

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

**IRC236618
Higher Scientific Officer – Scientific
Services (HSENI)
Health and Safety Executive for
Northern Ireland (HSENI)**

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 15th February 2019***

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



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

Thank you for the interest you have shown in the role of Higher Scientific Officer in the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI).

As the regional authority for health and safety at work in Northern Ireland, HSENI is committed to working in partnership with industry and the trade unions to raise standards and create a safer and healthier working environment.

Through a range of functions specified in the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, HSENI proposes legislation, sets standards for health and safety at work and seeks to ensure compliance with those standards. It also undertakes other forms of activity designed to stimulate or support necessary action on the part of people and organisations that have the potential to affect standards of health and safety at work.

The Higher Scientific Officer post affords the opportunity to join a team of dedicated professionals who are working to bring about a culture of change in the way in which workplace risks are managed. The function of Scientific Services is to provide a scientific resource, informing the opinion of the Inspector and supporting other parts of the organisation across a broad range of topics. The work can and will make a real difference in helping to minimise risks and incidences of ill-health, reduce costs and save lives. The work is interesting and varied and above all, delivers enormous job satisfaction.

I hope this information pack will encourage you to apply for this post and I look forward to hearing from you.

Robert Kidd
Chief Executive
HSENI

BACKGROUND

ABOUT HSENI

HSENI is the lead body responsible for the promotion and enforcement of health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland. It aims to inform, stimulate, guide and, where necessary, compel those with duties of care and others concerned with health and safety at work, in actions leading to higher standards.

HSENI was established in April 1999 as an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for the Economy (DfE). It has Crown status and its staff are civil servants.

HSENI plays a leading role in overseeing all aspects of health and safety promotion, information and advice, enforcement and legislation relating to work activities.

HSENI's vision is "A place where the sensible control of work-related risk is the norm and work-related deaths, injuries and ill health are the exception."

The essence of the work that HSENI undertakes in pursuit of this broad vision is encapsulated in the following **mission** statement: "To reduce serious work-related injury and ill-health in Northern Ireland."

This **mission** will focus on:

- Preventing the most serious workplace health and safety issues;
- High risk industries and activities;
- Sensible and proportionate risk management;
- Effective regulation; and
- Supporting businesses and the economy.

HSENI endeavours to realise its vision through the following key objectives:

- To promote key workplace health and safety messages and communicate sensible workplace health and safety advice;
- To increase compliance with workplace health and safety requirements (through inspection and investigation activities);
- To maintain an effective health and safety regulatory framework; and
- To provide the highest possible levels of corporate governance and service delivery to customers.

ABOUT SCIENTIFIC SERVICES

Scientific Services is a unit within HSENI, reporting through Specialist Sector Division. The team consists of a Senior Scientific Officer, two Higher Scientific Officers, a Scientific Officer and an Assistant Scientific Officer. The function of Scientific Services is to provide a scientific resource, informing the opinion of the Inspector and supporting other parts of the organisation across a broad range of topics. The unit is well provided with modern equipment for both field and laboratory based investigations.

The work of the unit focusses primarily on Occupational Hygiene related matters and seeks to contribute to the prevention of ill-health from work, through recognising, evaluating and controlling the risks posed by materials used in the workplace. This includes the measurement and identification of asbestos and the assessment of contaminated sites, the assessment of employee exposure to other harmful dusts, gases and vapours and the evaluation of the effectiveness of control measures.

Some further non-related occupational hygiene functions are also maintained within the unit including the measurement of slip resistance to flooring and the provision of aerial photography using Small Unmanned Aircraft.

The unit operates the Asbestos Advisory Service, responding to requests for information and direction on matters related to asbestos.

Scientific Services holds UKAS accreditation for a significant part of its activities which is a key element of the Quality Management System. Maintaining a high quality of output is vital in ensuring fair treatment of the client and in providing authoritative advice and information both for the investigative activity and for the Courts.

JOB DESCRIPTION

There is currently one permanent, full time vacancy.

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 post holder will be based in HSENI HQ, 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, BT6 9FR.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £30,149 - £31,760 (under review) 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.

Training

In-house and on the job training will be provided.

The successful applicant will be required to travel to Great Britain to study for the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) Certificate of Operational Competence in Occupational Hygiene or Certificate of Competence in Asbestos, dependent upon their existing qualifications. The timing of the training will depend on the availability of courses with training providers.

Please note that continued employment as a Higher Scientific Officer in HSENI will be conditional on passing all assessed elements of the required training. Two re-sits will be available, however if still unsuccessful in any of the results, your employment as a Higher Scientific Officer in HSENI will cease. The assessment process and timing will be subject to the prevailing rules and conditions set by the training provider.

