



Údaráis Áitiúla Éireann
Local Authorities Ireland

Local Authority Graduate Programme Recruitment Competition 2020

Information Booklet

13th November 2020

Background

Recruitment for the Local Authority Graduate Programme will commence in late 2020 with a view to filling the vacancies as they arise during 2021.

This is an entry level programme to provide local authorities with graduate employees in seven skills areas in which the sector has identified a skills shortage.

Local government is committed to recruiting the best graduates and developing them to become drivers of change. Graduates will be assigned to teams and will undertake a mixture of group, team and individual tasks, including a limited amount of day-to-day transactional activity.

Over time, it is expected that graduates will be assigned more responsibility for certain tasks or be assigned the delivery of certain outputs.

Those recruited under the Local Authority Graduate Programme will take part in a three-year graduate development programme, details of which are provided below.

The initial intake will be individuals who have recently graduated in a field of study directly relevant to one of the following seven skills areas:

- Economic Enterprise and Business Development
- Project and Programme Management
- Innovation Strategy and Change Management
- HR Management
- Communications and Marketing
- Data Analytics and Data Metrics
- Climate Action

A short description of each of the roles that graduates can expect if employed by a local authority is provided at the end of this document.

Recruitment competition

The Local Government Management Agency is co-ordinating the Local Authority Graduate Programme recruitment campaign on behalf of the local authority sector.

Applications

Details of the recruitment competition are available at www.lgma.ie/graduates along with an application form, which applicants must complete, sign and return by 3pm on December 17th 2020

Applicants are permitted to apply for more than one skills area but are limited as to the number of posts that they can apply for (i.e.) applicants can only select up to 2 regions and

up to maximum of 5 locations within each of those 2 regions. Applicants will also be asked to give an order of priority (1 to 5 with 1 being their highest priority) for the local authorities within those two regions.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be based solely on the direct relevance of an applicant's academic qualifications to the skills area being applied for. Graduates who are successful at the shortlisting stage will proceed to a regional interview stage.

Regional interviews

The process will involve regional interviews in the following areas,

- Dublin
- Eastern and Midlands
- Border and Western
- Southern

A lead authority will be appointed for each of the four regions. The lead authorities role will be (i) organise and host the regional interviews; (ii) establish a panel of qualified candidates to be assigned to individual local authorities according to the requirements of that local authority and the stated preference of the applicant; and (iii) communicate the interview results to the individual applicants and communicate the assignment to the prospective employing local authority who will then proceed to the job offer stage with their assigned individual.

It is envisaged that placements to individual local authorities will occur in 2021 from the regional panels for each of the seven skills areas.

Terms and conditions of employment

Graduates who are successful at the final regional interview stage will, subject to verification of the candidate's results transcripts and where required a valid work visa, be offered a three-year fixed term contract.

The conditions of service for the graduate recruits will be as follows,

- Salary - €31,221 (single point salary scale – no increments)
- Annual leave – 24 days
- Working hours – 37 hours net of lunch breaks

Graduates are recruited on a single point salary scale and are to be considered as analogous to Grade IVs for the purposes of pay and promotion.

Graduates will take part in a Graduate Development Programme – details are available below.

Promotional opportunities for graduates

While employed on the Graduate Programme, graduates are eligible to apply for any advertised vacancies either within their employer or across the local government sector as a whole if they meet the eligibility criteria for the advertised vacancy. Vacancies in local authorities can be usually categorised as being either open or confined competitions. Open means just that open to all applicants. Confined means that the competition is confined to a smaller pool of applicants and they are usually confined to (i) all suitably qualified applicants already employed by the local authority advertising the vacancy; or (ii) confined to all employees of all 31 local authorities.

Graduates including those with previous experience in the public sector may be eligible for confined competitions if they meet all the published criteria for that specific competition.

Graduates however will if successful when taking up that new employment be required to resign from their Graduate contract and the development programme.

Eligibility to Compete

In order to be eligible applicants must demonstrate the following,

1. on or before the 31 December, 2020 have recently achieved a first or second class primary (2.2 minimum) honours degree (level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications), and
2. demonstrate the competencies for the role of Graduate. These competencies are defined by the sectoral competency framework and are defined in Appendix II of this document.

