

Candidate Information Booklet

**Senior Professional Development Specialist:  
Public Policy**  
in the  
**Institute of Public Administration**



**Closing date: Friday 10th January 2025 at 12 noon**

Interviews for this role are envisaged to take place at the beginning of February 2025.



**Contact**

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## About the IPA

### The Organisation

Founded in 1957, the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) is a leading provider of education, professional development and advisory services for the public sector in Ireland. Its objective is to advance the understanding, standard and practice of public administration and public policy. The IPA is a recognised college of the National University of Ireland.

### What we do

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) is Ireland's only public service development agency focused exclusively on public sector development. It delivers its service through:

- Education and Professional Development: building people's capability to meet current and future challenges.
- Advisory and Consultancy: solving problems and helping plan and shape the future.

We are proud of our distinct mission and role in the provision of Education, Professional Development, Consultancy and other services for the wider public sector both in Ireland and abroad.

Our blend of experience, skills and knowledge of the public sector allows us to offer a wide range of bespoke services which meet our clients' needs precisely and effectively and whilst our services are delivered mainly to clients in the Irish public service, we have a strong reputation and demand for our services internationally also.

Find out more about the IPA at: [www.ipa.ie](http://www.ipa.ie).

### Why consider a role in the IPA

If you are looking for a career where you can make a real difference, with the potential for enormous personal satisfaction, then we urge you to consider a role with the Institute of Public Administration. If you enjoy variety within your role, you get satisfaction from your client's successes and you want to be part of a strategy for developing better public services, then we would love to hear from you.

We make a difference, and we are proud of what we do. The Institute is involved in every part of the public service and this role is exciting and varied. If you're ready to join us, to be challenged, and to grow professionally, then consider a role with the Institute of Public Administration.

## What we offer

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Competitive salary (IPA Grade 2)	Starting salary €79,301 per annum. Rising to €113,786 (12-point salary scale, the top 2 points are long service increments). Annual increase subject to satisfactory performance. Additional pay increases in line with national pay agreements (2% March 2025). Prior public sector experience will be taken into consideration in determining starting salary.
Holidays and Leave	30 days annual leave. Hybrid working – up to 2 days working from home subject to operational demands.
Central location	Based in Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4 beside dart station. Premises subject to relocation to central city-centre office at a future date.
Pension	Career-Average Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. Retirement benefits are mainly based on a percentage of your pensionable earnings throughout your public service career (Single Pension Scheme for Public Servants). Prior public sector employees (pre-2013) will be entered on to the IPA superannuation scheme.
Staff Development	Support for professional development programmes, to assist in developing skills and expertise.
Benefits	Permanent contract. Employee supports including Employee Assistance Programme, Tax-free travel pass, Bike-to-work scheme.

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## **Job Description**

**Grade:** Grade 2

**Reports to:** Director of Professional Development (or their nominee)

### **Professional Development in the IPA:**

The Professional Development Department within the IPA is preparing to embark on an exciting strategic plan, focused on empowering the public service workforce with essential and emerging capabilities through our programmes and services. The Department reaches a large number of public servants across a broad spectrum of organisations.

Professional Development provides a portfolio of open and custom-designed development programmes, advisory services, seminars, conferences and for a that are specifically designed to meet the needs of client organisations and individuals within the Public Service. The Department works in partnership with clients in the civil service, local government, health, education, commercial and non-commercial state bodies and agencies, and public benefit sectors to build capacity and capabilities at organisational levels, strengthen individual generalist and specialist skills, and build a range of competencies, as well as in the provision of advisory and support services.

Programme specialists and subject matters experts combine experience and expertise in a specific discipline (e.g. Governance, Assurance, Risk, Audit, Finance, Local Government, Policy, Business Systems, Digital Transformation, Strategic HRM and People Development, Leadership, Management and Sustainability) with a deep understanding of the public, state and public benefit sector, and the challenges within client organisations.

Experienced specialists, skilled in the design and delivery of interventions, track policy development and practice in specific sectors and organise opportunities for discussion, debate and reflection on topical issues. The design of programmes and services incorporates highly innovative, participative and work-based methodologies, including action learning, problem-based learning and case studies. The fora and networks led and convened by the Department such as the successful IPA Governance Forum provide unparalleled access to current thinking and practice across our key client sectors.

Forming a key foundation of the work at the Institute, this Department is central to ensuring that the IPA is strategically fit for purpose in delivering against the needs of the Public Service and continually driving change and transformation required.

