Completed Application Forms must be returned to HRConnect no later than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 27th December 2019.
Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account to make sure that you don’t miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

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BACKGROUND

THE AGRI-FOOD AND BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

AFBI is a leading provider of scientific research and services to government, non-governmental organisations and commercial companies.

In line with AFBI's mission of “using scientific excellence to advance the local and global agri-food sector”, the Institute has developed a reputation of being an influential, internationally recognised, centre for innovation in agri-food and biosciences providing high quality and locally relevant science. Our “2020 Strategy” includes plans for an ambitious programme of capital investment in AFBI's infrastructure, improved facilities at AFBI Hillsborough and a new veterinary sciences building, which will give us one of the most modern laboratory and ancillary estate infrastructures of any agri-food research institute in Europe.

As the Northern Ireland government’s main research and statutory testing provider in the areas of agri-food, fisheries and the environment, AFBI plays a major role in the Northern Ireland knowledge economy. AFBI's scale, relationships with a wide range of international research organisations and close links with local industry mean that it is ideally placed to carry out research that is of both global and local impact. AFBI's science is outcome-driven and aimed at solving important practical problems for a wide range of local, national and international customers in the public and private sectors. Our staff carry out world class scientific research, surveillance, and analytic and diagnostic testing for a wide range of customers in the fields of animal health and welfare, sustainable agricultural systems, plant science, food innovation and safety, environmental protection, fisheries and aquatic ecosystems, and agricultural and rural economics.

AFBI was established on 1 April 2006 as a non-departmental public body and is sponsored by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). It is responsible for the provision of statutory and scientific programmes in the areas of agri-food, animal and plant health, fisheries and the environment, providing access to specialist expertise and providing facilities to industry and public sector bodies for contracted scientific services. AFBI has a staff complement of approximately 650 people, with a budget of approximately £55million. Details of AFBI's most recently published income and expenditure are available on its website.

The Institute has two science divisions, Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences and Veterinary Sciences Divisions, which are supported by the Finance and Corporate Affairs Division.
AFBI is located on seven sites across the province, with its headquarters at Newforge Lane, Belfast. The AFBI sites are at Newforge Lane (1), Stoney Road, Stormont (2), Crossacreevy (3), Hillsborough (4), Loughgall (5), Omagh (6) and Bushmills (7), along with a sea going research vessel, the RV Corystes (8).
AGRICULTURE BRANCH

Agriculture Branch is one of seven Branches within the Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division in AFBI and aims to address the global challenges of food security and sustainable intensification. The aims of the Branch are to develop and sustain an integrated research effort with national and international recognition in sustainable livestock production and welfare systems, thereby

- developing sustainable practices within a competitive industry
- providing a scientific basis for government policy and
- enhancing the quality of the environment.

The work of the Branch links fundamental science to systems level research to deliver innovations for the agri-food sector and scientific knowledge in ways that assist policy makers and industry partners. An innovative approach is taken linking large-scale applied research studies undertaken on farms across Northern Ireland to strategic research and development at AFBI Agriculture Branch and further to more fundamental research in partnership with other AFBI Branches and external research organisations.

Work within Agriculture Branch continues to develop to meet the requirements of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), other government departments, NGO’s and industry within a policy environment of ever increasing emphasis on promoting competitiveness in the marketplace, food security, delivering an improved environment and addressing animal welfare concerns. Scientific outputs from Agriculture Branch underpin government policy on livestock production, welfare, environment and renewable energy issues.

Agriculture Branch research and development is also promoting innovation in the agri-food sector and our outputs are key drivers of strategic initiatives in the industry including technology transfer programmes led by the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise. In addition, Agriculture Branch provides analytical services for livestock feedstuffs, manures and agri-food products for DAERA and the agri-food sector.

The research platform comprises an instrumented research farm at AFBI Hillsborough with satellite facilities at AFBI Loughgall and AFBI Stormont.

