracts.

The Profession consists of over 120 staff, from Staff Officer (Assistant Economist) level through to Chief Economist / Head of Profession (Senior Civil Service Grade 5).

Economists are typically 'loaned-out', on a long-term basis, centrally by DoF to NICS Departments, with occasional secondment opportunities with other non-departmental public bodies.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Depending on the specific role within each Department, the main duties and responsibilities could include:

- Providing professional advice to Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and senior colleagues on key economic and policy issues pertaining to the work of NI Departments;
- Providing a wide range of policy and professional advice to Departments and where appropriate to their arm's length bodies. This will include the provision of sound economic analysis and research to inform and challenge policy development and decision making across the Departments;
- Playing a key role to provide advice on the application of the NICS guidance on the preparation, review and approval of business cases that supports expenditure within Departments and their arm's length bodies;
- Delivering timely, high quality and sound economic services. Postholders will be expected to set and maintain high quality standards in accordance with best practice and economic thinking as it develops;
- Participating in evaluations of the effectiveness of departmental policy and research areas;
- Responding to Assembly Questions and providing briefing for Ministers and senior management on economic issues and policy;
- Staff management, ensuring the appropriate training, development and mentoring of staff; and
- Managing resources, both staffing and financial, and respective workloads within your Branch.

This list is not exhaustive and successful candidates will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There are currently a number of permanent, full time vacancies. However, arrangements for part time working can be considered.

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

These posts will be based in the Greater Belfast area, which may include Bangor. To build on our response to the Covid-19 pandemic and prepare for the future, a hybrid style of work which blends working at home (and remotely) with working in the office will be considered as the emerging NICS 'New Ways of Working' policy takes shape.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £52,026 - £55,685 within which pay progression will be performance related.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. If the successful candidate is an existing civil servant, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements will apply.

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, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service.

Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 37 hours, excluding meal breaks, Monday to Friday. Most offices work flexi-time.

Travel

Applicants may, from time to time, be required to travel on official duty; the successful candidate must have access to a form of transport, which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. This may require post holders to travel outside of Northern Ireland on occasion, depending on the requirements of the post.

Vetting

Most appointments to NICS will require security clearance to Basic Level. Some posts however may require a higher level of vetting.

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.

NICS Economists also benefit from access to a bespoke NICS Economist Profession Learning and Development (L&D) framework. The Economist L&D framework provides a structured learning pathway for NICS Economists - setting out targeted L&D by grade, across a number of key pillars including: Economics/Analytical; Policy; and Leadership, Management and Communication.

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 email Conor Bell (conor.bell@finance-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

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date of applications, have:

1. At least a second-class honours degree (2:2) with Economics as a major component*

AND

2. At least 5 years' experience, gained within the last 10 years**, in undertaking economic research/analysis and advice to support decision making (gained following graduation, from an eligible degree).

AND

3. At least 2 years' experience, gained within the last 10 years*** of working with others**** to successfully manage delivery of high quality economic research/analysis and advice in a timely manner (gained following graduation, from an eligible degree).

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 for example, Master's Degree where Economics has been a major component as defined above.

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.

You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your qualifications prior to appointment so please ensure you have these readily available.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition, applicants should be aware that, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the breadth and depth of information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 3. This will be completed on a scored basis of the criteria and only the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

* **Major Component** is defined as: at least 50% of all the course modules must be in economics. **Candidates must list all modules and briefly describe their relevant economic modules to allow the panel to determine that their qualification contains 50% of economics. The onus is on you to provide**

the panel with details of modules studied etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

**** applicants should provide dates against specific areas of economic research/ analysis and advice they have undertaken in the last 10 years to demonstrate that they meet this criterion.**

***** applicants should provide dates against specific areas where they have worked with others to manage delivery of high quality economic research/ analysis and advice in a timely manner in the last 10 years to demonstrate that they meet this criterion.**

****** 'working with others' could include those internal to the organisation such as staff, customers, and other business areas, or working with others in external organisations or Departments.**

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.**
- **State clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. State "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 lasting 7 minutes. The presentation topic, which will be economic in nature, will be provided on the day of interview and 30 minutes' preparation time will be given. Candidates should therefore report for interview at least 45 minutes earlier than their scheduled interview appointment to allow time to prepare their presentation.

The panel will stop the candidate when 7 minutes have elapsed. The panel will ask question(s) after the presentation to clarify understanding of a point(s).

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 assessed against the '**Seeing the Big Picture**' and '**Leading and Communicating**' competencies. To note, these two competencies will also be assessed further and separately in the competence based interview to follow.

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.

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: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

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

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

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.

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

2. 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: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

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

Minimum Standard: 12

4. 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

Minimum Standard: 12

5. Delivering Value for Money

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve a good mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay, thus reducing the risk of fraud and error. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money.

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

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.

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

Total Marks Available: 140

Overall Pass Mark: 84

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place during March 2022.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 4.

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

You can apply online at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

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:

- 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 submitted 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. State 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

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. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation when requested will result in your application being rejected.

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. Please note **ALL** applicants for external recruitment will be subject to a Nationality validation check.

Applicants must be either:

- (i) UK national; or
- (ii) National of a Commonwealth country; or
- (iii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or
- (iv) EEA nationals with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or
- (v) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service; or
- (vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or
- (vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals

For candidates applying under categories iv – vii you are required to provide the following information in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form. Failure to provide the requested information **WILL** result in your application being rejected.

Category iv – Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your ['share code'](#) here

Category v - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. You are also required to provide your payroll number in the nationality response box to demonstrate that you are working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service;

Category vi - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. Alternatively please provide confirmation in the nationality response box that you hold indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK and that this was granted prior to 31st December 2020.

Category vii - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. In addition, please provide evidence in the nationality response box to support your application for applying as a family member of a relevant EEA and Turkish nation. Further documentary evidence may be request from HRConnect to support this;

'Family member of the relevant EEA or Turkish nationals' means:

- (i) That national's spouse*; or
- (ii) A direct descendant (child, grandchild etc.) of that national or his/her spouse who is under 21 years of age or is their dependent; or
- (iii) A dependent relative in the ascending line (parent, grandparent etc.) of the EEA national or his/her spouse.

*Note: 'Spouse' does not include a party to a marriage of convenience and in the case of EEA national vocational students family members are restricted to spouses and dependent children only

Where a candidate has a right to work status which has a time limitation, ongoing checks will be in place to ensure the right to work is maintained.

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post 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.

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. Further information regarding policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders and the vetting process is available at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk in Recruitment Policy and Procedures manual.

Security Policy for AccessNI Disclosure Information is available at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk under Useful Information.

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.

Applications from Protestants, women, young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are particularly welcome for this post.

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**