



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

RESEARCH OFFICER – CONTRACT
Assistant Principal Equivalent Grade
ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

The Adoption Authority of Ireland is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

CONTACT: [HR @AAI.GOV.IE](mailto:HR@AAI.GOV.IE)

ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND
SHELBOURNE HOUSE, SHELBOURNE ROAD, DUBLIN 4
WWW.AAI.GOV.IE

TITLE OF POSITION: Research Officer – Assistant Principal Equivalent Grade (3-year contract)

REPORTING TO: Chief Executive Officer

OFFICE: The Adoption Authority of Ireland

LOCATION: Dublin 4.
The Adoption Authority is currently based in one location in Ballsbridge. In due course the Authority, or part of the Authority, may relocate to one or more sites and some staff will be relocated to the new site(s).

Our Mission

"We will work to achieve excellence in adoption and adoption related services, with the best interests of children as our primary consideration."

The Adoption Authority of Ireland (the Authority) was established under the Adoption Act 2010 and it is the Central Authority for finalising adoptions within Ireland. The purpose of the Adoption Act 2010 is to improve standards in both domestic and intercountry adoption. The Authority aims to support Government to achieve the highest quality of service for children in need of alternative and permanent family homes through adoption, and to regulate all child and adult adoption services.

To meet the goal of promoting evidence-based practice and policy as outlined in its Corporate and Business Plans, the Authority has established a Research Advisory Committee to assist in formulating and enabling research, and commissioning research projects.

A further initiative in ensuring the development of the Authority as a centre of excellence in adoption practice, policy and research internationally will be the appointment of a **Research Officer**.

These developments (initiatives) will enhance the Authority's capacity to meet its broadened remit of regulation, policy, research and communications in compliance with the Adoption Act 2010.

For further information on the work of the Authority, visit our website www.aai.gov.ie

Job Description

One half of the role will focus on applied research on adoption with a view to informing standards and guidance. The primary audience for Authority research will be policymakers, managers and frontline staff and practitioners. The Research Officer will play a major role in establishing the annual research programme of the Authority in line with its strategic aims.

The other half of the role will focus directly on existing adoption records and files in Ireland, held by the Authority which provide valuable source of research data. Different statistical analyses of the data will be carried out under the direction of the Authority.

The Research Officer will report to the Chief Executive Officer. He or she will attend the Authority's Research Advisory Committee meetings and liaise with the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Core duties and responsibilities will include the following:

- Overseeing and managing research work relevant to the priorities of the AAI, including the administration and management of commissioned research, as well as the publication and dissemination of completed projects;
- Assisting the Authority in developing evidence informed research and guidance;
- Ensuring that all research outputs produced or commissioned by the Authority meet defined quality standards;
- Undertaking primary and secondary research (both qualitative and quantitative) on relevant adoption issues as specified by the Board of the Authority and to report on findings and recommendations for publication;
- Compiling a databank of Authority statistics and perform statistical analysis on adoption records;
- Collaborating with fellow researchers, universities, research centres and other stakeholder groups on relevant projects, funded or co-funded by the Authority or other funding organisations;
- Drafting briefing and discussion papers on relevant issues when requested and assisting in drafting discussion papers on relevant adoption issues and review literature, reports and submissions on same;
- Engaging effectively with stakeholders – internal and external – to assist in the delivery of the Authority's research strategic plan;
- Supporting the work of the Authority's Research Advisory Committee;
- Carrying out any other duties as directed.

Requirements

Character

Each candidate must be of good character.

Health

Each candidate shall be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

The Research Officer shall have:

- Significant research experience in a relevant social science or cognate discipline, ideally to PhD level;
- Training in qualitative and quantitative research methods either separately or as part of a graduate programme;
- At least five years' experience of research, including research management in a relevant field;
- Experience in bringing reports to publication stage.

The Research Officer is expected to demonstrate:

- A record of completing projects on time and within budget;
- A sound knowledge of and proven expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods, evaluation methods and quality criteria;
- An understanding of public policy and the policy environment;
- Ability to analyse data and narrate meaningful implications;
- Knowledge and experience of relevant and current research software packages;
- An ability to work independently, use own initiative and consult where appropriate;
- Strong written and oral communication skills with the capacity to write simply and clearly, and to explain research findings to a non-technical audience; to produce reports and briefing papers for different audiences in the policy and public arenas;
- Excellent communication and public speaking skills;
- Capacity to engage with a broad range of stakeholders;
- Good organisational and leadership skills;
- Flexibility and the ability to respond to urgent requests for data;
- Knowledge of adoption legislation, adoption-related policy, research and statistics in the Irish context would be an advantage.

