

The Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman
is seeking applicants for the post of
Clerical Officer

CLERICAL OFFICER
OFFICE OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND PENSIONS OMBUDSMAN

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

The Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman is committed to a policy
of equal opportunity.

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Background

The Government decided in the context of the public sector reform process to amalgamate the Offices of the Financial Services Ombudsman and the Pensions Ombudsman. Regulated financial service providers and pension providers fall within the Ombudsman's remit.

The merger will be put on a statutory footing by the Financial Services and Pensions Act 2017, which when commenced in Autumn 2017, will establish the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman (FSPO) as an independent officer to resolve complaints about the conduct of regulated financial service and pension providers through mediation and where necessary by investigation and adjudication. The Act will also establish the Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman (the Office) to support the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman and the Office aim to:

- Ensure that the complaint resolution process is accessible, that complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively and where possible in an informal manner
- Ensure that complaints are adjudicated fairly, and
- Improve public understanding of issues related to complaints and associated consumer protection matters.

The Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman has statutory powers to resolve disputes between the parties and where necessary to direct rectification. In addition, where the complaint relates to a financial service he can direct the payment of compensation of up to €250,000. Findings of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman are legally binding subject only to an appeal to the High Court.

The Office proposes to appoint a suitable person to the post of Clerical Officer. The successful candidate may be appointed to the Office of the Financial Ombudsman pending the establishment of the Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman.

It is also intended to form a panel based on this competition to form any future vacancies at Clerical Officer level.

The Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Council

The Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Council (Council) will be established under Section 37 of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Act 2017.

The functions of the Council will include determining levies and charges payable for the performance of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman as it relates to financial services (the Ombudsman's role in relation to dealing with pension complaints will be funded from the Exchequer). The Council is also responsible for keeping under review the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office. The Council has no role with respect to how the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman deals with a particular complaint submitted to him.

The Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman

The Office will have a staff complement in excess of 40. It will be a statutory body funded by levies from financial service providers and an Exchequer grant.

The staff of the Office will support the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman in the provision of an impartial, independent alternative dispute resolution service to individuals, small companies, charities, clubs and partnerships experiencing unresolved disputes with financial service providers and pension providers.

The staff also support the Ombudsman in improving public understanding of issues related to complaints against regulated financial service providers and pension providers and related consumer matters.

While the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman will be an independent officer when undertaking his functions, the organisation will operate under the auspices of the Department of Finance.

A Time of Change

In preparation for the merger a joint Strategic and Operational Review of the Offices of both the Financial Services Ombudsman and the Pensions Ombudsman was completed in 2015.

This resulted in the development and implementation of a major change programme which is now at an advanced stage of delivery. In addition establishing the new Office will involve a period of considerable organisational change.

This is an exciting and challenging opportunity for a motivated, talented and experienced person to join a dynamic team that is committed to quality customer service and the highest standards of public service at a very exciting time.

Further information is available from the website www.financialombudsman.ie

Role of the Clerical Officer

Clerical Officers perform a broad variety of tasks in various areas of the Office. They provide a range of administrative services, including complaint registration and progression, provision of information by telephone, email and to callers to the office.

The role includes research, communications, administration, corporate services telephone duties and reception. This can include data entry, scanning, filing, word processing, photocopying, recording incoming and outgoing correspondence, accounts and procurement.

Clerical officers may also be required to support the organisation of events and meetings. In addition, they may be required to assist and support specific projects.

Flexibility in providing cover for other areas is an important feature of work with FSPO.

Requirements for the post

The ideal candidate will demonstrate the relevant experience and skills in the following areas:

- excellent interpersonal skills and excellent verbal and written communication skills and an all-round pleasant and customer focused manner
- A high level of flexibility
- Good attention to detail
- The ability to present written material in a clear and accessible manner
- IT literacy (particularly MS Office suite)
- Good interpersonal skills, including the ability to establish and maintain good working relationships
- A proven high level of efficiency and ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team
- An ability to be innovative in response to fast changing priorities and situations
- The capacity to contribute to all aspects of the organisation
- Experience of working in teams and an ability to work on own initiative
- An interest in the challenging work of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman
- Key to this position is a high degree of sensitivity and discretion in dealing with people who are in dispute with their financial service or pension providers

In addition to the specific requirements set out above, candidates should have all the abilities required of a Clerical Officer. In particular, candidates must demonstrate, by reference to specific achievements in their career to date, that they possess or have the capacity to acquire the following qualities, skills and knowledge required for the role of Clerical Officer as identified by the Public Appointments Service Clerical Officer level competency framework and set out in the table below.

