HR CONNECT

Human Resources for the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Northern Ireland Office

RE-SS 1.18a

Candidate Information Booklet

IRC331311

Agri-Food and Land Based Specialist - Grade 6

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs

Completed Application Forms must be submitted to HRConnect no later than 12 noon (UK time) on
Friday 27 November 2026

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

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs

Delivering a net zero nature positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities

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 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has a vision of “Delivering a net zero nature positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities”. Our vision is the foundation of everything we do as we seek to enhance our environment; grow a sustainable, vibrant economy; and support the development of thriving rural communities. At the heart of our vision is a desire to make DAERA a great place to work, with engaged people delivering a twenty-first century agenda.

The successful candidates will work within DAERA’s Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Group (FFRAG) providing leadership to teams who are developing policy and delivering education, knowledge transfer, innovation and regulatory programmes to support the agri-food industry.

We are looking for professional and technical people with a track record of delivery, decision making, leadership and an ability to develop strong partnerships within their organisations and with stakeholders.

If you believe you have the skills and experience required for these roles, I would be pleased if you would take the next step to complete and submit an application.

Martin McKendry
Deputy Secretary
Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Group

BACKGROUND

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

DAERA has responsibility for food, farming, environment, fisheries, forestry, sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland. The Department is structured into seven groups including one Executive Agency (the NI Environment Agency) and is also accountable for one Public Corporation (Forest Service) and all groups and agencies work together to support the delivery of DAERA's strategic objectives.

The work of the Department touches the daily lives of everyone in Northern Ireland by delivering cross cutting activities that protect and enhance our natural environment, address the challenge of climate change, support sustainable agri-food and fishing sectors, develop our rural communities and improve animal health and welfare in our ambitious drive towards disease eradication.

Together with its agencies, non-departmental public bodies and stakeholders, DAERA:

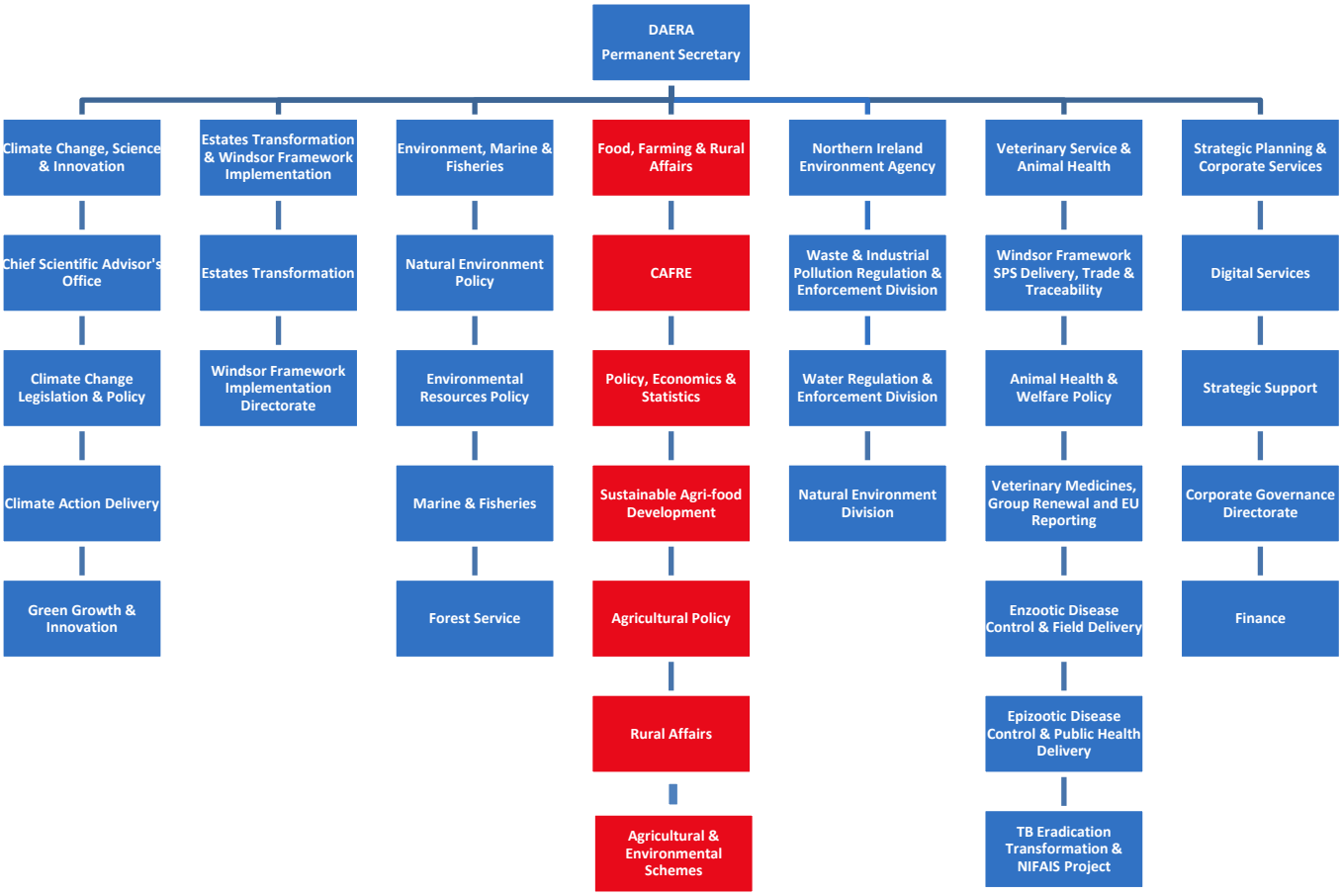
- leads on the Executive's climate change agenda, working with all NICS departments and sectors to develop and implement Northern Ireland's first Climate Action plan and reduce carbon emissions;
- takes action to protect and enhance the environment for future generations;
- assists the sustainable development of the environmental, agri-food, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland (NI) economy, having regard to the needs of the consumer, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment;
- delivers knowledge transfer and education programmes as essential components of successful policy delivery programmes across DAERA; and
- supports rural communities by working in partnership with other departments to address wider socio-economic rural issues and achieve improved outcomes for rural communities.