### **Job Function:**

The role of Senior Professional Development Specialist in Public Policy is a new position who will play a pivotal role in the development, management and delivery of Institute's

professional development services in the areas of public policy development and implementation, across national and local government. Through their leadership, the appointee will be responsible for ensuring that the existing and future portfolio of professional development services contributes to enhancing relevant capabilities and capacity of the public service in Ireland. The Senior Specialist, their team and Department colleagues, and the Institute as a whole, play an important role in supporting the public service to deliver on its ambitions for its services to the public, as illustrated, for example, in thematic transformation strategies such as *Better Public Services*.

The role is central to the Institute's commitment to support the learning and development needs of our civil and public service clients and thereby ensure that public service employees are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge to effectively serve society and adhere to regulatory standards.

Reporting to the Director of Professional Development, the Senior Specialist will be responsible for leading and managing the Team and Associate resources to deliver professional development courses, advisory and related services, potentially including conferences, seminars, fora and networks on behalf of the Institute's clients. The scoping, design, promotion and review of appropriate role-, grade- and organisation-relevant courses and services will be critical to ensure this integrated portfolio is successful in meeting the needs of the public service.

This role involves supporting the Director of Professional Development and Director General in the delivery of the Institute's strategy for professional development to meet the needs of the public service. The post-holder will collaborate with other Specialists across the Professional Development Department, the Whitaker School, Senior Public Service Department and Digital Learning to ensure an holistic, coherent, relevant and evolving portfolio of services are available to our clients.

The Senior Specialist will manage the operational relationship with public service clients. The role includes designing, delivering, and evaluating professional development programmes that enhance the skills, knowledge, and effectiveness of public service staff in this critical area.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

The key duties and responsibilities of the role are as follows:

#### Strategic Planning and implementation

- In conjunction with the Director of Professional Development and colleagues across the Department, strategically plan for the Department's policy and government portfolio, including Local Government, to set the direction for the business over a multi-year horizon.

- Implement the strategic plan for the portfolio, communicating the vision and objectives to the team and wider Institute, setting tangible objectives and deliverables for each team member.
- Role model the Institute's values and actively develop a culture within the team that reflects the strategy and ambition of the Institute.
- Monitor progress against plan, taking proactive and/or remedial action as required.
- Initiate and develop services to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing clients, particularly at senior levels.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Pro-actively engage with clients to identify learning, development and advisory needs and solutions. Contribute to a cross-departmental stakeholder engagement plan.
- Develop solutions that will meet client needs, promote the IPA brand and thought leadership, and deliver long-term value for the IPA.
- Work collaboratively with other PD teams and Departments across the Institute on the design and delivery of programmes and services.

#### Business Development

- Client Relationship Management and Business Development: Build and manage client relationships across the public service, along with relationships with key stakeholders.
- Develop responses to client requests, both from direct requests and in collaboration with the IPA and department's marketing and communications teams.
- Develop and maintain relevant contacts in Ireland and abroad.
- Professional Development Best Practices: Regularly research and integrate best practices into the Department's portfolio of services.
- Thought Leadership: Contribute to the ongoing development of the Institute's reputation for thought leadership in professional development, and relevant service domains through publications, insight pieces, speaking engagements and other events.

#### Training and delivery

- Curriculum Development: Lead the team on the design and development of professional development solutions that reflect the current trends and requirements in public service.
- Convene and deliver training and development programmes, seminars, conferences, fora (including both face-to-face and on-line delivery) and events, taking responsibility for the content and delivery of programmes in the Department.

- Provide advisory and related services for the sector, particularly at senior levels.
- Manage the conference and event portfolio for the team with regular reviews to identify new opportunities to support the IPA's brand and strengthen relationships.
- Manage the quality review process and plan for the team, reviewing evaluation and feedback gathered from programmes. Co-ordinate the team to collect and analyse feedback from participants to continuously improve training quality. Manage the process of implementation of assessment tools to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs.