AFBI Hillsborough is a full academic member of the Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock (CIEL), which is a UK industry led consortium of academia and industry. The main aim of CIEL is to increase the competitiveness of the UK Livestock industry through collaborative research and development. AFBI’s membership of CIEL has brought substantive investments in precision technologies to the farm platform across dairy, beef, sheep and pig.
Livestock research

The successful candidate will join Agriculture Branch’s Sustainable Livestock Production team, which is responsible for undertaking research across a wide range of issues relating to sheep and beef production. For example, current research programmes are examining grazing strategies, genetic improvement strategies, finishing nutrition and welfare related studies for both sheep and beef production systems.

The scientific officer post will have a key supporting role within the sustainable production team, predominantly working on sheep research projects but also contributing to the beef cattle research programme, when required. Sheep research is carried out at both the Hillsborough and Loughgall sites using the AFBI sheep flock as well as on commercial farms across Northern Ireland. The AFBI sheep flock currently consists of approximately 300 breeding ewes and their offspring. The AFBI suckler beef herd currently consists of 100 suckler cows.

Animals in the flock are managed on a number of different experiments at any one time, and as a consequence are subject to regular experimental measurements. The successful candidate will report to the Sheep and Beef Unit scientific manager, and will join a team who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the flock, ensuring that the flock is managed according to experimental protocols, and are responsible for maximizing flock health, fertility and welfare. The successful candidate will be required to be highly adaptable, must appreciate the reasons for the experiments being undertaken, and must be able to work as part of a team.
JOBD DESCRIPTION

There is currently one full-time position to be filled. A reserve list will exist and will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any further permanent or Fixed Term vacancies which may arise.

Salary

The salary for the post will be within the range £27,299 - £28,167 (under review) within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will normally be at the minimum of the scale except for existing AFBI staff for whom starting salary may be determined by either promotion or re-grading terms if these are more favourable.

Location

The successful candidate will be based at AFBI Hillsborough, Co. Down BT26 6DR. They will also be expected to work at other AFBI sites as required primarily AFBI Loughall. A significant amount of time will also be spent on farms across Northern Ireland participating in AFBI research projects.

Travel

The successful candidate will be expected to travel throughout Northern Ireland if required. Travel within GB, ROI and Europe may also be required.

The post will entail driving vehicles on the AFBI farm, between AFBI sites, and while visiting commercial farms and other sites. Therefore, the applicant must have a full valid driving licence which permits the licence holder to drive in Northern Ireland which will enable the applicant to meet the requirements of the post in full.

Annual Leave

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 30 after five year’s satisfactory service.

Working Hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. On occasions the duties may include some evening and weekend working. AFBI operates a flexi working system.

Medical

The post holder will be required to participate in research studies involving farmed livestock and should therefore be aware of the requirement to work in cattle/sheep housing, in fields, on commercial farms and with large animals.
Probation

The post holder will serve 12 months’ probation in the new post. This will commence from the date of appointment. At the end of the probation period a formal review will be conducted to confirm if the appointee has met the performance requirements of the post.

Further Information

Further Information about the post may be obtained from Emma Hall. Telephone: 028 9025 5060 or Email: emma.hall@afbini.gov.uk.

If you have any queries about the competition process you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330, or email recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The successful candidate will join Agriculture Branch’s Sustainable Livestock Production team, which is responsible for undertaking research across a wide range of issues relating to sheep and beef production. For example, current research programmes are examining grazing strategies, genetic improvement strategies, finishing nutrition and welfare related studies for both sheep and beef production systems and the main duties of the post will be:

1. Scientific Duties

The main activities include:

- Collect data on sheep performance at both Hillsborough and Loughgall, as well as a number of commercial sheep farms, using, for example, a weighbridge and EID reader and flock management system. Data will typically include dietary intake, live weight, body condition scores, parentage, carcase characteristics, health attributes and behaviour parameters defined according to experimental protocols;
- Contribute to the daily management of the AFBI sheep flock in order to maintain required health and welfare standards. In particular, this will involve assisting existing staff in administering and recording veterinary products to ewes and lambs in line with the AFBI flock health plan;
- Collect similar data on the AFBI Beef herd;
- Input data into computerised databases;
- Analyse the data, generate reports and maintain accurate written and electronic records;
- Liaise with unit manager to provide updates on key performance indicators;
- Develop scientific protocols and ensure that they are implemented appropriately;
- Operate complex and precise scientific instrumentation to record data.

