

PUBLICATION SCHEME

of the CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REVISED SEPTEMBER 2005

APPROVED UNTIL 29 FEBRUARY 2008

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Publication Scheme of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland (OCSC).

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are responsible for ensuring that appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is made on merit in fair and open competition.

This publication scheme is a guide to the information the Commissioners publish or intend to make routinely available to the public.

ROLE AND STATUS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

Civil Service Commissioners were first appointed in 1855 to uphold the principle that selection for appointment to posts in the Civil Service should be on the basis of merit through fair and open competition. Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland were first appointed in 1923.

The Northern Ireland Commissioners derive their responsibilities and authority from prerogative Orders in Council made by the Secretary of State. The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 gives the Commissioners specific responsibility for maintaining the Merit Principle, i.e. that selection for appointment to posts in the NICS should be on the basis of merit in fair and open competition.

The Commissioners' responsibilities are:

- To maintain the fundamental principle that selection for appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition, including the approval of appointments through open competition to the most senior levels in the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- To publish and maintain a Recruitment Code setting out the essential principles and procedures on which recruitment to the NICS must be based;
- Approving certain exceptions to the recruitment principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition;

- Auditing recruitment policies and practices followed by departments and agencies in making appointments to the NICS; and
- Requiring departments and agencies to publish information about their recruitment activity.

Under the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999, the Commissioners may also consider and determine appeals made to them under the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics.

The Commissioners also have a website (www.nicscommissioners.org) explaining their role and presenting key documents.

PURPOSE OF THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

This publication scheme responds to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which requires all public bodies to adopt and maintain a scheme for the proactive publication of information. These schemes are intended to ensure that information is made available to the public without the need for a specific request. Information which would be exempt under Part II of the Act, for example because it is sensitive or confidential is not included in our scheme. Such information may be edited out of documents published under the scheme.

Our aim in developing this publication scheme is to set out: -

- The classes of information we publish or intend to make available;
- How this information can be accessed; and
- Whether the information will be available free of charge or on payment.

Responsibility for administering the scheme rests with the Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners, Jim McKeown, and the Deputy Secretary, Joanne Dowling, who can be contacted by phone on 02890 549487 and 02890 549425, respectively.

For more detailed enquiries about the Commissioners' publication scheme contact Helen Mc Larnon at OCSC.

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Email: Helen.McLarnon@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

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5th Floor, Windsor House, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT 2 7SR

TEL NO: 02890549431

FAX: 02890549414

CLASSES OF INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTION

1. The role, history and biographical details of the NI Civil Service Commissioners.
2. Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999
3. Civil Service Commissioners (NI) (Amendment) Order 2003
4. Commissioners' General Regulations 1999
5. Commissioners' General Regulations 2005
6. The Recruitment Code 2001
7. The revised Recruitment Code 2005
8. Summary Minutes of Commissioners' Business Meetings, as from 19 April 2005
9. Details (excluding personal details) of Exceptions to selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition approved by the Commissioners.
10. Details of current senior competitions requiring the Commissioners' approval and senior appointments already approved.
11. Summary accounts of audits of departments' recruitment policies and practices against the Commissioners' requirements in their Recruitment Code.
12. Summary of recent queries and answers on the interpretation of the Commissioners' requirements.
13. The text of the Code of Ethics and appellant leaflets.
14. Current appeals under the Civil Service Code of Ethics i.e. summary accounts excluding the names of the departments and the appellants.
15. Published details of appeals i.e. summary accounts excluding the names of the departments and the appellants.
13. The Civil Service Commissioners' Equality Scheme
14. The Equality Scheme Annual Progress Report
15. Annual Reports - Commissioners' Annual Reports 98/99 to current reports are available on our website.
16. What's New
17. Contact details of OCSC staff.

CHARGES AND HOW TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION

The information in our scheme is available on our website. For those without Internet access, or who require a hard copy, a single printout or bound copy of any of the documents referred to in the scheme can be obtained free of charge by post, by contacting the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners as set out above.

When requesting information please include the following details: -

- your name and address;
- the information or documents you would like to access;
- the way you would like the information sent to you i.e. hard-copy or e-mail

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Tel: 01603 621000

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If an applicant is dissatisfied with a response from OCSC he/she can seek an internal review of that decision. A member of staff who was not involved with the original request will undertake the review. An internal review should normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Information Commissioner. A request for an internal review of a decision not to disclose information should be made to the Deputy Secretary to the Commissioners who will respond within 20 working days.

If an applicant remains dissatisfied, he/she can seek an independent review by the Information Commissioner. Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made writing directly to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 525 510

FEEDBACK

We intend to review our publication scheme on an annual basis and would value your assistance in identifying ways in which you feel we could improve it. Any questions or comments about this Scheme, or its operation, can be forwarded to the Deputy Secretary of the Civil Service Commissioners.