#### Management

- The role may include responsibility for the line management of specialist, professional and administrative staff within the team including day to day line management duties, resource planned and facilitating a positive team environment for staff. Ensure all staff in the team adhere to IPA policy and procedure.
- Management of Associate (contracted) Specialists / Lecturers including the engagement process, overseeing content and delivery of material by Associate Specialists / Lecturers, performance evaluation and contract management.
- Resource and Capacity Management: Plan and manage the capacity requirements of for the portfolio based on annual budgets and business plans. Guide staff assigned to programmes and projects to ensure that the services are delivered to a high standard.
- Financial Management: Assist the Director of Professional Development with the financial management of the Department as required, specifically in relation to the preparation and review of annual plans and budgets. Monitor income spend against plan and highlight any areas of risk, providing recommendations to address these.
- Reporting and Documentation: Ensure that accurate records of training sessions, participant progress, and program evaluations are maintained in the team. Prepare reports for the Director and Executive Leadership Team on progress against plan, operational activities, issues and resolutions, new developments.

#### General

- Continuous Professional Development: Actively participate in professional development opportunities to enhance personal training skills and sector-specific knowledge. Develop and maintain a record of expertise in public policy development and implementation, including in emerging areas of the Irish public service.
- One IPA: Participate as part of the extended senior management team in Institute-wide matters and contribute to Institute-wide initiatives and programmes as required.

- Other Duties: Undertake such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Director General or Director of Professional Development. Deputise for the Director of Professional Development on a range of topics as required.

### About the ideal candidate

Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master’s level postgraduate degree (or equivalent) in public policy, public management, local government, governance, law, political science, economics or a related field (essential).</li> <li>• Additional professional qualifications and/or membership of relevant professional bodies, in relevant disciplines, e.g., education, training and development, or corporate functions such as ethics, governance, accountability, leadership, project management, and change management (desirable).</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of the role and objectives of the Institute.</li> <li>• Familiarity with the latest trends in professional development within the public service in general.</li> <li>• In-depth understanding of public service operations and challenges is desirable.</li> <li>• Working knowledge of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven to ten years’ experience at the appropriate level and in a relevant role comprising training, advisory/consultancy, Learning &amp; Development, education and/or operations, preferably within the public service (essential).</li> <li>• Experience of management of teams in a professional setting (essential).</li> <li>• Experience in curriculum development and delivery (essential).</li> <li>• Evidence of managing of projects in a complex multi-stakeholder environment.</li> <li>• Experience of working in or with the Irish public service system (desirable)</li> </ul>
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong track record of service portfolio development and management in a learning and development environment.</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to design professional development solutions to address complex client requirements.</li> <li>• Ability to manage a diverse workload and competing demands.</li> <li>• Excellent training and facilitation skills including presentation and communication skills.</li> <li>• Cross-Functional collaboration skills</li> <li>• Excellent client relationship management skills.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong organisational and planning abilities.</li> <li>• Strong research, analytical and writing skills.</li> <li>• Ability to analyse data and participant feedback to improve training effectiveness.</li> <li>• Creative problem-solving skills and adaptability.</li> <li>• Ability to facilitate effectively, to engage with large and small audiences, and to manage group dynamics.</li> <li>• Proficient in use of Microsoft suite, virtual delivery and e-learning technologies.</li> </ul>
Personal attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to lead a team, setting out vision, goals and tangible deliverables and fostering commitment to achievement of strategic objectives with a focus on performance and accountability.</li> <li>• High level of integrity and professionalism.</li> <li>• Passionate about public service and capability development.</li> <li>• Upholds the values and obligations of the Equality Acts and Public Sector Duty on Human Rights.</li> <li>• Approachable, with the ability to build rapport with a diverse range of participants and clients.</li> <li>• Committed to lifelong learning and professional growth.</li> <li>• Adaptable to diverse groups and learning environments.</li> <li>• Willingness to travel within Ireland for training delivery or other duties.</li> <li>• Fluent in English, with proficiency in Irish being an advantage.</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each candidate shall be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service</li> </ul>

### General Conditions

This position will be filled on a permanent or secondment basis.

Applicants should note that the Professional Development department is currently undertaking a strategic review, and therefore reporting lines may alter.

### Our Values

Character: Each candidate must demonstrate commitment to the IPA values:

- Integrity;
- Client-Centred and Responsive;
- Openness and Accountability;
- Trust and Respect;
- Innovation and Learning;
- Research-Led;
- Practice-Led.

### **Our commitment to supporting our Staff**

The Institute is committed to embracing opportunities for blended working, to build a dynamic, agile and responsive organisation while sustaining strong standards of performance and high levels of productivity.

A healthy work-life balance is important to us and we recognise this by offering a comprehensive range of work-life balance options and a wide variety of special leave options.

