



**NATIONAL
APPRENTICESHIP
OFFICE** GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP

**Post of Project Officer in the
National Apprenticeship Office
(Permanent)
(ref: 508)**

Information Booklet

Closing date for applications

12 noon Wednesday 6th March 2024 via nao@cpl.ie

All candidate data is handled in accordance with the SOLAS data protection policy.

About the National Apprenticeship Office

The National Apprenticeship Office is a new body that has been set up jointly by SOLAS and the Higher Education Authority on behalf of Government to manage, oversee and develop all aspects of the apprenticeship system. The Office is also responsible for implementing the national *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025*. The Office will act as a single point of contact for employers, apprentices and providers in accessing information and guidance on apprenticeship.

The *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025* was published by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in April 2021. Following a seven-year period of expansion 2014-2021, the Action Plan sets out a roadmap for a single integrated system of apprenticeship nationally. There are over 60 actions in the Plan, covering core objectives on the quality and positive status of apprenticeships nationally; ensuring strong industry involvement; enhanced equity of access to apprenticeship opportunities; and a single cohesive apprenticeship system which includes 'migration' of 25 craft apprenticeships into a consortium-led model.

Currently, there are over 26,000 apprentices training in Ireland, on 73 programmes, employed by 8,800+ employers. 40+ education and training providers around the country are involved in off-the-job training of apprentices. The Action Plan includes targets for apprenticeship registrations over the coming years; it is intended that there will be 10,000 apprentice registrations per annum by 2025. There is a pipeline of up to 30 proposed new apprenticeship programmes which are either in-development or at initial proposal stage.

Since the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) was set up in 2022, implementation of the Action Plan for Apprenticeship has advanced significantly. The NAO published its first annual report in January 2023, this is available online.

The NAO is currently advertising for a number of key posts via open competition. This includes a permanent Project Officer post. Details on the post and how to apply are set out below.

Project Officer in the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO)

Status of position: permanent contract

Organisation: National Apprenticeship Office (NAO), employed by SOLAS.

Location: Blended working in NAO offices and remotely

Grade: 8

The National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) wishes to recruit a project officer (finance) to support the planning, management and reporting of its financial affairs. The person will play an important role in ensuring that the NAO delivers on its commitments within budget and in line with relevant public sector procurement and travel and subsistence guidelines. The Project Officer will support NAO programme managers to ensure that they remain on track in managing their budget areas. They will also be responsible for liaising with the SOLAS Finance and Procurement Teams in particular to provide regular reports on expenditure, to identify risks and to troubleshoot issues as they arise. In 2023 the NAO has a budget of €10.5m to deliver on a range of activities to promote and grow the Apprenticeship system. The project officer will be a key member of the NAO team.

Job Description

The Project Officer will:

- Prepare estimates, budgets and forecast outturns and report on same in a timely manner
- Monitor and report on variances between budget and actual expenditure on a monthly basis
- Provide insights into the financial journey of the NAO that can help to inform future financial planning
- To support the annual budget estimates process for submission to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Provide support and guidance to NAO managers to proactively manage their budget areas
- Respond to information requests in particular from the NAO team, from SOLAS Finance and Procurement colleagues and other stakeholders as required
- Liaise on financial controls in place in the NAO in accordance with SOLAS procedures
- To proactively ensure adherence to all relevant SOLAS policies including procurement procedures, travel and subsistence guidelines etc.
- Present financial information in a confident manner to internal and external stakeholders
- Engage effectively with internal and external stakeholders
- Carry out any other duties deemed appropriate for the position by the NAO line manager

Requirements

- At least 3 years' experience in a finance role, modelling, monitoring and reporting on income and expenditure in a fast-paced, constantly evolving environment.
- A financial / accounting qualification is desirable
- Proficient in MS Office software: in particular Excel, Word and Powerpoint and preferably experience of using SAP or equivalent
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including ability to present information clearly, concisely and confidently to individuals in financial and non-financial roles
- Strong interpersonal skills and experience
- Strong team player, who supports and collaborates with colleagues to achieve organisational goals
- Ability to lead, present and facilitate meetings
- Ability to work well under pressure on multiple tasks and to achieve deadlines
- Proven ability to work on own initiative and deliver assigned goals and tasks

