



# Open competition for the appointment of Education Officers

## Information Booklet

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# Education Officer in the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

## 1. The appointment

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is the statutory body which advises the Minister for Education and Skills on matters relating to the curriculum for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools and the assessment procedures employed in schools and examinations on subjects which are part of the curriculum.

The Council wishes to make appointments, by way of secondment or contract, to the following posts of Education Officer:

### **Full-time - one year initially**

- Education Officer – Language and Literacy: Early Childhood and Primary
- Education Officer – Language and Literacy (Gaeilge and English): Primary
- Education Officer – Junior Cycle
- Education Officer – Junior Cycle/Special Educational Needs

Education Officers assist the executive in carrying out the brief of Council as defined in the Education Act, 1998, in relation to specific aspects of the review and reform of curriculum and assessment for early childhood, primary and post-primary education. Education Officers report to the Chief Executive or her nominee. In day-to-day operations they report to a Deputy Chief Executive or Director, Curriculum and Assessment. They will also work with administrative staff and ancillary personnel as well as responding to queries and requests from across the education sector, and from the public and the media as they arise. They are also responsible for such contact with national and international networks, researchers and academics as may be required.

## 2. Requirements

Applicants must (on the latest date for receipt of completed applications):

- hold a relevant recognised degree or equivalent professional or teaching qualification
- have a comprehensive knowledge of the Irish education system, of current curriculum and assessment issues, and particular expertise in the area specified
- have excellent communication and presentation skills and the ability to write to a very high standard
- have ICT skills.

### **Desirable**

- research skills including data gathering and recording, analysing, summarising and report writing
- a post-graduate qualification in the field or a cognate area.
- skills and experience working with websites and digital media.

## 3. Responsibilities

The Education Officer shall:

- assist the NCCA executive in carrying out its brief in relation to the review and reform of school curriculum and its assessment
- support the work of committees and working groups to which they may be assigned
- prepare working papers, discussion documents, draft reports and other such documentation in relation to curriculum and assessment matters
- engage with researchers and their work
- develop and support NCCA networks in schools and settings and work effectively with teachers and practitioners
- assist in dissemination of information on curriculum and assessment at all levels of the education system
- attend and/or address meetings of Council at the direction of the Chief Executive or her nominee or meet with other groups and individuals on behalf of Council
- communicate effectively within the NCCA, and on its behalf
- work effectively with others both as a team member and a team leader
- carry out further related work at the request of the Chief Executive or her nominee.

## 4. Particular responsibilities

In addition to the above, the following particular responsibilities apply to the posts.

### **4.1 Education Officer – Language and Literacy: Early Childhood and Primary** **The filling of this post is subject to sanction by the Department of Finance.**

The person appointed will join the Early Childhood and Primary Team contributing to the NCCA's early childhood and primary work and playing a key role in the development of a language curriculum for primary schools.

The person appointed will be required to:

- play a significant role in the re-construction of the infant level of the *Primary School Curriculum* with particular focus on the Language Curriculum and taking account of the transition from pre-school to primary school
- work with principals, teachers, children and parents in primary schools to
  - explore how *Aistear* and the *Infant Curriculum* can work together
  - gather evidence of language teaching and learning experiences in primary schools
  - develop online resources to support teachers' classroom practice
- support the online publication of resources and materials arising from the above work and update content on the NCCA's websites.
- support the work of other projects in curriculum and assessment in light of the findings from curriculum review, and with particular reference to development of the language curriculum.

In fulfilling these duties, the Education Officer will draw on the following expertise and skills:

- experience in working with young children (pre-school and/or children in the infant classes)
- experience in leading curriculum review and development
- some knowledge of the latest research and thinking in supporting children's language development and emergent literacy.

## **4.2 Education Officer – Language and Literacy (Gaeilge and English): Primary**

The person appointed will join the Early Childhood and Primary Team contributing to the NCCA's early childhood and primary work and playing a key role in the development of a language curriculum for primary schools.

The person appointed will be required to:

- play a significant role in the re-construction of the Language Curriculum for primary schools, to include English and Gaeilge, beginning with infant classes
- work with principals, teachers, children and parents in primary schools to
  - explore how *Aistear* and the *Infant Curriculum* can work together
  - gather evidence of language teaching and learning experiences in primary schools
  - develop online resources to support teachers' classroom practice
- support the online publication of resources and materials arising from the above work and update content on the NCCA's websites.
- support the work of other projects in curriculum and assessment in light of the findings from curriculum review, and with particular reference to development of the language curriculum.

In fulfilling these duties, the Education Officer will draw on the following expertise and skills:

- experience in working with primary school children
- experience in leading curriculum review and development
- some knowledge of the latest research and thinking in supporting children's language development and emergent literacy.