We provide access to the Cycle to Work Scheme and the Tax Saver Scheme and we have a staff wellbeing and employee assistance programme.

We are committed to providing ongoing learning and development opportunities so that you can develop to your full potential. Staff are actively encouraged to pursue further education opportunities.

### **Our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

As an equal opportunity employer, we are committed to implementing equal opportunities in all our employment policies and procedures.

The Institute of Public Administration values and welcomes diversity and is committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace. We aim to develop colleagues to enable them to make a full contribution to meeting the Institute's objectives, and to fulfil their own potential on merit.

We welcome and encourage job applications from candidates of all backgrounds.

## **Principal Conditions of Service**

### **Remuneration**

The salary scale for this position ranges from €79,301 to €113,786 (12 point scale, the top 2 long service increments) per annum pro rata.

Entry will be at the minimum of the 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 pay and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment the appointee is already a serving Civil Servant or Public Servant.

Subject to satisfactory performance, increments may be payable in line with current government policy.

### **Tenure**

This role is offered on a permanent basis. A secondment arrangement may be considered on request from another Public Sector organisation.

### **Location**

While the position is Dublin based, a considerable proportion of our work is delivered in client organisations throughout Ireland, and abroad on occasions. Members of the staff of the

Institute may be required to attend meetings and other functions on occasions outside normal working hours.

### **Hours of Attendance**

Hours of attendance will be as fixed from time to time but will not amount to less than 35 hours per week (pro-rata for part-time employees). The successful candidate will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of their duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations.

The Institute operates a formal Blended Working model based on service/business requirements.

### **Annual Leave**

The Annual Leave allowance for this position is 30 days (pro-rata for part-time employees). This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave in the Institute, is based on a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

### **Sick Leave**

The rate of 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 Civil & Public Service sick leave circulars.

### **Safety & Welfare**

The holder of the post shall co-operate with the terms of the Institute's Safety Statement. They shall familiarise themselves with the safety rules and procedures and adhere to same.

### **Training**

It is a condition of employment that successful candidates will be required to participate in training programmes relevant to the skills necessary for the performance of the duties attaching to the post.

### **Superannuation Contribution**

Membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme is compulsory for all employees except where there is membership of pre-existing public service superannuation scheme. Details will be provided to the appointee prior to appointment.

For new entrants under the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, effective from 1st January 2013, superannuation contributions are as follows: 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration and 3% of pensionable remuneration. Pension and retirement lump sum will be based on career-average pensionable remuneration; pensions will be co-ordinated with the State Pension Contributory.

### **Additional Superannuation Contribution**

This appointment is subject to the Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC) in accordance with the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017. Note; ASC deductions are in

addition to any pension contributions (main scheme and spouses' and children's contributions) required under the rules of your pension scheme.

### **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.

### **Confidentiality**

All enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings relating to recruitment and selection are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone outside those directly involved in the recruitment process.

### **Freedom of Information**

Candidates can expect that all enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

### **Eligibility to Compete**

Candidates must, by the date of any job offer, be:

- A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
- A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 visa; or
- A person awarded international protection under the International Protection Act 2015 or any family member entitled to remain in the State as a result of family reunification and has a stamp 4 visa; or
- A non-EEA citizen who is a parent of a dependent child who is a citizen of, and resident in, an EEA member state or Switzerland and has a stamp 4 visa.

## **Application & Selection**

### **Before you proceed**

Before proceeding with this phase of the selection process you should satisfy yourself that you meet the education & experience criteria for the post as set out in this booklet.

### **Communications**

The Institute will contact you when necessary, at each stage of the competition by email. You should only submit one email address for all correspondence in relation to this competition.

It is important to note that the email address you provide when applying must be one that you can access at all times. The onus is on the applicant to inform Conscia Limited of any change in email address throughout the recruitment and selection campaign. This can be done by emailing [ipa@consciatalent.com](mailto:ipa@consciatalent.com) The onus is also on each applicant to ensure that they

are in receipt of all communication from the Institute. The Institute does not accept responsibility for communications not accessed or received by an applicant.

### **How to Apply**

Conscia will be managing all aspects of the recruitment process on behalf of Institute of Public Administration. All information on the role can be found at <https://www.consciatalent.com/ipa>

Applications should be only made online through <https://www.consciatalent.com/ipajobs> and must be made by attaching the following elements:

- A comprehensive CV.
- A short cover letter outlining why you wish to be considered for the post and where you believe your skills, experience and values meet the requirements for the position.