Clerical Officer Level Competencies

Effective Performance Indicators

Team work	Shows respect for colleagues and co-workers
	Develops and maintains good working relationships with others, sharing information and knowledge, as appropriate
	Offers own ideas and perspectives
	Understands own role in the team, making every effort to play his/her part
Information Management / Processing	Approaches and delivers all work in a thorough and organised manner
	Follows procedures and protocols, understanding their value and the rationale behind them
	Keeps high quality records that are easy for others to understand
	Draws appropriate conclusions from information
	Suggests new ways of doing things better and more efficiently
	Is comfortable working with different types of information, e.g. written, numerical, charts, and carries out calculations such as arithmetic, percentages etc
Delivery of Results	Takes responsibility for work and sees it through to the appropriate next level
	Completes work in a timely manner
	Adapts quickly to new ways of doing things
	Checks all work thoroughly to ensure it is completed to a high standard and learns from mistakes
	Writes with correct grammar and spelling and draws reasonable conclusions from written instructions
	Identifies and appreciates the urgency and importance of different tasks
	Demonstrates initiative and flexibility in ensuring work is delivered
	Is self-reliant and uses judgment on when to ask manager or colleagues for guidance
Customer Service & Communication Skills	Actively listens to others and tries to understand their perspectives/ requirements/ needs
	Understands the steps or processes that customers must go through and can clearly explain these
	Is respectful, courteous and professional, remaining composed, even in challenging circumstances
	Can be firm when necessary and communicate with confidence and authority
	Communicates clearly and fluently when speaking and in writing
Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development	Develops and maintains the skills and expertise required to perform in the role effectively, e.g. relevant technologies, IT systems, spreadsheets, Microsoft Office, relevant policies etc.
	Clearly understands the role, objectives and targets and how they fit into the work of the unit
	Is committed to self-development and continuously seeks to improve personal performance
Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values	Consistently strives to perform at a high level and deliver a quality service
	Serves the Government and people of Ireland
	Is thorough and conscientious, even if work is routine
	Is enthusiastic and resilient, persevering in the face of challenges and setbacks
	Is personally honest and trustworthy
	At all times, acts with integrity

Principal Conditions of Service

General

The appointment will be to a full-time permanent position in the public service.

Pay

Entry will be at the minimum of the Clerical Officer (Standard) Scale, which is €22,879 for persons appointed to certain direct entry grades in the public service on or after 6 April 1995. The salary scale for the position (as per Circular 08/2017) is as follows:

For persons newly appointed to the public service on or after 6 April 1995 (Class A PRSI):

€22,879, €24,375, €24,756, €25,498, €26,592, €27,684, €28,777, €29,869, €30,931, €31,995, €32,743, €33,795, €34,840, €36,471, €37,753 LSI-1, €38,341 LSI-2

Long service increments may be payable after 3 years (LSI-1) and 6 years (LSI-2) satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale. Increments are normally awarded annually subject to satisfactory performance and sick leave limits; however, payment of increments and/or the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Tenure

The appointment will be to a permanent post in the public service. The appointee will be required to serve a 12 month probationary period. If at any time during this period it appears that the appointee would not be suitable for final appointment the probation will be terminated.

Hours of attendance

Hours of attendance will be fixed from time to time but will amount, on average, to not less than 43 hours and 15 minutes gross or 37 hours net of lunch breaks per week. Flexi – time will apply and flexibility will be required with regard to business needs.

Where extra attendance is necessary, payment or time off in lieu may be allowed in accordance with the normal regulations for the grade. Please note

that hours of attendance may be subject to change from time to time in line with Government/local policy and practices and business needs.

Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance for the position of Clerical Officer is 22 working days per year, rising to 23 after five years' service and to 24 after ten years' service. This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave, is based on a five day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Pension Entitlements

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate pension terms and conditions as prevailing in the Office at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment, this means being offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme"). Candidates will be notified of which scheme will apply to them, at the time of being offered an appointment.

The Single Scheme, as provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012, came into effect on 1 January 2013. From that date onwards, new public servants will be members of the Single Scheme, which will provide CPI-linked defined-benefit pensions based on career-average pay. The Scheme's minimum pension age will be linked to the State Pension age (66 years initially, rising to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028). Retirement for most members will be compulsory on reaching age 70. For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme for Public Servants please see: <http://www.per.gov.ie/pensions>.

Pension Accrual

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme will apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

Pension-Related Deduction

This appointment is subject to the pension-related deduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act, 2009.

Note

Candidates should note that different pay and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment with the Authority, the appointee is/was a serving civil or public servant.

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment, which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Assignment / Location

The successful candidate will be based in Dublin. When required to travel on official duty the appointee will be paid appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowances, subject to normal public service regulations.

Health

A candidate for and any person holding the office must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the office and be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

Sick Leave

Pay during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service, will apply on a pro-rata basis, in accordance with the provisions of the sick leave circulars.

