

FOI DOF/2023-0031

Request

RE: Closure of Competition IRC 232328 Principal Scientific Officer (PSO) RED Waste.

I would request, under Freedom of Information, copies of all policies and procedures relating to

1/ the Extension of Competition/Board end dates, and

2/ the Re-opening of Competitions/Boards where HR Connect have previously indicated that they are formally Closed.

Can you please also confirm the following in respect of **Competition IRC282684 Principal Scientific Officer (PSO) NICS:**

1. Please confirm the date in January 2023 when the first name was released from the Merit List?
2. Please confirm the date on which this Competition was formally closed? I have received nothing in writing from HR Connect in respect of closure but have been informed verbally by Grade 6 that it is now closed.
3. Please confirm why the Competition closed earlier than 1 year after the listing of the first name from the Merit Order as has previously been the case?
4. Please confirm why the Competition has not had the clock stopped and been extended for a time period equal to the period of the 2023 recruitment moratorium as has been the case in previous similar situations?

DoF Response

I can confirm the department holds the information requested.

Some of the information you have requested is held by the department but is exempt under Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 21 applies to information that is already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and the department is not required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.

1/ [1.05 Career Opportunities and Promotion \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://finance-ni.gov.uk) – this policy outlines the arrangements for internal opportunities in the NICS, including how long a competition merit list remains live. Lifetime of Successful Lists, section 3.9 & 3.10 refers. The policy can be accessed via the Department of Finance website or by selecting the above link.

[nics-recruitment-policy-and-procedures-manual-v20.pdf \(nigov.net\)](#) – this policy outlines the arrangements for external opportunities in the NICS, including how long a competition merit list remains live. Appointments from an existing competition, section 2.3 refers. The policy can be accessed via the NICS Recruitment website or by selecting the above link.

2/ There is no flexibility within either of the above policies to allow for a competition to be re-opened once it has been closed.

In respect of **Competition IRC282684 Principal Scientific Officer (PSO) NICS:**

1. The merit list for Competition IRC282684 was produced on 23 November 2022 and the first offer letter issued on 12 December 2022.
2. The closure date for Competition IRC282684 was 23 November 2023. HR Connect advised all remaining candidates on 12 February 2024 that the Competition has closed.
3. The merit list was produced on 23 November 2022 and closure date was one year later i.e. on 23 November 2023.
4. There was not a 2023 recruitment moratorium. A temporary pause was placed on filling General Service vacancies from General Service volume Competitions. Priority Professional and Technical vacancies, where there was a statutory, legislative or health and safety requirement, were recruited and appointed.