If not already in possession of the **Certificate of Operational Competence in Occupational Hygiene or the Certificate of Competence in Asbestos**, the candidate will be expected to commence study for the essential elements of the relevant Certificate course no later than 6 months after beginning of employment. The expected timeframe for completion of the relevant Certificate course is 4 years from commencement of study.

Hours of Work

The successful candidate will be required to work 37 hours per week. Normal flexible working arrangements apply, however the successful candidate will be required to participate in a rota to provide 9.00 – 17.00 cover Monday to Friday. In addition the duties may occasionally involve evening, weekend work and bank holidays and any additional hours will be allowed as time off in lieu.

Travel

The successful candidate must have access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil the responsibilities of the post and be prepared to travel throughout Northern Ireland and elsewhere, as required. This includes travel to other HSENI satellite offices in Northern Ireland as required.

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.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pensions package. Further details of this can be found on page 21 of this booklet.

Vetting Requirements

The successful candidates will be required to be cleared to Basic Check level.

Probation

Confirmation of your appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If your performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory your appointment may be terminated. All appointees will be expected to demonstrate a track record of effective service within this period.

Conflicts 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 HSENI from public criticism, it will be mandatory for the successful candidate to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration on appointment.

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. Your Personal Development Plan will identify your learning and development needs with a view to enhancing your skills and capabilities. As a NI Civil Servant you will have access to a wide range of internal job opportunities, including secondments with external organisations and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing your own career.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the posts before deciding to apply may contact Ann Boylan on 028 90243249 or visit HSENI's website www.hseni.gov.uk.

If you have any questions about the competition process, you should contact HR Connect on 0800 1 300 330 or email recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Higher Scientific Officer, you will be a senior member of a team of professional scientists, providing practical support to the Inspectorate and the wider organisation in the discharge of its functions under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. Support is in the form of gathering and assessing materials and authoritative, evidence based technical reports and advice to inform the opinion of the Inspector. The main focus of the work will be based around planning and managing the collection, analysis and reporting of asbestos samples in accordance with ISO17025, undertaking occupational hygiene surveys and using the Small Unmanned Aircraft facility to assist the Inspectorate.

Main duties

- Plan, manage and carry out technical investigations which can include bulk material sampling for the determination of the presence of asbestos, identification of asbestos in bulk materials, asbestos fibre counting, air sampling for hazardous substances, exposure assessment, evaluation of effectiveness of control measures;
- Manage and document the implementation of the quality management system to ISO17025;
- Line manager responsibility for Scientific Officer staff;
- Manage and participate in internal and external audits (UKAS);
- Participate in external proficiency schemes for fibre counting and asbestos identification;
- Oversight of the maintenance and calibration of equipment and the running of the laboratory;
- Assist in the development and delivery of the annual work programme;
- Write and review technical reports;
- Provide expert advice and guidance to Inspectorate, including the assessment and evaluation of third party reports;
- Ensure technical competencies and skills are developed and maintained for lower grades;
- Implementation of predetermined strategic interventions and long term research projects;
- Assist with evaluating capital equipment purchases i.e. assessing requirements, obtaining quotes, tender evaluation;
- Participate in the operation of the Small Unmanned Aircraft service;
- Attendance at court as expert witness when required;
- Maintain and further develop own professional and technical competence within the occupational hygiene discipline through attendance at relevant conferences, lectures, seminars and training courses.

The list of key responsibilities is not definitive and may be amended to meet the business needs of HSENI.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications have:

1. BOHS Certificate of Competence in Asbestos **OR** BOHS Certificate of Operational Competence in Occupational Hygiene

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.

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 used in the order listed:

1. At least 3 years' experience in the last 7 years, of practice in an occupational hygiene related discipline.
2. At least 3 years' experience, in the last 7 years, of working in an asbestos related discipline, i.e. surveying, sampling, fibre counting or identification analysis.
3. At least two years' experience of working in a quality accredited laboratory environment.
4. Additional relevant* qualifications in Asbestos or Occupational Hygiene.

* **Relevant qualifications in asbestos or occupational hygiene:** give the type and subject 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 relevant to the role, 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

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applicants will be expected to display the following qualities and skills at 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. This may be followed by questions from the panel. Candidates will be advised of presentation topic when they report for interview and will be given a maximum of 30 minutes to prepare for their presentation. Candidates should therefore report for interview at least 45 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 content of the presentation along with the follow up questions will be used to assess the **Seeing the Big Picture** competence

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. 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

3. 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

4. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches appropriately and effectively to support service delivery.

Marks available: 20

5. 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

6. 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. 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

Total Marks Available: 120

Overall Pass Mark: 72

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

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

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

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing Monday 11th March.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 3.

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.

For posts which require qualifications / professional membership insert - You will be required to bring documentary evidence of your qualifications / professional membership to 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 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.

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.

As women are currently known to be underrepresented in this occupation across Northern Ireland, 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**