***Note:** The functions and responsibilities assigned to this position are based on the current stated role and may be changed from time to time. The person appointed requires the flexibility to fulfil other roles and responsibilities at a similar level within the Authority.*

Eligibility to compete

Candidates should note that eligibility to compete is open to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Swiss citizens under EU agreements may also apply.

A candidate who is in doubt with regard to their eligibility to compete should consult the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation.

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 debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

Collective Agreement - Redundancy Payments to Public Servants:

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the public

service by any public service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. Thereafter the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will be required prior to re-employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility) and the Minister's consent will have to be secured prior to employment by any public service body.

Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010):

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider public service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.

Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013)

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants dated 28 June 2012 as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER Scheme that persons will not be eligible for re-employment in any Public Service body [as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012] for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. Thereafter, the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will be required prior to re-employment. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor).

Declaration:

Applicants will be required to declare 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

Remuneration and Benefits

Remuneration:

Salary Grade: Assistant Principal Equivalent Grade

Salary Scale: at 1 October 2018

€66,495 - €68,898 - €71,289

Personal pension contribution (PPC) rate. This salary is payable to an individual who is required to make a personal pension contribution (PPC) to their main pension (in general those persons whose initial appointment to the Public Service is on or after 6th April 1995).

€64,232 - €66,569 - €67,856

Non-personal pension contribution (non-PPC) rate. This salary is payable to an individual who is not required to make a personal pension contribution (PPC) to their main pension scheme.

Annual Leave: 30 days per annum. This leave is on the basis of a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Note:

- Entry will be at the minimum point of the scale for new entrants to the public service and will not be subject to negotiation;
- If immediately prior to appointment the appointee is already a serving Civil Servant or Public Servant and is on a pay scale which is the equivalent of the pay scale advertised, and at a point no higher than the third point indicated above, consideration will be given to entry at their existing point on the scale;
- The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Contract: A specified-purpose contract of 36 month's duration.

Probation: This role will be on a probationary basis for a period of 12 months from the date of commencement of employment.

Superannuation:

The successful appointee will be offered public service pension terms and retirement age conditions in accordance with pension arrangements in the Adoption Authority depending on the status of the successful appointee:

In general, an individual who has no prior pensionable Public Service history in the 26 weeks prior to appointment will be a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (Single Scheme) which commenced from 1 January 2013 (Section 10 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 refers. A copy of the Act can be viewed at:

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2012/en/act/pub/0037/index.html>;

Application and Selection Process

How to Apply

Please submit the 3 documents as set out below to HR@aai.gov.ie

- A comprehensive CV;
- A fully completed Key Achievements Form;
- A **cover letter/ personal statement** outlining why you wish to be considered for the post and where you believe your personal attributes, skills, knowledge and experience meet the requirements for the Research Officer post in the Adoption Authority as specified above.

Please note all documents must be typed and that omission of any or part of the 3 requested documents, as set out above, will render the application incomplete. Incomplete applications will not be considered for the next stage of the selection process.

Closing Date

The closing date and time for applications is 3pm on Thursday 07 February 2019. Applications received after the specified deadline cannot be accepted.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within 2 working days of applying, please email Caroline_Wilson@aai.gov.ie

Selection Methods

The Adoption Authority will convene an expert board to carry out the competitive stages of the selection process to the highest standards of best practice. The approach employed may include:

- Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application;
- A competitive interview;
- Second interview and presentation.

Shortlisting

If shortlisting is required, the selection board will apply the following assessment and scoring system.

The scoring system used will be a 30-point rating scale, which has three bands, as follows:

Limited/ Patchy Evidence 1 - 10

- based on the information provided in their application form the candidate has demonstrated **Limited/ Patchy** evidence in respect of the competency requirement for this post.

Moderate/ Good Evidence 11 - 20

- based on the information provided in their application form the candidate has demonstrated **Moderate/ Good** evidence in respect of the competency requirement for this post.

Very Good Evidence 21 - 30

- based on the information provided in their application form the candidate has demonstrated **Very Good** evidence in respect of the competency requirement for this post.

Interview

Candidates will be notified in due course of the exact date, time and venue for the interview(s).

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position the Authority 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.

Feedback and Review

Feedback: Where candidates have not been selected for a post; or in the case of an interim process such as shortlisting they have not progressed past this stage; the Authority is happy to provide feedback to candidates. A candidate may contact the Authority through the HR@aai.gov.ie and request same. The Authority will arrange this for you as soon as possible.

