Senior Civil Service
External Candidate Recruitment Guidance

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Introduction

This guidance has been developed to assist candidates in applying for an external Senior Civil Service vacancy at the Welsh Government. Please use the guidance provided throughout each stage of the recruitment and selection process.

If you have any questions relating to the information contained in this guidance or the application process, please contact the Senior Civil Service (SCS) Recruitment Team via email at SCSRecruitment@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Principles for Recruitment into the Civil Service

The Welsh Government is bound by the principles for recruitment as set out in the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Principles.

The main Principles are:

- Individuals will be selected on merit on the basis of fair and open competition: Prospective applicants will be given equal and reasonable access to adequate information about the job and its requirements, and about the selection process; and applicants will be considered equally on merit at each stage of the selection process.
- The process will be based on consistent criteria relevant to the job being applied consistently to all candidates; selection methods will be reliable and guard against bias.
- All external recruitment to permanent posts will be underpinned by these principles, including the requirement that permanent appointments must be made on merit via fair and open competition as set out in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

Points to Note

Equality and Diversity

The Welsh Government is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and equality of opportunity. This is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and must be adhered to at each stage of the application process.

In respecting this duty, we comply with the requirements of the Department for Work and Pensions "Two Ticks" Scheme for disabled job applicants, including making reasonable adjustment(s) where a candidate indicates that this is required.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme
The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) provides individuals with disabilities the right to proceed to the next stage of the selection process if they meet the minimum criteria at the sift stage. To apply under the GIS, simply confirm this under the 'Positive about Disability' section in the application form.

Accessibility

The Welsh Government is committed to providing an online application system that is accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of ability, capability or technology. However, due to certain constraints, we have had to include some technologies and features that can cause accessibility issues. If you would prefer to complete an application in a different format, for reasons related to a disability, please contact the SCS Recruitment Team, who can arrange this for you. The Team can also agree any reasonable adjustments that may be required in order to submit your application form. Please get in touch as early as possible during the advertising process, and before the deadline on the closing date. The SCS Recruitment Team can be contacted on SCSrecruitment@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Welsh Language

The Welsh Government acknowledges the importance of developing and growing its bilingual workforce, and welcomes applications for any post from candidates who demonstrate their capability to work in both English and Welsh. Each vacancy is assessed by the recruiting line manager to determine the Welsh language requirements for that particular post. Welsh language requirements will be stated in the advert. Applications for any post can be submitted in either Welsh or English unless otherwise stated in the advert (e.g. if the panel need to assess your written skills in either language at the sifting stage). Applications submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than applications submitted in English.

Stage 1: The Application Process

The majority of vacancies with the Welsh Government are advertised on the Recruitment pages of our website. Select 'Vacancies', then 'Senior', and then follow the link to view the current Senior Civil Service vacancies advertised on our external vacancies board. Vacancy adverts will include a description of the vacancy and will identify the competency behaviours (core skills and behaviours) and essential job specific criteria required for the post, together with any other requirements such as particular qualifications. The advert will also provide details of any other assessment method that may be undertaken during the course of the recruitment activity in addition to the sift and interview. It will also set out the general terms and conditions of the vacancy, including the starting salary at which the appointment will be made.

Planning your Application

Before you make your application you should carefully read the job advert and job description and assure yourself that you can provide sufficient evidence of the core skills and behaviours and job specific criteria for the post. It is worth noting that anyone who is deemed unable to provide sufficient evidence by the panel will not progress to interview and will be sifted out. Only candidates deemed competent against each of the areas being tested (which for the purpose of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is the minimum criteria for the post) may progress beyond the sift (short listing) and/or assessment stage. If you are applying for more than one post you will need to complete a separate application form

for each one, tailored to reflect the competency behaviours and job specific criteria required for each one.

You should plan the completion of your application being mindful of the closing date for the vacancy, as this is a fixed date that will not be negotiated (except where a reasonable adjustment is appropriate and has been agreed beforehand).

