

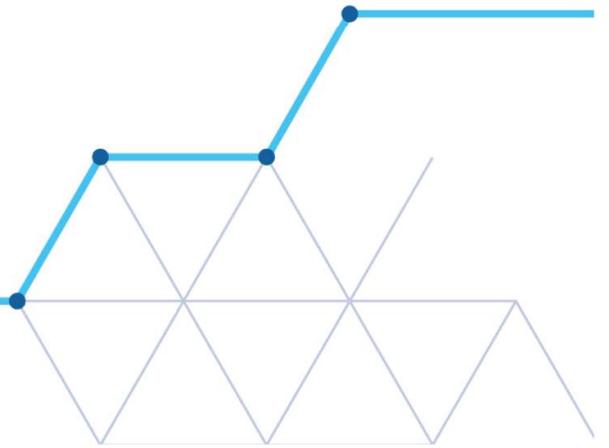


Ministry  
of Justice

# Information for Candidates

June 2017

Protecting and advancing the principles of justice



Our Information to Candidates gives you a brief overview of our recruitment process and provides you with information on what it is like to work for the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). It complements the Job Profile which provides you with the key information points, responsibilities and skill criteria of the role that you are applying for.

## About MOJ

MOJ is one of the largest government departments, employing around 70,000 people (including those in the Probation Service), with a budget of approximately £9 billion. Each year, millions of people use our services across the UK - including at 500 courts and tribunals, and 133 prisons in England and Wales.

### What we do

We work to protect the public and reduce reoffending, and to provide a more effective, transparent and responsive criminal justice system for victims and the public. We are also responsible for following parts of the justice system:

- courts
- prisons
- probation services
- attendance centres

We also work in partnership with other government departments and agencies to reform the criminal justice system, to serve the public and support the victims of crime. We are also responsible for making new laws, strengthening democracy, and safeguarding human rights.

### Priorities

- Improve public safety and reduce reoffending by reforming prisons, probation and youth justice
- Build a One Nation justice system by making access to justice swifter and more certain for all citizens whatever their background
- Uphold the rule of law, defend the independence of the judiciary, safeguard essential liberties and restore historic freedoms
- Delivering efficiently in MOJ: ensure the best possible service for citizens by making our department more efficient and more open, with policy driven by evidence

### Our Aim, Vision and Values

This vision for a future Civil Service that can serve a modern Britain as well as reflecting it, has four main elements:

**Improved outcomes** – a stronger focus on the difference we can make for citizens

**Effective leadership** – with leaders who inspire and empower colleagues to be the best they can be

**Skilled people** – our commitment to building a broader set of skills in the Civil Service, to make us more effective and offer more varied careers to help us retain and attract the best talent

**A great place to work** – creating a truly inclusive environment, in modern workplaces, with the technology to get the job done

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice>

## The Recruitment and Selection Process

### Application Form

When completing your application form, it is important that you refer to the relevant [Civil Service Competence Framework](#) for the Grade to which the job applies. The grade will be indicated in the job details section of the job advert. The job advert form highlights the key competencies of the role which you are applying for and that you will be assessed against during the selection process.

You should also refer to the Specialist Skills, Knowledge and Expertise stated in the Job Advert. You should read the descriptions of the indicated competences and provide examples on your application form that best demonstrate how your skills and abilities match these requirements. The information you provide will be assessed during the short listing (sift) stage and if you are invited to attend an interview, the indicated competence areas will be discussed further. Please note that only fully completed application forms will be considered in our selection process. Unless specifically requested in the job advert, CVs will not be accepted.

### Writing Supporting Statements and Competency Examples

It is possible that you will have to complete a Supporting statement and Competency examples. The following sections give some guidance on how to do this.