Informal Review: Where a candidate is unhappy with an action or decision in relation to an application, he or she may seek an informal review in the first instance. The candidate must address his or her concerns in relation to the process in writing, setting out the basis for the complaint being made, to the HR Team HR@aai.gov.ie within 2 working days of the notification of the decision.

Formal Review: A candidate may request a formal review under Section 7 of the Code of Practice for Appointments to positions in the Civil Service and Public Service. The candidate must address his or her concerns in relation to the process in writing, setting out the basis for the complaint being made, to the Head of Compliance and Resources in the first instance at HR@aai.gov.ie. A complaint or request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the initial decision, or within 5 working days of the outcome of the informal review stage if availed of.

Where the decision to be reviewed relates to an interim stage of a selection process, a request for formal review must be received with 4 working days of the date of receipt of the decision. Candidates electing to use the informal process at the interim stage must do so within 2 working days of communication of the decision to them.

Please Note: You may be required to undertake a medical should you come under consideration for appointment.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by the Authority, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence, as the Authority require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

References

We would appreciate it if you would start considering names of people who you feel would be suitable referees that we might consult (2 - 3 names and contact details). The referees listed here do not have to include your current employer, but should be in a position to provide a reference for you. Please be assured that we will only collect the details and contact referees should you come under consideration at interview stage.

Security Clearances

You may be required to complete and return a Garda vetting form should you come under consideration for appointment. This form will be forwarded to An Garda Síochána for security checks on all Irish and Northern Irish addresses at which you resided. If you are not successful, this information will be destroyed by the Authority. If you do, therefore, subsequently come under consideration for another position, you may be required to supply this information again.

Please note

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend interview, or a successful result letter, is not to be taken as implying that the Authority is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it, the Authority may at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

The importance of confidentiality

The Adoption Authority of Ireland may use third party recruitment specialists to manage all or part of the recruitment process on our behalf. We would like to assure you that protecting confidentiality is our number one priority. You can expect, and we guarantee, that all enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process.

This description has been designed to indicate the general nature of and the criteria required to perform this function. It will be subject to regular review with the post holder and his/her Manager.

AAI Ireland is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of gender, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family status, sexual orientation or disability.

Assistant Principal Equivalent Grade competencies

Effective Performance Indicators

Leadership

- Actively contributes to the development of the strategies and policies of the Department/ Organisation;
- Brings a focus and drive to building and sustaining high levels of performance, addressing any performance issues as they arise;
- Leads and maximises the contribution of the team as a whole;
- Considers the effectiveness of outcomes in terms wider than own immediate area;
- Clearly defines objectives/ goals & delegates effectively, encouraging ownership and responsibility for tasks;
- Develops capability of others through feedback, coaching & creating opportunities for skills development;
- Identifies and takes opportunities to exploit new and innovative service delivery channels.

Analysis & Decision Making

- Researches issues thoroughly, consulting appropriately to gather all information needed on an issue;
- Understands complex issues quickly, accurately absorbing and evaluating data (including numerical data);
- Integrates diverse strands of information, identifying inter-relationships and linkages;
- Makes clear, timely and well-grounded decisions on important issues;
- Considers the wider implications of decisions on a range of stakeholders;
- Takes a firm position on issues s/he considers important.

Management & Delivery of Results

- Takes responsibility for challenging tasks and delivers on time and to a high standard;
- Plans and prioritises work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, re-prioritising in light of changing circumstances;
- Ensures quality and efficient customer service is central to the work of the division;
- Looks critically at issues to see how things can be done better;
- Is open to new ideas initiatives and creative solutions to problems;
- Ensures controls and performance measures are in place to deliver efficient and high value services;
- Effectively manages multiple projects.

Interpersonal & Communication Skills

- Presents information in a confident, logical and convincing manner, verbally and in writing;
- Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues;
- Promotes teamwork within the section, but also works effectively on projects across Departments/ Sectors;
- Maintains poise and control when working to influence others;

- Instills a strong focus on Customer Service in his/her area;
- Develops and maintains a network of contacts to facilitate problem solving or information sharing;
- Engages effectively with a range of stakeholders, including members of the public, Public Service Colleagues and the political system.

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

- Has a clear understanding of the roles objectives and targets of self and the team and how they fit into the work of the unit and Department/ Organisation;
- Has a breadth and depth of knowledge of Department and Governmental issues and is sensitive to wider political and organisational priorities;
- Is considered an expert by stakeholders in own field/ area;
- Is focused on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth to help carry out the specific requirements of the role.

Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values

- Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level;
- Is personally honest and trustworthy and can be relied upon;
- Ensures the citizen is at the heart of all services provided;
- Through leading by example, fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity.