



**Oifig an
Rialaitheoir Pleanáil**
Office of the
Planning Regulator

Candidate Information Booklet

Planning Officer (Engineer Grade II) in the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

Location: Dublin 7

Department: Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

Closing Date: 01 May 2026

Email: recruiting@opr.ie

Website: <https://www.opr.ie/recruitment-3/>



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1. ABOUT THE CIVIL SERVICE

The Civil Service is at the heart of Irish society. Everything we do impacts our country and our people. We are a robust and trusted institution, which has served the people of Ireland since the foundation of the State. Civil servants and Civil Service organisations play a crucial role in providing and supporting the delivery of necessary front-line services to help meet the needs of our people and implement government policy. Our experience dealing with national and international issues has shown the tremendous commitment, resilience and ability of the Civil Service to respond with innovation and determination to any challenge.

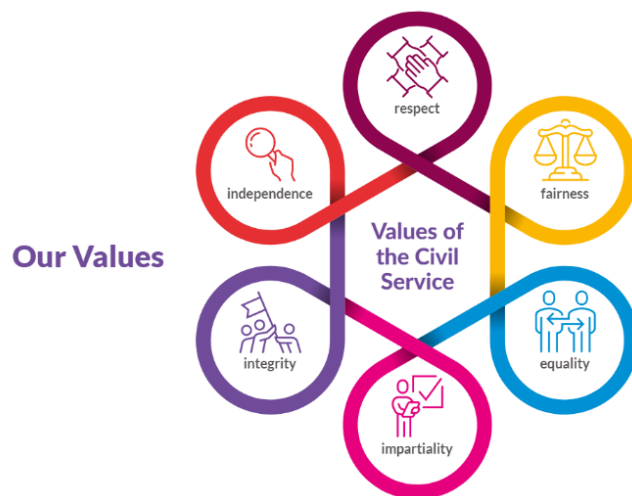


Climate change and sustainability, geopolitical and demographic changes, housing and healthcare add complexity to the environment in which the Civil Service operates. We therefore need agile and resilient staff to support the Government in managing the breadth of complex issues and in preparing for the future.

While the challenges which face the Civil Service today are different to those faced at the foundation of the State, our core values remain the same.

The Irish Civil Service employs people in over 40 Government Departments and Offices with a diverse set of responsibilities. We support the Government by developing policy options and legislation to address major national issues, co-ordinating the broader public service, helping to manage the economy and delivering services to the public.

[Civil Service Renewal 2030](#) is an ambitious 10-year strategy of reform for the Civil Service. Aligned to it, [Better Public Services](#), the Public Service Transformation Strategy, aims to deliver for the public and build trust. The Civil Service Renewal Strategy deliver a diverse and high performing Civil Service that is more inclusive, engaged and agile. By implementing these plans and demonstrating an enduring commitment to public service values, the Civil Service can create a more diverse yet unified, professional, responsive, open and accountable organisation that inspires confidence in Ireland and internationally.



The Civil Service can offer suitable candidates a very satisfying and varied career, with competitive terms and conditions. All civil service employers are committed to championing an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects modern Ireland and the people we serve. We strive to create a culture where all staff have equal access to opportunity and feel comfortable and empowered to be themselves at work.

2. ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) is an independent oversight body that was established by Government to oversee the functioning and policy consistency of Ireland's planning process to ensure quality outcomes in relation to proper planning and sustainable development.

Functions of the OPR

The Planning and Development Act 2024, outlines the OPR's role and functions, which include the following:

- Evaluation and assessment of regional assembly regional spatial and economic strategies and local authority development plans and area plans (including urban, priority and coordinated areas plans) to ensure material consistency with national and regional policies including National Planning Policy Guidance and Measures;
- Reviews and examination of local authorities and An Coimisiún Pleanála in the performance of their planning functions; and
- Research, education and training, and public awareness programmes that support the progressive development of Ireland's planning process.

Following the recent and ongoing phased commencements of the Planning and Development Act 2024, the OPR's statutory functions and role in the planning system will be further expanded. The Planning Officer will play a key role in developing and implementing practices and procedures to support these new and expanded functions.

The OPR is an equal opportunities employer and encourages and welcomes talented people from all backgrounds to apply to work with us.

3. ABOUT THE ROLE

The OPR is seeking to fill a Planning Officer (Civil Service Engineer Grade II) position, and it is intended that a panel of suitable candidates will be formed for the filling of future vacancies. The Planning Officer will perform an essential role in the delivery of statutory functions of the OPR. The successful candidate will report to the Senior Planner and will be responsible for technical analysis and input into the delivery of our statutory mandate. The initial vacancy is within the Research, Training & Public Awareness (RTPA) team, however candidates may be assigned to other teams and/or may work across several teams, subject to business needs.

This role involves working at a national level, with local authorities, government departments, regional assemblies and key stakeholders to co-ordinate national, regional and local planning policy and best practice. The OPR is strongly committed to providing opportunities for learning and development to support staff in the role.

The role of Planning Officer in the OPR entails:

- Undertaking **research and analysis** into planning topics and contributing to the OPR's functions;
- Support the delivery of training and public awareness programmes;
- Assessing and **evaluating statutory development plans and area plans (urban/priority/coordinated)**, as outlined in the Planning and Development Act 2024;
- Undertaking **reviews** of the systems and procedures used by planning authorities, regional assemblies or the Commission when carrying out their planning functions;
- Examining and advising on planning **complaints**;
- Continuously and pro-actively keeping up to date with the latest developments in professional planning practice in relation to planning and sustainable development;
- Liaising and interacting with planning authorities, regional assemblies, central Government

- and other key stakeholders in the achievement of the business objectives of the OPR;
- Such other duties as may be assigned from time to time.

Please note that the above list of responsibilities is not exhaustive.

4. LOCATION

The post will be located at the OPR offices at Park House, Dublin 7, however the OPR operates a Blended Working Policy incorporating a mix of office-based and home-based working.

5. WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are seeking experienced planning professionals with a career track record in delivering a broad range of work duties, looking to add to that portfolio working within a national level planning body and who will work well under tight statutory deadlines in a fast-paced environment. The ideal candidate will therefore be self-starting, innovative and dynamic, demonstrating very high-quality communication skills and the ability to learn and adapt to rapidly changing requirements or circumstances.

Essential criteria

Candidates must, on or before **3PM** on **01 MAY 2026** possess or demonstrate:

- A professional qualification in planning recognised by the Irish Planning Institute or the Royal Town Planning Institute as a qualification enabling the person to seek full membership of the relevant institute;
- 5 or more years' experience in planning post the qualification above;
- A strong working knowledge of the principal policy, legislative and regulatory requirements, including EU Directive requirements, relevant to the role and functions of local authorities and regional assemblies in their statutory plan-making functions;
- A proven track record in delivering high performance outcomes against a background of demanding time-driven requirements;
- A proven ability to build productive working relationships with internal and external stakeholders;
- Strong critical analysis skills and the ability to produce clear, accurate and well-structured written material for technical and non-technical audiences;
- Highly developed communication skills with an ability to express articulately, concisely and persuasively; and
- A clear understanding of the role of the Office of the Planning Regulator, its development needs and of the opportunities and challenges, it faces in the planning environment.

Desirable qualities

- Experience in the processes for preparation and adoption of statutory plans;
- Experience in undertaking and coordination of research;
- Experience and knowledge of working with EU Directive requirements in planning;
- Project management and administrative experience/qualifications;
- Staff management experience;
- Ability to interact using Irish language.

6. WHAT WE OFFER

The Principal Terms and Conditions of Service for this competition can be found [HERE](#). The main points are summarised as follows:

- A permanent position following the successful completion of an initial probationary contract in the Office of the Planning Regulator.
- A competitive salary. Planning Officer, Engineer Grade II. Click [HERE](#) to see the Pay scales circular. The current gross rate for this position, effective from 01 February 2026 of current Circular 07/2026 is: Point 1 €75,448
- **Annual Leave:** 27 days (rising to 30 days after 5 years' service)
- **Hours of Attendance:** 41 hours and 15 minutes gross per week (35 hours net per week). No additional payment will be made for extra attendance over (41 hours and 15 minutes gross or 35 hours net per week) as the rate of remuneration payable covers any exceptional extra attendance liability that may arise from time to time.