#### Supporting Statements

Statements need to be short and snappy. As there is a limit on the number of words it is essential that you use the space as effectively as possible. The word count may seem small but drafting statements that are comprehensive yet succinct is part of the skill being assessed. To prepare good strong statements to include in your application, you need to:

- Base your examples on a previous experience which has broad enough scope to enable you to demonstrate you have completed the actions that make up the competency
- Tell the truth - don't make things up. You may well be asked about the examples at the interview so will get tripped up if you have written about something that you are not familiar with
- Do a first draft then refine, refine, refine
- Check everything is there that is needed
- Use the word count facility on your computer – don't exceed the word count
- Think about presentation – would bullet points work as opposed to paragraphs of text
- Be succinct – make sure you cover the key points
- Draft in clear language that is grammatically correct, including the spelling
- Do not use jargon, abbreviations or specialist terms
- Use your own words, preferably those that enhance the impact of your application

#### Competency Examples

Top Tips for getting started

- Write down all the things that you have done well in your job over the past 2 years
- Your previous performance reports may help here
- For each of these things note down how you achieved what you did, what skills and behaviours did you use
- For each bit of work, note which competencies it might cover
- It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with your own competencies and indicators before you start.

- Gather your evidence together and analyse it before you start writing examples – you probably have more evidence than you think.
- Use evidence from work if you can.
- Talk through your evidence and examples with your line manager or a colleague – a second or third pair of eyes is always useful.
- Practise - you will not get it right first time.
- Take time – writing good examples takes days or weeks - not hours.

### Which Competencies

During the Selection process, you may be asked to provide a number of competency examples. Many people find this to be the most difficult part. It is essential that you get this part right. Failure to provide good evidence will not get you through a sift or an interview. The vacancy holder has 3 options to consider when they choose competencies for an exercise;

- Generic competencies only
- A blend of generic and professional competencies
- Generic competencies with additional professional or technical requirements such as qualifications specified in the vacancy

Usually you will be asked to provide evidence against the required competencies with a word count of 200-250 words per competency. Any evidence over the stated word count will be discounted. Competencies describe particular knowledge, skills and behaviours that you need to demonstrate to the vacancy holder.

They should be written in a way that helps managers assess your suitability for a vacancy or promotion exercise.

### How to choose your examples

They should be tailored to the behavioural indicators that you feel are most relevant to the advertised post. When deciding which examples to use, keep referring back to the **Key Tasks** and **Person Requirements** that are described in the advert, and in the effective behavioural indicators within the competency.

Underline any key words and phrases in the job advert to include in your examples.

### The STAR Approach

The **STAR** approach may also help you to present your evidence more successfully, providing structure and focus to your answers to questions about what you have done in the period the review covers.

- Situation** – briefly describe the context and your role.  
**Task** – the specific challenge, task or job that you faced.  
**Action** – what you did, how and why you did it.  
**Result** – what you achieved through your actions.

Keep the **situation** and **task** parts brief. Concentrate on the action and the result. If the result was not entirely successful describe what you learned from this and what you would do differently next time. **STAR** may help you to cover all the points you need to make. It may help you approach drafting your application in a positive way and ensure that you cover what you personally have done. Make sure you focus on your strengths.

One example per competency would be best practice to use the full STAR explanation within the required word count. Some departments may already have guidance on the number of competency examples and word limits so the applicant should check with the advertising department.

### Hints and tips

- Allow yourself plenty of time for writing your examples – avoid leaving them until the last minute.
- Writing it down is the safest way to ensure all your examples are fully considered.
- Don't assume the sift panel has any knowledge of the situation. They may not know everything you have done.
- It's all down to you. The sift panel cannot infer what is not included in the example and can only assess what you have actually written.
- Make sure you include how you overcome problems / obstacles.
- Keep looking back at the competency bullet points and cover the key points.
- Describe your thoughts, actions and feelings rather than just describing what happened.
- Don't get caught up telling a story in your example. Just give enough to show -
  - how you went about the task
  - why you did it the way you did and
  - describe any obstacles you encountered.
- Don't forget to include results and show why your actions were effective and/or how you could have improved on what you did.
- **Use 'I' not 'we'**. This is about your role in the task and how you affected the outcome.
- Use short statements that show the value you added.
- Use your own words. Consider using active verbs to create greater impact.
- Choose your most powerful examples – demanding/challenging situations that have lots of substance.
- Consider completing a Competency Example Prompt using information about the business challenge, ministerial importance and strategic risks. What value did you add and what was the outcome and impact on the business? Complete one for each competence you are asked to provide evidence for. You can use this form to help shape evidence for the application and for the interview.