The onus is on the candidate to ensure that they satisfied the essential eligibility requirements for these posts.

Certain restrictions of eligibility

It will be for non-EU/EEA citizens making an application to prove that they hold a valid work permit for the duration of their 3-year fixed term contract prior to any job offer being made. The work permit must allow for the applicant to work full time for their prospective employer. The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Swiss citizens under EU agreements may also apply.

Ex-public servants who previously availed of incentivised early retirement or a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement and/or the collective voluntary redundancy scheme such as is detailed in Circular Letter LG(P) 06/2013. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

Can existing local authority staff apply?

Existing staff of local authorities are eligible to apply for a Graduate position where they are on a salary or pay scale that starts at a point below the Graduate single point salary scale. Where an individual is on such a salary scale but on a point on that scale which is in excess of €31,221 then they will transfer over at their existing rate of pay and normal rules in relation to incremental credit will apply. The application of incremental credit will apply to staff on their substantive scale whilst they are undertaking the graduate programme.

Process for matching successful applicants with local authorities

Applicants wishing to be considered for placement with local authorities (including existing staff members) will be shortlisted by the LGMA to determine their suitability to be called forward for interview in one or a maximum of two regions.

Interviews will place in the offices of the lead authorities or if the current Covid-19 public health measures persist then the lead authority reserves the right to organise for remote interviewing using MS Teams or some other suitable video conferencing platform. The four regions and the local authorities within those regions are as follows:

<i>Border & Western Region</i>	<i>Dublin Region</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cavan County Council • Donegal County Council • Galway City Council • Galway County Council • Leitrim County Council • Mayo County Council • Monaghan County Council • Roscommon County Council • Sligo County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dublin City Council • Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council • Fingal County Council • Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) • South Dublin County Council
<i>Eastern & Midlands Region</i>	<i>Southern Region</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kildare County Council • Laois County Council • Longford County Council • Louth County Council • Meath County Council • Offaly County Council • Westmeath County Council • Wicklow County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlow County Council • Clare County Council • Cork County Council • Cork City Council • Kerry County Council • Kilkenny County Council • Limerick Local Authority • Tipperary County Council • Waterford City & County Council • Wexford County Council

Assigning prospective graduates to individual local authorities

As well as organising the regional interviews each regional lead authority will also be responsible for assigning individual candidates from the regional panels for each of the seven skills areas to each local authority with a vacant Graduate post to be filled in that skills area.

Allocation will be undertaken by the regional lead authority on the basis of firstly the request by a local authority in respect of a candidate under a specific skill area, thereafter the place on the Panel of the candidate under that particular skill and then the expression of preference by the Candidate of a specific local authority on their original application form. The regional lead authority will notify individual applicants of the vacancy they are being assigned to will conduct all the necessary checks on qualifications; birth certificates; Garda; health; character and references. On completion of this stage the candidate will be assigned to a local authority and the regional lead authority will notify the local authority of who is being assigned. The local authority will then be provided with a copy of the Graduates application once the allocation has been made. Once advised of candidate the local authority will then undertake the normal recruitment process in the making of a job offer and the resulting issuing of contract.

Depending on the individuals own defined skills set and experience the local authority may amend or vary the original business plan to ensure that business units are primed to get the maximum benefit from their assigned graduate over the term of their contract and allow the Graduate to reach their full potential.

Graduate Development Programme

Each Graduate recruit will participate in a three-year structured graduate development programme that has been designed to meet the demands of graduate entrants to local government. The structured development programme will take place over the three-year fixed-term employment contract period. The aim of the development programme is to ensure that at the end of the three-year period each of the graduates will have demonstrated their competence in their chosen area of expertise.

An integral part of the three-year development programme is the investment by local authorities in the training and development of the graduates they recruit and the provision of the supports and experience that the graduates will need to fulfil their potential.

The investment in their graduates will be front loaded in years 1 and 2 of the contract term so as to allow for maximum effective utilisation of each graduate's skills in year 2 and 3 of their employment contract. Year 2 of the development programme will be made up of the industry recognised accredited training.

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in collaboration with the LGMA will organise the off-site development and training elements of the three-year development programme. The IPA organised off-site training will be either centrally or regionally delivered at venues agreed with by the LGMA. All local authorities participating in the graduate recruitment initiative undertake as part of their participation to release graduates where required to complete the off- site elements of the development programme.