Assistance in completing the Application Form: It is your responsibility to provide examples that best demonstrate the relevant competency behaviours and job specific criteria required and it is important to bear in mind it is your application and should therefore be all your own work. If you get an interview or progress to another form of assessment, you will be tested in depth on what you have written. You must not seek advice from anyone who will be involved in the recruitment process, particularly members of the recruitment panel. Assistance may however be provided for a disability-related reason, including the help of an advocate to complete the form in appropriate circumstances.

You are welcome to complete the application form in English or Welsh. For posts where Welsh language skills are required, please check the job description and advert carefully for any instructions about the need to answer certain questions in Welsh in order to test those skills.

How to Apply

The majority of Welsh Government vacancies are advertised via our online application system, which can be accessed via the Recruitment page on the internet. We have recently upgraded to a new online application system, so if you have previously applied for vacancies with the Welsh Government (before September 2014), you will need to create a new account.

To view all the types of opportunities the Welsh Government has to offer, visit the Recruitment page on the internet, and then select the type of vacancy you are looking for.

You are able to track the process of any applications you make via the online application system, in the 'My Applications' section of your account.

Did you know? You can register for Job Alerts via the Candidate Application Centre in your account, so that you are sent the details of any vacancies that meet your search criteria to you via your registered e-mail address. Just select 'Create Job Alert' at the bottom of the vacancies board.

To apply in Welsh

To access the Welsh version of a vacancy, simply click on the 'Change Language / Newid Iaith' toggle button at the top right hand of the advert page. If you would like to apply in Welsh, simply click on the 'Gwneud cais' button at the bottom of this page. Please note, once you start an application in Welsh, you aren't then able to switch to an English application for that post, using the same user account. If you experience any difficulties, or

have any questions regarding the process, please contact the SCS Recruitment Team via email at SCSRecruitment@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Creating a new user account

Once you have selected 'Apply' or 'Gwneud Cais' you will be taken to the candidate log in screen. If you already have a candidate account, simply enter your log-in details and continue. If you do not have an existing candidate account, you will need to select 'Create New Account' which can be found underneath the log in details. Once you have done this, enter your details and read the terms and conditions. If you agree to the terms and conditions, confirm this and select 'Submit Registration'.

Completing the form

A green tick by a section shows that you have responded to all the questions in that section. An orange tick shows that you have completed all the mandatory questions in that section. A cross indicates that you have left some mandatory questions unanswered; therefore the application cannot be submitted.

You don't need to enter all your details in one go. You will be able to save your information and revisit your application at any point before submitting it, up until the application deadline. Please ensure that you save your work frequently, by clicking the "Continue" button, as the application will time out after 60 minutes if left inactive (i.e. if you don't move from one page to the next). It is recommended that candidates draft any lengthy answers off-line then copy and paste this information into the relevant sections of the application form.

If you want to leave your application to finish at a later time, ensure you click the 'Continue' button to save all you have done on your current page. You can then log out of your account, but return to your unfinished application at any point before the vacancy closing date. To return to the application form, simply log in to your account, select 'My applications' and click on the relevant vacancy title in your applications history.

Submitting your Application

Vacancies are open for 24 hours a day and are usually run for a minimum of 2 weeks. It is for prospective candidates to determine when to submit an application but it is advisable not to leave it until the day a vacancy closes before applying.

Select 'Submit' ONLY if you are content that your application is complete and you do not wish to make any changes. Your application will only be submitted once you have completed all essential fields and pressed the 'Submit' button. You will receive an email confirming that your application has submitted and can check in the 'My Applications' section of your account, however, should you be in any doubt, you can contact the SCS Recruitment Team who will be able to confirm for you (E-mail: SCSRecruitment@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

You will need to submit your application by the closing date and specified time of 11:55pm, and once all the required information has been entered.