FOOD FARMING AND RURAL AFFAIRS GROUP

Food Farming and Rural Affairs Group (FFRAG) is responsible for the following high-profile DAERA wide programmes and initiatives:

- Development of Departmental policy and programmes to improve productivity, environmental sustainability, resilience and supply chain integration in the agri-food sector, particularly via the Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP);
- Implementation of policy through inspection, enforcement, licensing, certification, knowledge transfer and guidance relating to agriculture, horticulture, food and countryside management;
- Delivery of schemes and measures to support the agri-food sector;

- Development and implementation of DAERA policy on the education and skills of people wishing to enter or already working in the Northern Ireland agri-food industry, land-based sector and rural community.



FFRAG has over 1000 staff, many of whom are professional and technical staff working from various locations across Northern Ireland. As shown in the organisational chart (above), FFRAG has six Divisions. There are currently three Agri-Food and Land Based Specialist - Grade 6 vacancies; two in CAFRE and one in Agricultural Policy Division. Additional vacancies may arise during the lifetime of this competition.

The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)

CAFRE has three campuses at Enniskillen, Greenmount (Antrim) and Loughry (Cookstown).

The College contributes to DAERA's aims and goals through the delivery of education, knowledge transfer and innovation programmes to benefit the Northern Ireland agri-food industry. This is achieved through the delivery of:

Further and Higher Education programmes

The current portfolio of full-time and part-time courses offered by CAFRE includes:

- Level 2 through to Honours Degrees in Agriculture, Equine Studies and Horticulture.
- Level 3 through to Honours Degrees in Food.
- Level 3 in Land-based Engineering.
- Levels 2 and 3 in Veterinary Nursing.
- Postgraduate courses in Strategic Leadership for Agri-Food.

Knowledge Transfer and Innovation programmes

CAFRE is working with DAERA policy colleagues to design and deliver a range of new knowledge transfer and innovation schemes as part of the new Sustainable Agriculture Programme.

Agricultural Policy Division (APD)

Agricultural Policy Division (APD) has lead responsibility for developing the future agricultural support policy framework and associated legislation for Northern Ireland, replacing the EU's Common Agricultural Policy in the context of UK devolved arrangements.

This area of work seeks to deliver the four outcomes of increased productivity, environmental sustainability, improved resilience and an effective functioning supply chain.

The Division is focused on development of agricultural policies including identification and progression of associated legislation, business cases, impact assessments and stakeholder engagement required to implement policy and delivery mechanisms for: Farm Sustainability Payment; Beef Sustainability Package; Farming with Nature and Carbon Reduction Measures. It manages the agricultural policy linkages with other devolved administrations and encompasses the Department's presence in the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

While not an exhaustive or prescriptive list of responsibilities, an indication of the main duties of an Agri-Food and Land Based Specialist - Grade 6 is provided below. The emphasis on particular duties will vary depending on the post allocated and may vary over time depending on business priorities and needs.