### **Nationality Eligibility**

Appointments to roles within MOJ will be made in accordance with the Civil Service nationality rules. These can be found at [www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/resources/nationality.aspx](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/resources/nationality.aspx). In general, only nationals from the following countries (or association of countries) are eligible to apply for posts at MOJ.

- UK nationals in both reserved and non-reserved posts
- European Economic Area (EEA) and Commonwealth in non-reserved posts
- Switzerland, and in some circumstances, Turkey in non-reserved posts
- Certain family members of EEA, Swiss and Turkish nationals in non-reserved posts

In addition, you must be eligible to work in the UK under current UK legislation which is detailed at [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk).

Where a role is designated a reserved post, only UK Nationals are eligible to apply. This will be clearly outlined in the job advert.

### **Equal Opportunity and Diversity Information**

MOJ is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and which promote equality of opportunity. As an employer, it is also committed to equality and valuing diversity within the workforce.

Its goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by its values, are embedded in its day-to-day working practices with all its customers, colleagues and partners.

MOJ is a diversity friendly employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, working pattern, employment status, gender identity (transgender), caring responsibility or trade union membership.

MOJ is committed to providing equal opportunities for all candidates during the selection process, to enable us to select staff from a diverse pool of talent. Part of that commitment is that we guarantee an interview to any candidate who has a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and declares their disability in their application, provided that they meet the minimum (essential eligibility) criteria for the post(s) in question, as set out in the job advertisement and this document.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as being disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

In order for MOJ to support your needs best, If you require any adjustments to be made at your interview please make these clear in your application form so that the vacancy manager is aware and can put these in place.

In order to avoid any biases from occurring, MOJ operates a blind sift process. Personal details are removed at sift stage and are only made available to the panel once a decision has been made on which persons should be invited to an interview.

### **Selection Process**

There are normally two stages to the recruitment process. The first stage is a sift, which identifies applicants who appear from the information provided in their application to be best suited to the role's requirements. Those who go through the sift stage will be invited to an interview. In the event of a large number of applications, a sift on the lead competency only may take place.

In order to avoid any biases from occurring, MOJ operate on a blind sift process. Personal details are removed at sift stage and are only made available to the panel once a decision has been made on which persons should be invited to an interview.

Interviews usually last for approximately 40 to 60 minutes and candidates may be required to give a presentation or partake in other assessments. Candidates who pass the required standard for the role may be placed on a reserve list should the successful candidate decide not to take up the appointment or whereby further opportunities arise in the near future. Candidates will be kept on a reserve list for up to 12 months.

### **Terms of Appointment**

The job profile will detail the type of appointment (loan, permanent or fixed term) in addition to the working pattern, including whether the role is being advertised as full or part time.

Civil servants recruited via fair and open competition are eligible to apply for posts advertised internally and across the Civil Service.

Staff on fixed term appointments or those joining on a loan should ensure they have prior approval from their home department before they apply for a role at MOJ.

Please note that where former Civil Servants are recruited through fair and open competition, the Department will not consider applications for re-instatement. Re-instatement is an exception where fair and open competition has not proved successful or is not deemed appropriate. Those applying from agencies, NDPBs (non-departmental public bodies) or any other bodies should check their status with their own HR Department prior to making an application. Crown or public servants (i.e. not civil servants) will be treated as new entrants to the Civil Service and any previous service and other entitlements may not be transferable.

### **Remuneration**

The salary range for the role you are applying for will be detailed on the job profile. For existing Civil Servants, if successful, their salary on appointment would normally be determined by applying the Cabinet Office salary progression roles. If appointment is on level transfer the salary will remain unchanged, unless the successful candidate's current salary is below the relevant MOJ grade minimum. If the appointment is on temporary or substantive promotion, the successful candidate's salary will be increased by 10% or the minimum of the relevant MOJ grade, whichever is greater. Specialist pay enhancements or allowance paid by other departments are not transferable to MOJ. The exception to this rule is the London weighting allowance where the exporting department does not have a separate London pay scale.