Personal Pension Contribution (PPC)

The PPC pay rate applies when the individual is required to pay a Personal Pension Contribution (otherwise known as a main scheme contribution) in accordance with the rules of their main/personal superannuation scheme. This is different to a contribution in respect of membership of a Spouses' and Children's scheme, or the Additional Superannuation Contributions (ASC).

Individuals who are new to the Civil Service are required to pay into the Personal Pension Contribution scheme.

A different rate will apply where the appointee is not required to make a Personal Pension Contribution.

Where applicable, Long Service Increments may be payable after 3 years (LSI1) and 6 years (LSI2) satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

Important Note

Entry will be at the minimum of the pay scale, and the rate of remuneration will not be subject to negotiation and may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Different terms and conditions may apply if you are a currently serving civil or public servant.

Subject to satisfactory performance, increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy.

All offers are for immediate appointment.

You will agree that any overpayment of salary, allowances, or expenses will be repaid by you in accordance with Circular 07/2018: Recovery of Salary, Allowances, and Expenses Overpayments made to Staff Members/Former Staff Members/Pensioners.

In applying for this competition, you accept that, if offered a post, you will be able to commence duties within a reasonable timeframe. Start dates are determined by business needs, and appointees will be expected to take up duty within this period once an offer is made. Requests for deferral will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and remain entirely at the discretion of the Department. As an Employer of Choice, the Civil Service is committed to supporting a flexible and family-friendly working environment. We offer a range of elective policies, e.g. Worksharing, Shorter Working Year, Remote Working (operated on a 'blended' basis) etc. All elective policies can be applied for in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and are subject to the business needs of the organisation.

In addition, the Civil Service operates a Mobility Scheme for all general service grades. This initiative provides staff with valuable career development opportunities, enabling them to gain experience in diverse roles across various Civil Service organisations and geographical locations.

7. THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

7.1 Eligibility

To be eligible, you will need to meet **certain requirements** by the date of the position offer:

You must be:

- (a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; **or**
- (b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); **or**
- (c) A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; **or**
- (d) A non-EEA citizen who has a Stamp 4* or a Stamp 5 permission.

** Please note that a 50 TEU visa, which is a replacement for Stamp 4EUFAM after Brexit, is acceptable as a Stamp 4 equivalent.*

Fulfil Health & Character and Reference Check requirements

It is important that you list any previous civil or public service employment, if you have availed of a voluntary redundancy or retirement scheme and/or are in receipt of an ill-health retirement pension. Failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

IRISH PROFICIENCY

As part of our ongoing commitment to support the Irish language, our leadership on the Gaeilge365 programme and to comply with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021, we are gathering information on candidates' capacity to speak Irish.

Under this legislation, public bodies are required to ensure that 20% of new recruits can perform their duties through Irish by 2030. While this position is not an Irish language speaking role, we are asking all applicants to indicate their current level of Irish language ability.

This information will be used for workforce planning purposes only and will not form part of the selection process for this competition.

PLEASE NOTE

Qualifications/eligibility may not be verified until the final stage of the process. Therefore, those candidates who have not met the specified eligibility requirements and proceed with their application are putting themselves through unnecessary effort/expense and will not be offered a position from this campaign. An invitation to interview or any element of the selection process is not acceptance of eligibility.

7.2 Selection Process

7.2.1 How to Apply

Applications should be submitted via email to recruiting@opr.ie by **01 MAY 2026 at 3pm**. Candidates should submit a completed application form, in pdf format, in a single email.

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

An acknowledgement email will be issued in respect of all applications received (this email will acknowledge receipt of the application but will not confirm eligibility or otherwise). If an applicant does not receive an acknowledgement email within 3 working days of the date of submission, the applicant should contact the OPR to ensure their application has been received.

Closing Date

Deadline for applications: **01 MAY 2026 at 3pm**. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

7.2.2 Selection Process

The selection process may include:

- shortlisting of candidates (on the basis of the information contained in their application)
- initial/preliminary interview
- presentation
- final interview

Please note that any offer of employment made to a successful candidate will be subject to satisfactory:

- reference verification;
- pre-employment medical declaration.

Shortlisting

The OPR will carry out a shortlisting process to select a group of applicants who, based on an examination of the applications submitted, appear to be the most suitable and qualified for the position.