The post holder will report to the relevant Head of Division (Grade 5).

The main duties and responsibilities of the successful candidate will include:

- Leading, managing and motivating a multi-disciplinary team of technical and administrative staff.
- Identifying the workforce and financial resource requirements which are required within their Divisions to enable it to achieve corporate Business Plan objectives.
- Leading a programme of continuous improvement and change to ensure the organisation has the capacity and capability to fulfil its role effectively and deal with a changing environment.
- Prepare and deliver annual Business Plans and priority programmes in accordance with corporate requirements.
- Monitor and manage the annual budget.
- Maintain and respond to Risk Registers, Statements of Internal Control and agreed Audit Action Plans.
- Prepare and manage all audit and assessment reviews.
- Identify the required competences and training requirements for staff and ensure suitable training is completed to enable them to carry out their duties consistently and efficiently, in accordance with Investment in People (IiP) principles.
- Leading the preparation of written and oral evidence for appearance before the Minister, Select and Assembly Committees and presenting evidence.
- Representing the Department, Division and others on national and international committees, working groups and other fora, and making presentations at seminars and conferences nationally and internationally as required.
- Maintaining and developing partnerships with key personnel in other Government Departments within the United Kingdom & Ireland, the European Commission, and other national and international bodies so that the Department is seen as the provider of preference for expert advice and guidance on issues and is involved in the development and revision of relevant legislation and guidance in the UK and Europe.
- Other duties in line with the business needs of DAERA.

The first vacant position is **Deputy Director, Head of College Support Service (CSS)** in CAFRE.

The primary role of CSS is to provide the wide-ranging administrative support functions across CAFRE. The Service also manages the CAFRE farmed estate, non-specific estate facilities, leads on the Campus Redevelopment project,

manages CAFRE's finance, staffing, IT and data, provides learner support, marketing, recruitment, quality management of CAFRE's education provision, and develops and evaluates knowledge, innovation and generational renewal policy under the Sustainable Agriculture Programme.

College Support Service is made up of the following branches:

- Campus Redevelopment Branch.
- College Services Branch.
- Knowledge and Innovation Policy Branch.
- Learner Support Branch.
- Sustainable Land Management Branch.

The post-holder taking up this role will be required to demonstrate the capacity and ability to assume immediate responsibility and to act as an effective representative for CSS, CAFRE and wider Department, engaging both internally within the Department and with a diverse range of external stakeholders. Staff will be required to work independently, pro-actively to deliver at pace in a fast moving, high profile and continually evolving environment. The post holder will report to the CAFRE Director.

The second vacant position is **Deputy Director, Head of Knowledge Advisory Service (KAS)** in CAFRE.

The primary role of KAS is the holistic development of farm and food businesses, where economic and environmental performance is inextricably linked, through the development and delivery of Knowledge Transfer, Innovation, Industry Training, Benchmarking and Technical support to the Industry. This ensures that the productivity, environmental sustainability and resilience of the land based and food processing industries are the primary focus, allowing better integration of environmental advice to support the agri-food sector.

Knowledge Advisory Service is made up of the following branches:

- Beef and Sheep Branch (BSB);
- Dairy, Pigs, Poultry and Crops Branch (DPPCB);
- Food Technology Branch (FTB);
- Livestock Genetics and Data Branch (LGDB);

The post-holder taking up this role will be required to demonstrate the capacity and ability to assume immediate responsibility and to act as an effective representative for KAS, CAFRE and wider Department, engaging both internally within the Department and with a diverse range of external stakeholders. Staff will be required to work independently, pro-actively to deliver at pace in a fast moving, high profile and continually evolving environment.

The post holder will report to the CAFRE Director and will lead CAFRE's Knowledge Advisory Service in assisting the development of businesses within the agri-food industry.

The third vacant position is **Deputy Director, Head of Agricultural Policy Development Unit** in Agricultural Policy Division.

The role involves providing strategic leadership for the development and delivery of agricultural policy in Northern Ireland. Reporting directly to the Director of Agricultural Policy, the postholder will play a pivotal role in shaping future agricultural policy, leading the implementation of the Sustainable Agriculture Programme, and ensuring that support measures deliver for farmers, food producers, rural communities and the environment.