Application Updates

Once you have applied for a vacancy, you will be kept updated on the progress of your application via your registered e-mail address. Please make sure that you register using an e-mail address that you're happy for application updates to be sent to. You can also check on the progress of your application by logging in to your account and viewing the 'My Applications' section of your account which is at the top of the page when you are logged in.

Stage 2: The Sift Process (short listing)

A sift process will enable the line manager to ensure all applicants meet a minimum standard or reduce the numbers of applicants to a manageable size. A sift panel will have a chair which is usually a HR Deputy Director or Director.

The purpose of the sift panel is to assess and score the evidence provided by the applicants and to determine who has the strongest evidence for each competency/job specific criteria that was advertised. The sift panel will discuss and agree standards against which they assess each application and ensure that sifts are in line with procedures for ensuring equal opportunities.

You may find that there are occasions when you are sifted in or sifted out with the same evidence. This could happen because each exercise is a separate competition with different requirements being set by each panel, and with different candidate pools which vary in the standard of evidence they present.

Each panel member will read the evidence provided by candidates and then rate the evidence against the required competency level. Every application is looked at independently by all panel members who then come together as a sifting panel to discuss their individual analysis before agreeing on a final outcome and a score that is captured by the panel chair only.

All applications are ranked in merit order.

If you are unsuccessful in meeting the minimum criteria required to be invited to the next stage of the application, you will be notified by e-mail. Feedback will be provided to you on request by e-mailing the SCS Recruitment Team so that this can help you with future job applications.

Stage 3: The Interview Process

If you are successful in passing the sift stage you will be invited to attend an interview. This will involve questions based on the competency behaviours and job specific criteria noted in the advert. For some posts you may also be asked to undertake some other form of assessment, for example a written exercise, a presentation or other form of assessment appropriate to the type of role that you are applying for (this will usually be made clear in the job advert and / or the invitation to interview e-mail).

The Panel

At interview, the recruitment panel will have a gender balance, and will usually comprise of three people: the Chair, whose responsibilities include ensuring that the process complies with open and fair competition guidance; and two other panel members. Some panels may include a fourth member, depending on the type of role e.g. if knowledge of a particular specialism is required for the interview.

Interview Language

We will endeavour to ensure that your interview is conducted in your preferred language, English or Welsh (you will be asked your preference in the application form). If you select to have an interview conducted in Welsh, we will also need to test your ability in English, so part of the assessment will be conducted in English. You will be informed of the arrangements beforehand. In some cases where a full Welsh-speaking panel cannot be convened, simultaneous translation from Welsh to English may need to be provided for the benefit of any panel members who don't speak Welsh. In such cases, you will be informed of the arrangements prior to the interview.

Stage 4: After Interview

Issuing Outcomes

You will be informed of the result of your interview by the SCS Recruitment Team via e-mail. If you are successful, your outcome e-mail will inform you of any action you need to take in order to be confirmed in post.

If you are unsuccessful, you can request feed back via the SCS Recruitment Team on your performance at interview who will arrange this with the panel Chair.

Starting in your new post (for successful candidates)

Once you have been notified of your successful outcome, the SCS Recruitment Team will send you a new employee starter pack, which will include a conditional contract, security vetting documentation and any other documentation needed to start your employment. The starter pack will include instructions on how to ensure your employment can start as quickly as possible.

If successful for an SCS post, you will need to have an enhanced security check when you take up your post. The SCS Recruitment Team will advise you on the level of check required for the role, and the process for completing this check.

Grievance and Complaints

Anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly, or has a grievance or complaint, about how the process was conducted should write to:

Head of Resourcing
HR Expert Services
Welsh Government
2nd Floor
Cathays Park 2
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Or email SCSRecruitment@wales.gsi.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint raised with the Welsh Government and feel that the principles of appointment on merit through fair and open competition have not been met you have the right to pursue your grievance with the Civil Service Commission:

Civil Service Commission
G/8
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Email: info@csc.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7271 0831

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