2. Quality Management System: ISO/9001

Take responsibility for the daily compliance with quality assurance standards:

- Produce and amend Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs);
- Validate data before inclusion in reports through carrying out appropriate quality checks.
- Calibrate weighing and other equipment according to protocols.
- Identify and report non-conformance issues.
3. Communication and Team working

- Communicate with work colleagues and colleagues from other Branches as required
- Take an active part and contribute to team meetings
- Work as a member of a team, valuing the contribution of others and forming cooperative working relationships with all colleagues.
- Manage staff to ensure delivery of experimental protocols, demonstrate work tasks to new members of the team, other staff, visitors and students
- Participate in the development, validation and introduction into routine use of new techniques, processes and equipment.
- Report incidents and supply information required for investigation
- Liaise with commercial farms across Northern Ireland, organise field work visits, collate, collect and analyse data on their farm in line with experimental protocols.
- Contribute to the organisation and running of events such as farm walks, open days, workshops. In particular, contribute to and prepare dissemination material for such events.

4. Information & Technology

Take responsibility for the efficient operation and management of IT systems:

- Use Microsoft Packages to report scientific analyses to Project Leader;
- Manage the distribution of results via Outlook/email and postal systems;
- Interrogate and interpret data for scientific reports and publications;
- Proficient use of computerised software to manage scientific data: capture, collate; assess; log-in; track and query sample results and progress;
- Ensure that data protection and information technology policies are fully adhered to;

5. Budget and assets Management

- Assist the unit manager with the procurement of capital, consumables and services by seeking quotes and ordering consumables;

6. Personal Development

- Contribute to the personal objective setting in performance reviews, taking responsibility for own continuing personal development
- Attend staff and resource management training to comply with best practice, Health and Safety and other legislative requirements;
This list is not exclusive and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.

Applicants should be aware that they will be expected to deal with agricultural livestock and biological samples which may be contaminated with transmissible diseases. Appropriate training will be given as required.
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must by the closing date for applications have:

1a) A Degree in an area relating to agriculture or biological science and 1 years’ experience of working with sheep and / or cattle;

OR

1b) GCE ‘A’ level passes (A - E) in 3 separate subjects (one of which must be biology or chemistry) and 4 years’ experience of working with sheep and / or cattle;

OR

1c) 5 GCSE/GCE O ‘Levels at Grade C or above which must include English, Mathematics and a science subject and 6 years’ experience of working with sheep and / or cattle;

AND

2) Experience in collecting, managing and processing biological samples and data from livestock including animal live weights;

3) A minimum 2 years’ experience in recording and maintaining accurate data within computerised systems and also in analysing the data and producing electronic summaries and presentations when required. Candidates must provide a detailed description of the types of information they recorded, the formats this information was recorded in, and how they interpreted the information recorded.

4) A current valid driving licence which permits the holder to drive within the UK.

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.

Please refer to https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/qualifications-what-different-levels-mean for further information.

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.

In providing evidence for this, it will be essential that candidates draw upon specific examples of work they have undertaken to illustrate the extent to
which they possess the experience and skills required. It will not be sufficient simply to list the duties and responsibilities of posts held.

**SHORTLISTING**

In the event that further shortlisting is required the selection panel will reach a decision as to whether or not an applicant meets each criterion on a scored basis for criteria 1 (experience element) - 3 with a minimum score set for each criterion. Only those applicants assessed as meeting all essential criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

However, in the case of a high volume of applicants AFBI may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview in a proportionate manner. In this instance all applicants who meet the essential requirements will be listed in merit order according to their total score and the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

**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 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.
- 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.
- Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through [www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk).
PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Essential Criteria and shortlisting criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate competency in Professional Knowledge & Skills pertaining to this post together with the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 2 for the purpose of personal and professional development.

What is the NICS competency framework?

The 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 2 should be demonstrating level 1 as a matter of course.