The role requires a highly effective leader capable of operating at a senior level across government, industry and stakeholder organisations. The successful candidate will help ensure that Northern Ireland's agricultural policies support increased productivity, business resilience, environmental sustainability and a competitive agri-food sector.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There are currently three permanent, full-time vacancies. One in Agricultural Policy Division (APD) and two in CAFRE.

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 at Greenmount Campus, Antrim (CAFRE posts) and DAERA Headquarters, Clare House, Belfast (APD post).

If future posts become available, they may be based at other locations in Northern Ireland.

It is envisaged that some element of home working and/or remote working may be possible, in line with the NICS Hybrid Working policy and business needs.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £73,577 - £77,904 (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.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. You'll find further details on the Civil Service Pensions (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: 42 hours per week which includes a 1 hour meal break (37 hours net) Monday to Friday.

In addition, the duties of the posts may involve some work outside normal office hours including evenings, weekends and public holidays and occasionally short periods of work outside Northern Ireland.

Travel

Successful applicants must have access to a form of transport which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities including regular travel to remote and rural locations often inaccessible by the public transport network. In addition, they may be required to travel throughout Northern Ireland and on occasions within Great Britain (GB), Republic of Ireland (ROI) and further afield.

Vetting

An appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the vetting requirements for the post. See Page 24 for more details.

For posts based in CAFRE, successful applicants will be required to satisfy a pre-employment check undertaken by AccessNI in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). This will include checking the Children's Barred List.

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.

Successful applicants will be expected to undertake essential training as identified by the Department and proactively seek out and undertake activities associated with their continuous professional development, including availing of membership of approved professional bodies.

For CAFRE posts, successful applicants will be required to attend training in the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and in Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and fully implement the requirements of both in their work.

Conflict of Interest

It is a basic requirement of all Civil Servants that their private activities should not bring them into conflict with their official duties.

Conflict of Interest is not limited to the individual's own private, financial or other interests, as family, friends and associates may also have dealings which affect the Department's business directly or indirectly. Therefore, to avoid any conflict or potential conflict and to demonstrate impartiality to the public at all times, an officer must not, without prior approval, engage in any activity which could be considered to be in conflict with official business.

As such, to protect employees and the Department from public criticism, it will be mandatory for the successful candidate to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration on appointment.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may telephone Shane McKinney on Tel - 028 8676 8242 or email shane.mckinney@daera-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 have, by the closing date for applications:

1. An Honours Degree or an equivalent qualification (minimum classification of 2.2) in either Agriculture, Agricultural Economics and Management, Agricultural Technology, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Mechanisation, Agri-Environment, Horticulture, Food Science, Food Technology, Food Business, Equine Studies, or Equine Management or Equine Science, or a closely related subject*.

AND

2. At least **five** years' post qualification experience of successfully using professional and technical knowledge to contribute to significant industry support, policy and/or education programmes or other industry initiatives, for the benefit of the agri-food / land-based sector that have achieved impact.

AND

3. At least **two** years' senior management** experience of building effective working relationships with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and successfully negotiating and influencing to deliver improvements or agreed outcomes.

AND

4. Access to a form of transport which will enable you to travel throughout NI, ROI, GB and abroad to fulfil your responsibilities in full.

* **'Closely Related Subject'***:* If you hold a qualification that is a 'closely related subject' to those listed in the professional qualification criterion above, you must provide evidence to demonstrate that at least 50% of the technical modules of your qualification share similar content and learning outcomes to those of a currently available Honours degree course as listed above. The inclusion and comparison of non-technical (generic) modules will not provide sufficient evidence that the criterion has been met.

** '**Senior management'** is defined as experience gained at the top management levels of an organisation e.g. holding a post equivalent to that of a Grade 7/A within the Northern Ireland Civil Service/Northern Ireland Office, as a board member; or reporting directly to a Chief Executive or a Board.

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.

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

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 panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the depth and breadth of information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 2. This will be completed on a scored basis and only the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME

As part of our commitment to the employment of disabled people, we operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS does not guarantee a job. However, its objective is to ensure disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview. Further information on the GIS can be found at Information for Disabled Applicants.

If you wish to apply under the GIS, you must declare this on your application form. Shortlisting criteria will not apply to GIS applicants.

If you do not wish to apply under the GIS, but do require us to make reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, you should provide details on your application form. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments for any stage of this recruitment process. Details of any disability are only used for these purposes and do not form any part of the selection process.

If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability, are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be asked to outline any reasonable 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.