When outlining your application, accuracy is essential. The information you supply in your application will play a central part of the selection process. Only applications fully submitted online will be accepted into the campaign.

### **Closing Date**

Your application must be submitted on the <https://consciatalent.com/ipajobs> portal not later than **12 noon on Friday 10 January 2025. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.**

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within 24 hours of applying, please email: [ipa@consciatalent.com](mailto:ipa@consciatalent.com)

**Interviews for this post are likely to take place at the beginning of February 2025.**

You are advised to check your email on a regular basis as email notifications of updates/ tests/ Interviews etc issued to your address may sometimes be filtered into your Junk/ Spam email folders. You are also advised to check all these folders regularly.

The onus is on each applicant to ensure that they are in receipt of all communication from Conscia Limited. Conscia Limited accept no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by an applicant.

### **Selection Process**

The Selection Process may include the following:

- Short-listing of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application;
- Competitive interview;
- Work sample/role play/media exercise, and any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate.

Please note that the Institute reserves the right to hold any part of the selection process by way of remote/video-call platform or other appropriate methodology.

### **Shortlisting**

The Institute reserves the right to shortlist applications. The shortlisting process may take the form of either a desktop shortlisting process based on the information contained in the applications submitted or a shortlisting interview.

Where, by reason of the number of persons seeking admission to the competition and the standard of knowledge, training or experience in general of such persons, the Institute considers that it would be reasonable not to admit all the persons to the competition, the Institute may admit to the competition only persons who appear likely to it to attain in the competition a standard sufficient for selection and recommendation for appointment.

The information you supply in your application will play a central part in the shortlisting process. The Institute's decision to include you on the shortlist of candidates going forward to the next stage of the process may be determined based on this information.

### **Interview**

You will be contacted in relation to any interview dates and times. You may also be contacted in relation to the requirement to complete an on-line questionnaire should this be included in the selection process. The onus is on you to attend for interview on the dates and times allocated. Alternative dates and times cannot be facilitated. When attending for interview you are requested to bring photographic identification.

The interview is your opportunity to give evidence of your knowledge, skills and experience and the Institute's opportunity to assess your suitability for the role as advertised.

The admission of a person to a competition, or invitation to attend an interview, is not to be taken as implying that the Institute is satisfied that such person fulfils the requirements of the role or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important therefore for you to note, the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview.

The Institute may at its discretion require candidates to attend a preliminary interview in which case admission to the competitive interview would be conditional on candidates reaching such a standard as the Institute considers appropriate in the preliminary interview. Interviews shall be conducted by Board(s) set up by the Institute. The Board(s) will assess the merits of candidates (except insofar as they are assessed otherwise) in respect of matters referred to in the prescribed qualifications and any other relevant matters. Only candidates who reach such a standard as the Institute considers satisfactory in the competitive interview shall be considered for selection and placed on a panel. The onus is on all applicants to make themselves available for interview.

The Institute reserves the right to vary the number and sequence of each stage of the selection process as the competition progresses

**Panels**

A panel may be formed on the basis of the outcomes of the selection process. Placement on any panel from this competition is no guarantee that a position will be offered. The selection process will not be concluded until such time as references have been sought and clearance checks, i.e., occupational health, and verification of education qualifications, have been carried out.

**Offer of Appointment**

The Institute shall require persons to whom an appointment is offered to take up such appointment within a period of not more than one month, or as agreed. If they fail to take up the appointment within such period, or such longer period as the Institute in its absolute discretion may determine, the Institute may not appoint them.

**Probationary Period**

All new employees are required to satisfactorily complete a probationary period, in accordance with the 'Terms and Conditions of Employment' in their employment contract. Employees will be required to serve an initial probationary period. During this period, the employee's performance on the job and potential abilities are evaluated to determine suitability for the position. At the end of this probationary period, a formal assessment will be carried out by the employee's line manager, resulting in a decision on whether the employee has completed their probation satisfactorily.

**Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn**

Candidates who do not complete and submit any assessments before the specified date or do not attend/undertake any stage of the selection process as requested or do not furnish such evidence as requested in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

**Data Protection**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. The personal information (data) collected on the application form, including any attachments, (which may include the collection of sensitive personal data) is collected for the purpose of processing this application and any data collected is subject to the regulations.

**Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify.**

**The Institute will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.**

**The Institute is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.**