Key Competencies for the Role

- **Leadership** - Inspiring and energising self and others to achieve personal and organisational success.
Creates team spirit and helps direct individuals towards the achievement of the team and organisational goals
 - remains visible, available and approachable to others
 - provides a clear definition of individual and team member roles and responsibilities
 - explains what needs to be done and why
 - allows the team to take the glory
 - regularly finds ways to celebrate and reward successes with the team
 - takes a stand on issues he/she feels strongly about but supports a decision once it is made.
- **Communication** - Exchanging information and ideas with others to promote effective discussion and decision making; promoting 2-way communication.
Exchanges information in an open, honest and clear manner to enhance team effectiveness
 - regularly asks for, and listens to, the views and opinions of others, showing genuine respect for what they have to say
 - responds to others in a way that demonstrates he/she has heard and considered their opinions
 - adjusts language, style and tone of communication to suit audience
 - brings forward to Management the ideas and concerns of his/her team to ensure they are heard
 - openly voices and constructively shares differences of opinions, yet is willing to modify perspective and demonstrate flexibility

- **Results-focused and business-aware** - Maintaining a focus on the important issues to achieve and improve results and awareness of and applying sound business principles and effective operational practices to drive successful outcomes.

Works with team to ensure that sound business principles and operational practices are being applied and focuses the team on activities to achieve goals

- brings discipline to the team, encouraging them to find easier and more efficient ways of working
- encourages team to continuously focus their activities to meet the team's objectives and sets measurable targets
- establishes team priorities, and identifies critical tasks and milestones to help keep projects and individuals on track.

- **Developing self and others** - Finding ways to keep skills current and maintain up-to-date knowledge of specific and broad-range topics; providing developmental opportunities to others and taking ownership for own learning and others.

Promotes information sharing within the team and encourages learning as integral to the team's daily activities

- provides time for the team to share information from a variety of sources,
- demonstrating that learning is integral to work
- surrenders the interesting jobs to others to help broaden and strengthen their capabilities
- exchanges information with a wide range of contacts to keep abreast of new ideas, technology etc.

- **Learner and stakeholder focus** - Maintaining learner/ stakeholder focus, understanding their needs, providing realistic commitments and taking responsibility for delivering on those commitments.

Works with team to develop a better understanding of the learner or stakeholders' circumstances to provide the most effective service

- engages with stakeholders whenever possible to better understand their business and build relationships
- works with team to ensure that learner/stakeholders are kept informed as their requests are being managed
- seeks feedback from learners/stakeholders, listening and responding positively to suggestions and criticisms..

- **Thinking big** - Generating and implementing creative solutions to achieve NAO Strategic goals, conceptualising and articulating future opportunities and trends.

Assists the team in the development of new ideas and ways to work.

- considers how new ideas/trends may affect the team
- shares new ideas/trends with the team, asking how those trends could be turned into opportunities for the team
- engages others in "what if" thinking to encourage them to find new and better ways of working
- provides time for brainstorming and the sharing of ideas.

Pay

The salary scale for this position is as for public servants at Grade 8 as of 01 Oct 2023 as follows:

17 point scale - Min point on scale: €43,135 Max point on scale: €68,846

Salary: The appointment will be made on the salary scale at a point in line with current Government Pay Policy. New entrants to the Civil or Public Sector, as defined in Circular 18/2010, will commence on the first point of the salary scale. Different pay and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the appointee is a serving civil or public servant.

Annual Leave: Annual leave will be 29 working days. This leave is exclusive of public holidays.

Hours of Attendance: Working hours are in accordance with the standard arrangements for government agencies including SOLAS and the HEA and will equate to no less than a 35 hours (net of rest breaks) per week.

No additional payment will be made for extra attendance as the rate of remuneration payable covers any exceptional extra attendance liability that may arise from time to time.

Location: Office premises for the National Apprenticeship Office are in East Point Business Park, Dublin 3. The location of the office premises may change; however, they will continue to be in Dublin. A Blended Working policy is in place and an arrangement is available for request with this role, with a minimum of 2 days per week in the office (East Point, Dublin 3). One of the days must be a Tuesday. Please note that as a public sector employee, you must work in the Irish jurisdiction to avail of blended working, and in accordance with Department Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) requirements, you must be available to attend in person if and when required. SOLAS headquarters is currently based in Castleforbes House, Dublin 1.

Tenure: This is a permanent post in the National Apprenticeship Office, employed by SOLAS.

Probation: A probation period of 9 months applies to this role.

Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER): It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are not eligible to apply for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

Declaration: Applicants are required to declare in writing whether they have previously availed of a Public Service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

How to apply for this post

An application can be made by submitting the National Apprenticeship Office application form which accompanies this competition booklet no later than **12 noon on Wednesday 6th March 2024, to nao@cpl.ie**.

Applications cannot be accepted after the closing date and must be made using the application form provided to the email address above.

Selection process

The selection may include shortlisting of candidates based on the information contained in their application and by (i) interview and (ii) satisfactory references (referees will not be contact without the candidate's prior agreement). Candidates may be required to attend a second interview.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position SOLAS will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises SOLAS may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of the selection process.