Appointees, who will be paying the Class A rate of PRSI, will be required to sign a mandate authorising the Department of Social Protection to pay any benefits due under the Social Welfare Acts direct to the employing Department/Organisation. Payment of salary during illness will be subject to the appointee making the necessary claims for social insurance benefit to the Department of Social Protection within the required time limits.

Superannuation and Retirement

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the public service, at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment (see paragraph d below), this means being offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (“Single Scheme”). Key provisions attaching to membership of the Single Scheme are as follows:

a. Pensionable Age

The minimum age at which pension is payable is 66 (rising to 67 and 68) in line with State Pension age changes.

b. Retirement Age

Scheme members must retire at the age of 70.

c. Pension Abatement

If the appointee was previously employed in the Civil/Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil/Public Service normal abatement rules will apply. However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil/Public Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER) or the Department of Health Circular 7/2010 VER/VRS which, as indicated above, renders a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment. Special arrangements will however, be made for the reckoning of previous service given by the appointee for the purpose of any future superannuation award for which the appointee may be eligible.

If the appointee was previously employed in the Civil Service or in the Public Service please note that the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 includes a provision which extends abatement of pension for all Civil and Public Servants who are re-employed where a Public Service pension is in payment. This provision to apply abatement across the wider public service came into effect on 1 November 2012.

This may have pension implications for any person appointed to this position who is currently in receipt of a Civil or Public Service pension or has a preserved Civil or Public Service pension which will come into payment during his/her employment in this position.

**Department of Education and Skills Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers
Circular102/2007**

The Department of Education and Skills introduced an Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers. It is a condition of the Early Retirement Scheme that with the exception of the situations set out in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 of the relevant circular documentation, and with those exceptions only, if a teacher accepts early retirement under Strands 1, 2 or 3 of this scheme and is subsequently employed in any capacity in any area of the public sector, payment of pension to that person under the scheme will immediately cease. Pension payments will, however, be resumed on the ceasing of such employment or on the person's 60th birthday, whichever is the later, but on resumption, the pension will be based on the person's actual reckonable service as a teacher (i.e. the added years previously granted will not be taken into account in the calculation of the pension payment).

III-Health-Retirement

Please note that where an individual has retired from a Civil/Public Service body on the grounds of ill-health his/her pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill-health retirement within the pension scheme of that employment.

d. Prior Public Servants

While the default pension terms, as set out in the preceding paragraphs, consist of Single Scheme membership, this may not apply to certain appointees. Full details of the conditions governing whether or not a public servant is a Single Scheme member are given in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012. However the key exception case (in the context of this competition and generally) is that a successful candidate who has worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) capacity in the public service within 26 weeks of taking up appointment, would in general not become a member of the Single Scheme.

In this case such a candidate would instead be offered membership of the pension scheme for non-established civil servants (“Non-Established State Employee Scheme”). This would mean that the abatement provisions at (c) above would apply, and in addition there are implications in respect of pension accrual as outlined below.

e. Pension Accrual

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme would apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

f. Pension-Related Deduction

This appointment is subject to the pension-related deduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Measure in the Public Interest Act 2009.

For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme for Public Servants please see the following website:
<http://www.per.gov.ie/pensions>.

Important Notice

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Application and Selection Process

How to Apply

Candidates must submit applications by email incorporating the following elements:

- **A Comprehensive CV**
- **A short personal statement** (*no more than 2 pages*) outlining why you wish to be considered and where you believe your skills, experience and values meet the requirements of the particular position.
- **Completed Competency Form** The form at Appendix 1 should be completed with specific achievements, contributions or expertise you have developed from your career to date which demonstrate your suitability to meet the challenges of the post of Clerical Officer.

Applications should be attached to an email marked “Application for Clerical Officer to the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman at: jobs@financialombudsman.ie

The closing date has been extended to 5pm on Thursday 31 August 2017. Late applications cannot be accepted.

Selection Process

The Selection Process may include shortlisting of candidates, on the basis of the information contained in their application and/or a preliminary interview and may include some or all of the following:

- shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application
- a competitive preliminary interview
- presentation or other exercises
- a final interview
- work sample or any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the Office may decide that a number only will be called to interview.

Shortlisting will be undertaken on the basis of the information you provide as part of your application. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/ experience on the application form.

Confidentiality

Applications will be treated in strict confidence. All 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.

Appendix 1 Key Achievements

Name: _____ Title of Post: **Clerical Officer**

Please highlight, in not more than 250 words for each competency, specific achievements, contributions or expertise you have developed from your career to date which demonstrate your suitability to meet the challenges of the post of Clerical Officer. You should clearly state in each case what your particular role was.

Customer Service & Communication Skills

Team Work

Delivery of Results