Disability Requirements and Reasonable Adjustment Requests

We wish to ensure all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. If you require any form of reasonable adjustment to participate in the selection process, please note this in the box provided on your application form and include details of your disability and the specific adjustment you

need. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments for any stage of this recruitment process.

To ensure you are fully supported in the process, you may provide relevant supporting information regarding your adjustment request – for example, an Occupational Psychologist report or a GP's medical statement.

Information to support your request should be sent to HRConnect at recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net as soon as possible following submission of your application but no later than the competition closing date (27 November 2026). Please mark your correspondence with the competition reference number IRC331311 and title it 'Supporting information for reasonable adjustment request'.

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.**
- **No additional information or evidence provided in support of your experience will be considered at any time after the closing date for applications.**
- **The NICS Competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.**

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The selection process will include the following stages:

1. A sift on eligibility criteria (including shortlisting if applicable)
2. A presentation
3. A competence based interview.

ELIGIBILITY SIFT

This is an assessment of the evidence provided in your application form against the eligibility criteria. Successful candidates at sift will progress to the next stage of selection.

PRESENTATION

As part of the interview candidates will be required to make a presentation relevant to the responsibilities of the post lasting no longer than 7 minutes, the subject of which will be provided to candidates in the 'Invitation to Interview' letter.

The panel will stop the applicant when 7 minutes have elapsed. The panel will ask follow-up question(s) after the presentation before moving on to the competence-based interview section of the assessment.

Applicants should fully prepare their presentation in advance as no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview. Applicants may only bring prepared flip chart paper and/or prepared notes into the interview to deliver their presentation. Applicants are not permitted to deliver the presentation electronically, nor should they provide any hand-outs or other materials to the panel.

No notes (other than flip chart paper and/or speaking notes for the presentation) or personal documentation may be brought into the interview room.

The presentation and the follow-up questions will be used for the assessment of the **'Seeing the Big Picture'** competence.

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 below areas with **each having 20 marks available**.

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

1. **Making Effective Decisions**
2. **Changing and Improving**

3.	**Collaborating and Partnering**	**Minimum Standard: 12**
4.	**Leading and Communicating**	**Minimum Standard: 12**
5.	**Delivering at Pace**	

Total Marks Available: 120

Overall Pass Mark: 72

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Greenmount Campus during week commencing 21 December 2026.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS Competency Framework at Level 4.

Agri-Food and Land Based Specialist – Grade 6 posts are analogous to Unified Grade 6 in the NICS.

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-and-benefits-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.

Artificial Intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn. Please see our candidate guidance, via the link below for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.

Artificial Intelligence & Recruitment Guidance

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 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 Recruitment Team is informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect Recruitment Team has up to date contact details for you. If your email address changes then it is your responsibility to inform the Recruitment Team at HRConnect.

(Note for existing NICS staff – An update to your employee records will not result in your applicant profile being updated. You must still inform HRConnect Recruitment Team of a change in 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.

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 the Republic of Ireland; or

(iii) National of a Commonwealth country; or

(iv) Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland or Liechtenstein with settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS); or

(v) Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland or Liechtenstein have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

(vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service or who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or

(vii) Certain family members of the relevant EU, EEA, Swiss & Turkish nationals **ALL** candidates are required to state their nationality and the category they are applying under in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form.

For candidates applying under categories iii – vii you are required to provide the confirmation of Right to Work and Nationality Requirements, including your 'Share code' in the response box in Part 1 of your application form.

You should provide details of 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.

Failure to provide the requested information **WILL** result in your application being rejected.

EU Settlement Scheme EU, other EEA, Swiss citizens and family members provides guidance on EUSS and certain family members.

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 in the Nationality Guidance section of the NICS Recruitment website.

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For many posts 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 Government baseline personnel security standard - GOV.UK (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 the post in APD 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.

The category of Access NI check required for the posts in CAFRE is:

Enhanced Disclosure Certificate

Barred List Checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service keeps two barred lists:

- people who are unsuitable for working with children
- people who are unsuitable for working with vulnerable adults

People on these lists are barred from regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for anyone who is included on a barred list to work or seek work, in regulated activity. Candidates should be aware that by submitting an application form for this post, they are confirming there is no reason why they cannot work in regulated activity.

As the CAFRE post holders will be based on a campus that delivers education courses to children and young people, the barred list for people who are unsuitable for working with children will be checked.

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 males, young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are particularly welcomed 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