This position is analogous to EO1 in the NICS. Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment / interview criteria as outlined below.
INTERVIEW CRITERIA

In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria and shortlisting criteria (if applicable) applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

1. Professional Knowledge and Skills

- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of techniques used within livestock research to better understand animal performance, sward/land performance and livestock health and well-being
- Apply knowledge and skills in the collation, collection, manipulation, analysis and interpretation of scientific data.
- Develop and update professional/specialist/technical knowledge and skills to meet objectives and improve performance

Marks available: 40    Minimum Standard: 24

2. Leading and Communicating

- Demonstrate ability to communicate orally and in writing effectively with others
- Demonstrate ability to listen to, understand, respect and accept the value of different views, ideas and ways of working

Marks available: 20    Minimum Standard: 12

3. Collaborating and partnering

- Proactively contribute to the work of the whole team
- Proactively seek information and support from others in order to complete own work effectively
- Listen attentively to others and check their understanding

Marks available: 15

4. Making Effective Decisions

- Demonstrate ability to set priorities, analyse and use evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions
- Demonstrate experience in providing advice and feedback to support others to make accurate decisions

Marks Available: 15
5. Delivering at Pace

- Demonstrate experience in delivering results to meet agreed goals and deadlines
- Demonstrate ability to monitor progress against objectives and take corrective actions when problems are identified

Marks Available: 15

Total Marks Available: 105
Overall Pass Mark: 63 (60%)

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 AFBI Newforge, Belfast, on Wednesday 15th January 2020.
INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

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 in relation to each of the competences. 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.
SELECTION PROCESS

The Merit Principle

Appointments to AFBI are made under the ‘merit principle’, where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Making your application

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.

Guidance for Applicants

- 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.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- 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.
- 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.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out 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.

Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- 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.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to
HRConnect. HRConnect will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.

- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- 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.
- Please note - 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.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

**Changes in personal circumstances**

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

**Communication between HRConnect and you**

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account 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.

**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.

**Further appointments from this competition**

Where a further position in AFBI is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

**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.

**Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form**

Please note, this form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement to which AFBI adheres please refer to page 24.

Applications are particularly welcomed from Roman Catholics and Females as these groups are currently under-represented within AFBI.

**AFBI is an Equal Opportunities Employer.**

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

**Assessment Information**

It is HRConnect policy that all candidates invited to attend for assessment bring sufficient documentation to satisfy the eligibility/shortlisting criteria and the Nationality and Vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

**Employment Requirements**

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

Entry to the United Kingdom is controlled under the Immigration Act 1971. Everyone who does not have the right of abode is subject to immigration control. You should check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment before you apply for a post. If you are invited to interview we will ask you to provide documentation confirming that you are entitled to work in the UK, under the terms of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

Advice on entitlement to work may be obtained from the Home Office website, www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
Nationality Requirements

There are no nationality requirements for AFBI posts.

Vetting Procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post 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) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

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.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: http://www.accessni.gov.uk/. 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.

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment. The selection panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. The order of merit is valid for one year.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Pensions

New entrants who join the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) are eligible to join the NICS pension scheme.

Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at:

www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

or

if you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions as follows:

Civil Service Pensions
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP
Tel: 02871 319000
Email: cspensions.cpg@dfpni.gov.uk

Feedback

AFBI is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair. 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
Please apply online or post your hardcopy completed application form to the HRConnect Recruitment Team:

HRConnect
PO Box 1089
2nd Floor
The Metro Building
6-9 Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 9EW

NOTE: Late applications or applications received by fax or email will not be accepted.

Contact details:

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect at the address above or by;

Email: Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net
Tel: 0800 1 300 330
Fax: 028 9024 1665
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy Statement

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement to which AFBI adheres is set out below:

“The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere where they are treated with dignity and respect. We aim to provide opportunities for all sections of the community and continue to strive to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued. Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and giving each person the opportunity to contribute their skills and experience will help us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve”.

We all want to work in an harmonious workplace where we feel valued, respected and included, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race/ethnic origin, religious belief or political opinion, disability, having or not having dependants, sexual orientation and age.

In order to provide a high quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to attract, recruit, develop and retain the very best people at all levels. Our approach is based on three key principles:-

Equality – we promote equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups of people.

Diversity – we accept each person as an individual. Our success is built on our ability to embrace diversity – and we believe that everyone should feel valued for their contributions. By working together we will deliver the best possible service for our staff, customers and stakeholders.