New entrants into the Civil service are appointed at the pay scale minimum for the grade.

### **Pre-appointment Enquiries**

If successful at interview, MOJ is required to carry out pre-appointment checks to ensure that the successful candidate is qualified for the appointment. These include; identification, nationality, character and security. The post recruited for will require you to undergo Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) checks and may require an additional level of security clearance. This will be either the Counter Terrorist checks (CTC), Security clearance (SC) or Developed vetting (DV). If a higher level is required for the role it will be detailed in the job profile.

The BPSS is a basic recruitment check to verify your identity and nationality. It seeks to prevent identity fraud, illegal working and deception. It requires the presentation of personal documentation, completion of a character enquiry questionnaire and the receipt of employment or educational reference covering the past three years. As part of the security clearance process, you will be asked to complete a security questionnaire which will explain the government's vetting policy.

**Please be aware that if you do not upload all of the correct documentation within 15 days of being notified that you are successful, a decision relating to pre-employment checks will be taken based on the documentation held will take place.**

### **Probation Period**

In addition to pre appointment enquiries, new entrants to the Civil Service will normally be required to serve a six month probation period. If you are an existing civil servant and have successfully completed a probation period only pre-appointment enquiries will apply and you will not need to serve a new probation period.

### **Legislative and Statutory Commission Requirements and Complaints**

MOJ's recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the Civil Service Commission's recruitment principles. This can be found at [www.civilservicecommission.org.uk](http://www.civilservicecommission.org.uk).

MOJ must ensure that its recruitment system delivers recruits who are appropriate to the organisation's needs, are able to carry out the required work and are selected on merit on the basis of fair and open competition under the requirements of the Civil Service Commission's recruitment principles [www.civilservicecommission.org.uk/Recruitment](http://www.civilservicecommission.org.uk/Recruitment).

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the recruitment principles and wish to make a complaint you should, in the first instance contact [moj-recruitment-vetting-enquiries@sscl.gse.gov.uk](mailto:moj-recruitment-vetting-enquiries@sscl.gse.gov.uk). For externally advertised campaigns, if not satisfied with the response you receive from MOJ, you may bring your complaint to the Civil Service Commission who will consider complaints where the principle of appointment on merit through fair and open competition has not been met. Further information can be found at [www.civilservicecommission.org.uk/Recruitment/Complaints Recruitment Principles](http://www.civilservicecommission.org.uk/Recruitment/Complaints_Recruitment_Principles).

## What you can expect from MOJ

The Ministry of Justice has updated its terms and conditions of employment as part of Civil Service Reform. Details of the changes that will apply from 1 April 2014 are set out below.

For more information on whether this affects you, please contact [SSCL](#) for further information. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they are aware of the Terms and Conditions they will adopt should they be successful in appointment with MOJ.

### Pay and Grading Structure

Beneath the Senior Civil Service pay structure we have a number of pay bands. The pay band for the role the candidate is applying for will be stated in the job profile. Salary is paid monthly in arrears by credit transfer directly to a personal bank or building society account on the last working day of each month.

### Annual Leave

Full time new entrants to the Civil Service and those Civil Servants on modernised terms and conditions will be entitled to 25 days leave increasing on a sliding scale to 30 days after 5 years of service. In addition to this, they are entitled to 8 public/bank holidays plus an additional privilege day for the Queen's birthday. The leave allowance for part time staff is pro-rated.

Civil Servants on pre-modernised terms and conditions are entitled to 31.5 days leave. In addition to this they are entitled to 8 public/bank holidays plus an additional privilege day for the Queen's birthday.

### Working Hours

From 1 April 2014, full time new entrants to the Civil Service and those on modernised terms and conditions will work a 42 hour week including lunch breaks regardless of location. Civil servants on pre-modernised terms and conditions will work 41 (London) or 42 (Non-London) hours per week over a five-day week, including lunch breaks.