An expert panel will examine the application forms against agreed shortlisting criteria based on the requirements of the position. The shortlisting criteria may include both the essential and desirable criteria specified for the position. It is therefore in an applicant's interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of their qualifications/experience in their application.

Interview Process

First Interview

Interviews will be semi-structured in format, with candidates asked to provide examples of the **capabilities for the role as outlined in the [Assistant Principal Officer Capability Framework](#)**.

All candidates are assessed on the same areas to ensure fairness in the selection process. Candidates will be scored on their competence in each area and those meeting the standard are ranked in order of merit, to determine if they may progress to the final interview stage. The preliminary interview may take place in person or by live video through MS Teams.

Final Interview

Candidates invited to final interview will be given a question or topic that they must research and create a presentation on before delivering the presentation as part of the final interview stage. Presentations will be requested for submission in advance of the scheduled final interview stage.

During the final interview, candidates will be further examined on their skills, experience, capability and/or competence in relation to their presentation and criteria outlined in the competition information booklet. The final interview may take place in person or by live video through MS Teams.

Both, the first and final interviews for this post, are likely to be held in **MAY / JUNE 2026**. We will endeavour to give as much notice as possible of interview and presentation submission dates.

Candidates who do not attend for interview, as scheduled, or who do not furnish such evidence as required in regard to any matter relevant to their application, will have no further claim to consideration in this process.

Reasonable Accommodations

The OPR is an equal opportunities employer and applications are welcome from those with a disability.

Reasonable accommodation to support people with disabilities to participate in this competition will be provided. Please contact recruiting@OPR.ie to ensure that specific needs are obtained and known at application stage and prior to interview(s). Reasonable accommodations will be delivered, meeting the needs of the individual insofar as possible.

A panel of successful candidates may be formed to fill similar roles at the grade of Planning Officer Engineer Grade II at the OPR.

References

Candidates should start considering names of people who would be suitable referees that we might consult. Please note, should you be successful in this competition, we will require a reference from your current employer, and contact details must be provided, as requested, within the application form. Please be assured that we will only contact referees should you come under consideration after interview stage.

7.2.3 Candidates' Rights - Review Procedures in relation to the Selection Process

Requests for a review are dealt with in accordance with the Code of Practice: Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments – the Code can be accessed at <https://www.cpsa.ie/>.

7.3 Working for the Civil Service

The [Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour](#) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Civil Servants. If successful in this competition you must behave according to the code's principles and live by its values.

The Civil Service embraces diversity and is an equal-opportunities employer. We are committed to championing an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects modern Ireland and the people we serve. We strive to create a culture where all staff have equal access to opportunities and feel comfortable being themselves.

The OPR will run this competition in compliance with the [Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service](#), prepared by the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA).

7.4 Data Protection Policy

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

When your application is received, we create a record in your name, which contains much of the personal information you have supplied. This personal record is used solely in processing your candidature. Such information is subject to the rights and obligations set out in the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018.

If you have any queries related to the processing of your data, or if you wish to make a request under the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018, please submit your request in writing to dataprotection@opr.ie.

General Information

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify them. The OPR will not be responsible for any expenses, including travelling expenses that applicants may incur in connection with their application for this post.

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

The OPR is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence.

Appendix A: Flexible and Family Friendly Policies¹

List of available Family Friendly policies:

- [Blended Working](#)
- [Shorter Working Year](#)
- [Career Break](#)
- [Work-Sharing](#)
- [Enhanced Parental Leave](#)
- [Adoption Leave](#)
- [Special Leaves](#)
- [Paid Sick Leave](#)

Learning and Development

We are committed to supporting you to develop and grow in your career, providing:

- Training and further continuous education, including Study Leave
- Leadership Development Programme
- Mobility: This scheme provides staff with career opportunities to learn and partake in diverse roles across a range of Civil Service organisations and geographical locations.
- [Refund of Fees](#)

[Civil Service Employee Assistance Service](#) (CSEAS) provides a wide range of free and confidential supports to staff designed to assist employees to manage work and life difficulties which, if left unattended, could adversely affect work performance and/or attendance and quality of life.

Schemes

- Cycle to Work Scheme
- VDU Eye Test Scheme
- Travel Pass Scheme

¹ Subject to Business Needs of Department/Office