Local authorities as part of their participation agree to provide the necessary local support elements of the development programme so as to ensure the success of each placement.

The programme will provide the necessary opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge through a combination of on-site; office-based; and project specific experiential learning as well as formal training and accredited sector specific education.

Industry recognised training

The industry recognised training element of the development programme will be delivered in Year 2 of the programme. The purpose of the industry recognised training element is to allow individual graduates to acquire specific training in their chosen field/skills area and to demonstrate their competency. Delivering this training in year 2 allows for individual local authorities to recoup some of their investment in year 2 of the employment programme.

During the programme review the LGMA will seek to determine which of the range of available course options best reflect the field of work which the Graduate is working in during the placement with the local authority. While some allowances will be made for individuals recruited under one skills area to enrol in another of the listed courses this will only occur where their employer supports such a switch.

Graduates undertaking the development programme are made aware that the development programme does not offer them a qualification at a higher QQI level than their original qualification. The limited number of course options available to them and detailed in Appendix 1 of this document are recognised by industry and as such have been identified by the LGMA as the most relevant to the work likely to be undertaken by the Graduates.

Graduates who already possess a specific undergraduate or post graduate qualification in their chosen field will be accommodated (where applicable) with a route to an appropriate level of membership with a professional body through Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) with that body. Graduates with higher levels of qualification can choose not to take up the industry recognised training course on offer to them. However, where this does occur there is no requirement on the employer to provide an alternative course of equal standing or cost. Local authorities who do wish to provide an alternative course can do so as long as the training provided satisfies the main requirement of being clearly related to the actual work undertaken by the Graduate as part of their employment with the local authority.

Description of roles available

Below are short descriptions of each of the roles that Graduates can expect to be working in if employed by a local authority.

Economic Enterprise and Business Development

Local Authorities have always played a key role in supporting local enterprise and helping small and medium enterprise to grow. This is in addition to the provision of various Local Authority services to non-domestic customers. The Government, in order to leverage the experiences of both the Local Authorities and the County & City Enterprise Boards formally (in April 2014) launched the 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEO's) in each Local Authority.

The LEO's represent a transformation of the support for small enterprise across every county. Each LEO is tasked with developing a local plan for boosting enterprise. The ambition is to maximise entrepreneurship and job creation at local level. Key targets in the local plan will be new business start-ups, business expansions and jobs created or sustained as well as wider economic impacts such as exports, mentoring, training and enterprise

promotion. The Local Authorities will also bring new initiatives and opportunities for supporting local enterprise. In addition to the work of the LEOs other business units within Local Authorities are seeking to deepen their economic and business development focus.

Graduates with qualifications in and a strong interest in Economic Enterprise and Business Development can expect to improve their competency by becoming involved in the important work of these business units in developing and deepening their business community facing focus in the coming years. Applicants interested in a position with a LEO should note that if assigned to a rural local authority they will need to be in a possession of full driver's license (with no endorsements) and be able to provide their own transport as work in rural LEOs may result in work related travel within the County. Local Authority staff who use their own transport in the course work related travel are reimbursed at the prescribed public sector rates for travel & subsistence expenses.

Project and Programme Management

Local authorities utilise a wide variety of time defined projects in order to achieve operational and strategic goals. The adoption of single and multi-disciplinary project teams occurs in nearly all the business areas of local authorities. Projects can range from large and smaller scale capital investment infrastructure projects to organisational and business process change projects aimed at improving outputs and outcomes for the local population.

Graduates with qualifications in and a strong interest in the areas of project and programme management can expect to improve their competency by becoming part of an existing project team or part of a start-up project team in the local authority area where they gain a placement.

Innovation Strategy and Change Management

In a time of widespread change local authorities, no more than any other public body in Ireland is faced with having to examine how they deliver their services and whether current practice is the best way to deliver these services and are these services really what the public wants?

The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 provides for the necessary changes to local authority functions, structures, funding, performance and governance to achieve the overall vision of a local government system that is the main vehicle for public service delivery at local level, leads economic, social and community development and represents citizens and communities effectively and accountably.

Graduates with qualifications in or a strong interest in the areas of innovation and change management can expect to improve their competency by becoming part of an existing project team or part of a start-up project team in the local authority area tasked with examining existing business processes and implementing change where they gain a placement.