MOJ recognises the importance of a strong work life balance and employees are encouraged to find workable solutions that balance the employee's needs as well as those of the organisation. A number of working patterns are available, including but not limited to full time, part time, compressed hours and job share opportunities. We also operate a system of recorded flexible working hours.

### Retirement

There is no formal retirement age for staff.

### Civil Service Pension Scheme

The Civil Service Pension scheme offers a range of benefits that will provide financial security both in the time up to retirement and beyond. It will provide an income for you in retirement and benefits for your dependants after your death. It will also provide protection in the event of serious ill health and a range of options if you leave the Civil Service before retirement. The pension scheme arrangements applicable to you will be dependent on your employment status and the date you joined the Civil Service.

Comprehensive information on all aspects of your Civil Service pension can be accessed through my Civil Service pensions - [www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/](http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/)

### Mobility

All new entrants to the Civil Service from 1 April 2014 at all grades and regardless of working pattern as well as those staff who are already on modernised terms and conditions are required to be mobile across Government Departments within the parameters of practicality. The issue of what is practical will relate to your individual circumstances at the time of any proposed changes to your place of work.

If you are an existing Civil Servant who is not on modernised terms and conditions during the course of your employment you may be required to transfer to any post in the Civil Service in the UK. Unless wholly exceptional emergency circumstances exist which make it impossible, you will be given reasonable notice of any such change. Any relocation and travel costs incurred as a result of the transfer will be paid for. Mobility is not a requirement for administrative grades.

### **Employee Wellbeing and Facilities**

MOJ has a range of policies and procedures in place to protect your health and safety. Modern information technology is provided within a safe and comfortable working environment. Workstation assessments are undertaken and trained staff can provide advice and guidance in this area. If you are a user of display screen equipment, we will reimburse you with costs of eye tests and contribute towards the cost of your glasses.

Access is provided to an independent occupational health service provider and all employees are eligible to access our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which offers free practical assistance and specialist counselling support on a wide range of personal, legal and financial issues via the telephone, internet and face to face sessions.

## What is Expected from You as a Civil Servant

### Civil Service Code

The Civil Service provisions of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 places the Civil Service values on a statutory footing and includes the publication of a Civil Service Code. The Civil Service Code sets out the core Civil Service values and standards of behaviour expected of all civil servants in upholding these values. The Civil Service is an integral and key part of the Government of the United Kingdom. It supports the Government of the day in developing and implementing its policies, and in delivering public services. Civil servants are accountable to Ministers, who in turn are accountable to Parliament. If appointed as a civil servant (either on a permanent or fixed term basis), you are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values:

- integrity
- honesty
- objectivity
- impartiality

The Civil Service code is available at [www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values/index.aspx](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values/index.aspx)

### Confidentiality and the Official Secrets Act

The post is covered by the Official Secrets Act. As a civil servant, you are bound by the provisions of criminal law, including the Official Secrets Act, which protect certain categories of official information, and by your duty of confidentiality owed to the Crown. Candidates must exercise care in the use of official information acquired in the course of official duties, and not disclose information which is held in confidence.

### Conflicts of Interest

Candidates must declare any interests they may have that might cause questions to be raised about their approach to the business of the Department. They are required to declare any relevant business interests, share holdings, positions of authority, retainers, consultancy arrangements or other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies, both for themselves and for their spouses/partners. The successful candidate will be required to give up any conflicting interests and his/her other business and financial interests may be published. As a civil servant, you may not take part in any financial or non-financial activity which would could in any way conflict with the interests of the organisation or be inconsistent with your role. An actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest may arise where your impartiality in performing your official duties is called into question because you have an interest in an area affected by, or affecting, those official duties. Civil servants should not receive benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity.

### Political Activity

As a civil servant, the political activity rules aim to give you the greatest possible freedom to take part in public affairs whilst making sure you do not compromise your official duties. These rules relate to activities where you might express your political views in public. They do not concern your private beliefs and opinions or stop you being a member of a political party. Further information can be found in the Civil Service Management Code, available at [www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/resources/csmc/index.aspx](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/resources/csmc/index.aspx).