Inclusion – we create a working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with, and adheres to NICS values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. Both Management and Trade Union Side are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation.
Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification. The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables the NICS to examine how our employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff.

Legislative Context
This section explains the reasons for gathering this information by setting out the legislative background.

Gender
The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of his or her sex. Information on gender is also provided in the annual statutory monitoring the, as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally.

Age
The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 make it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different ages and age groups.

Community Background
The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the basis of religious belief or political opinion. The Order also requires the NICS to submit an annual monitoring return to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This takes the form of a statistical return, providing information on the gender and community background composition of all people working in the NICS at the 1st January each year.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief and political opinion. Following guidance issued in July 2007 by the Equality
Commission for NI the NICS has decided to use “community background” information as a proxy for political opinion.

**Disability**
The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The DDA defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

This definition is interpreted as follows:-

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.

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 likely to last overall for at least 12 months and the effect must be a detrimental one. A person with a life expectancy of less than 12 months is of course covered if the effect is likely to last for the whole of that time.

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. It does not mean something so individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

**What sort of effect must there be?**
The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; ability to take part in normal social interaction and form social relationships; or perception of risk of physical danger.

**What happens if the effects are reduced by medication or other treatment?**
Broadly speaking, the effects that matter are those that would be present if there was no medication or treatment taking place. The exception is people who wear spectacles or contact lenses when what matters is the effect that remain while the spectacles or contact lenses are being used.
**Are there any types of condition covered by special provisions in the DDA?**
Yes, because some people with particular conditions might not otherwise be counted as disabled. These are provisions covering:
- Recurring or fluctuating conditions such as arthritis, where the effects can sometimes be less than substantial, which are treated as continuing to have a substantial adverse effect so long as that effect is likely to recur;
- Conditions which progressively deteriorate, such as motor neuron disease, which count as having a substantial effect from the first time they have any effect at all on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities even if it is not substantial, so long as there is eventually likely to be a substantial adverse effect; and
- People with cancer, HIV, or multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled people from the point of diagnosis, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms.

**Are any conditions not covered?**
Yes, the following conditions specifically do not count as impairments:
- Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance (unless resulting from the substance being medically prescribed);
- Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever) unless it aggravates the effect of another condition;
- Tendency to set fires, or steal, or physically or sexually abuse other persons;
- Exhibitionism and voyeurism;
- Severe disfigurements consisting of tattoos, non-medical body piercing or attachments to such piercing are not treated as having substantial adverse effects.

**What if someone has recovered from a disability?**
Much of the DDA also applies to people who have had a disability in the past (for example, someone who was disabled by mental ill health) but have now fully recovered. People who were registered disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (NI) 1945 both on 12 January 1995 and 2 December 1996 will be regarded as having had a disability in the past if they do not in any case fall within the definition of the DDA.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

**Race**
The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial group(s).

**Sexual Orientation**
The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) Order 2003 makes it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. In order to monitor the effectiveness of NICS policies
information is gathered on sexual orientation. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation.

Marital Status
The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended), makes it unlawful to discriminate against married persons and civil partners in employment. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different marital status.

Dependants Status
Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions in NI, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with dependants and persons without.

Confidentiality of Monitoring Information

The following general principles will be applied to all individual monitoring information:-

- individual monitoring information will be afforded a high degree of confidentiality;
- misuse of monitoring information will be viewed as a disciplinary offence; and
- individual monitoring information will only be disclosed to members of staff or officials of a trade union, members of which are employed in the NICS, if it is necessary to do so for the appropriate discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the above internal safeguards on the protection of equality monitoring information generally, the confidentiality of community background monitoring information is protected through Regulations made under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO). These make it a criminal offence, subject to specific exceptions, for an employer or employee to disclose information on the community background of an individual which has been obtained, or is used, for the purpose of monitoring under FETO.

As with other forms of personal data, the obtaining, use, storage and disclosure of monitoring information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Monitoring information is held on computer and is protected by a high level of security. Access to this data is restricted to those NICS staff, employees of HRConnect and Trade Union officials whose duties make it necessary for them to have it. Misuse of monitoring information is viewed as a disciplinary offence.