### **4.3 Education Officer – Junior Cycle**

**The filling of this post is subject to sanction by the Department of Finance.**

The Education Officer appointed will work with the NCCA Junior Cycle Team and with school networks on the junior cycle developments and the proposed introduction to schools of a new *Framework for Junior Cycle*.

The person appointed will be required to

- contribute to the development and introduction of a new *Framework for Junior Cycle* in schools
- contribute to and manage the development of curriculum and assessment specifications and exemplification related to the junior cycle developments
- work with management, teachers, students and parents in school networks on planning for junior cycle development
- support the online publication of resources and materials arising from the work and update content on the NCCA's websites

In fulfilling these duties, the Education Officer will ideally draw on the following expertise and skills

- experience of working with schools in a developmental capacity
- experience of leading curriculum review and development
- some knowledge of research and international developments in lower secondary education

### **4.4 Education Officer – Junior Cycle/Special Educational Needs**

The Education Officer appointed will work with the NCCA Junior Cycle Team and with school networks on aspects of the junior cycle developments and the proposed introduction to schools of a new *Framework for Junior Cycle*. The work of the Education Officer will focus, in particular, on students with special educational needs and those who are educationally disadvantaged.

The person appointed will be required to

- contribute, in general, to the development and introduction of a new *Framework for Junior Cycle* in schools

- contribute to the development of curriculum and assessment specifications and exemplification related to the junior cycle developments, particularly learning programmes for a proposed new qualification for students with particular special educational needs
- work with management, teachers, students and parents in school networks in the above contexts
- support the online publication of resources and materials arising from the work and update content on the NCCA's websites

In fulfilling these duties, the Education Officer will ideally draw on the following expertise and skills

- experience of working with students/schools in the area of special educational needs and educational disadvantage
- experience of working with schools in a developmental capacity
- experience of leading curriculum review and development
- knowledge of research and thinking, both in Ireland and beyond, in special educational needs and educational disadvantage

## 5. Remuneration

The Education Officer salary scale is as follows:

€53,984 - € 56,326 - € 58,654 - € 60,963 - € 63,867 - € 68,210 - € 72,097 - € 76,036  
€ 79,238 - € 81,720 (LSI 1)\* - € 84,195 (LSI 2)\*\*

\* After three years satisfactory service at the maximum,

\*\* After six years satisfactory service at the maximum.

Government policy dictates that all posts be filled at the first point of the scale. However, a person appointed on secondment from within the education sector that has higher earnings will retain their existing salary and allowances. The salary is subject to all statutory deductions including Pension Related Deduction.



## 6. Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance will be 32 working days per annum, pro rata for the duration of the contract. This allowance which is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave is on the basis of a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

## 7. Location

The NCCA is currently based at 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 and Portlaoise Co. Laois. The NCCA will consider procuring alternative suitable office accommodation to be agreed by the Chief Executive for staff based in other locations. The Council also has a policy of facilitating atypical working arrangements which include working from home on occasion but not on a full-time basis.

## 8. Equal Opportunities

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is an equal opportunities employer.

## 9. Format of the competition

NCCA reserves the right to **shortlist applicants**.

Selection will be on the basis of a **competitive interview**. The interview will be based on the competencies required to carry out the duties and responsibilities as set out in the requirements for the posts.

Prior to the main interview, applicants will be **set a 30-minute task** which will require them to offer a written analysis of a policy issue broadly relevant to the work of the NCCA. This short written report produced on a PC will be made available to the interview board to assist them in making a decision on the application.

It is expected that the interviews for the posts will take place in 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

## 10. Completing the application form

Applications must be made on the official application form for the relevant post.

When completing the application form **accuracy is essential**.

## 11. Closing date

In order to expedite the holding of the competition, the NCCA would be grateful if applicants would forward **four** signed hard copies of each completed application form when applying. The four signed hard copies must be forwarded to reach **Morgan Lockhart, Executive Officer, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2** not later than **5 p.m. on Friday, 16th September, 2011**.

Appeals related to loss or delay will not be considered unless supported by a certificate of posting. The cost of postage must be borne by the applicant. All applications are acknowledged. Change of address should be notified to us immediately in writing.

## 12. Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the F.O.I. Act, 1997 applications will be treated in strict confidence.

## 13. Attendance at interview

The onus is on all applicants to make themselves available for the interview on the date(s) specified by the NCCA and to make whatever arrangements are necessary to ensure that they receive communications sent to them at the address specified on their application form. The NCCA will not be responsible for expenses incurred by applicants.

## 14. Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Applicants who-

- (a) do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the NCCA requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature; **or**
- (b) do not attend the obligatory test(s) at the time(s) and place(s) appointed, **or**
- (c) when offered appointment do not accept appointment and take up duty as arranged;

shall, unless the NCCA in their absolute discretion decide otherwise, be deemed to have withdrawn their candidature.