HR Management

Local Authorities are at the forefront in the ongoing process of modernisation in the public service, operating in an environment where standards and citizen expectations are very high, coupled with significantly reduced resources since 2008. The demand for quick and accurate responses, comprehensive information, greater transparency, accountability and value for money has increased and focuses attention on the most effective use of one of the key resources of the Local Authorities, their employees. A need exists within the sector to continually drive organisational performance improvement including employee contribution to such performance.

Graduates with qualifications and or a strong interest in the areas of Human Resource Management or Human Resource Development can expect to improve their competency by becoming part of an existing HR section in the Local Authority where they gain a placement.

Communications and Marketing

Given the necessity for change there is a need for Local Authorities to communicate the changes being undertaken and the need for such changes to the public and local business communities. Improving the effectiveness of Local Authority's communication and ensuring greater utilisation of new technologies and media to disseminate knowledge about the work and vital role of Local Authorities in local communities will be vital to improving public service delivery at the local level.

Graduates with qualifications in and a strong interest in the areas of communications, marketing and social media can expect to improve their competency by becoming part of an existing communications team or part of a start-up communications team in the Local Authority area where they gain a placement.

Data Analytics and Data Metrics

Local Authorities, in common with most other businesses are tasked with future planning for service provision. In order to effectively deliver services Local Authorities will be required to gather population and customer data in order to determine current and expected needs. Data analysis of obtained raw data and converting it into information useful for decision-making is a key component of evidence-based policy and service provision.

It is anticipated that graduates recruited in this skills stream will be involved, as part of a team, in the development of suitable metrics which can be used to report on service delivery levels.

Climate Action

It is anticipated that Graduates recruited under the Climate Action skills area will be assigned to either one of the regional Climate Action Offices (CAROs) or to a local Climate Action Team within an individual local authority.

The primary role of the CAROs (which were established in 2019) will be to coordinate and facilitate Climate Action activity in the Local Govt sector and to engage and collaborate with the other sectors in this regard. The initial focus of the CAROs is the development of Climate Change Adaptation Strategies across each of the 31 local authorities and that all strategies are in line with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.

Each Local Authority will in addition to the CAROs establish their own Climate Action teams that will be multi-disciplinary and cross-functional in their approach to ensuring that each Local Authority meets its own commitments and targets under the Governments 2019 Climate Action Plan.

Graduates can expect to gain hands on experience of implementing Climate Action policies and on contributing to the development of sustainable solutions aimed at addressing national; regional and local climate issues.

Appendix I

Three-year Graduate Development programme

The main features and components of the three-year graduate development programme will be:

- Block start for all graduates
- Local induction to happen in first week of contract,
- Group induction/orientation (centrally delivered) in week 2 of their contract
- 4 separate two day of skills development based on competency framework for front-line staff (regionally delivered by the IPA). These four regional skills sessions will be spread over the duration of the three-year programme. Details of what is covered by each of the four IPA regional skills sessions is included in Appendix II along with a copy of the competency framework for frontline staff of which Graduates are included.
- Structured performance reviews with assigned line manager during the duration of the three-year contract. Where PMDS is in operation the performance review will follow this cycle.
- A structured review of placement between employing local authority; graduate and LGMA,
- Graduates will be enrolled in industry recognised training in their chosen skills which will be either accredited and/or lead to member of a professional body in that chosen field

The IPA will be responsible for the provision of the centrally delivered portions of the development programme. Individual employing local authorities will be required to pay the IPA directly for each graduate placed with them. Final figure for the IPA charge per graduate is not yet determined as it will depend on the numbers of graduates to be placed as part of the graduate recruitment initiative.

While IPA will formally establish and reach agreement with each of the providers of the accredited industry led training and professional bodies involved. Each employing local authority will be required to pay the professional body directly for any graduates that enrol with them.

Industry recognised training in their chosen skills are which will be either accredited and/or lead to membership of a professional body in that chosen field

The industry recognised training element of the development programme will be delivered in Year 2 of the programme. The purpose of the industry recognised training element is to allow individual graduates to acquire specific training in their chosen field and to demonstrate their competency. Delivering this training in year 2 allows for individual local authorities to recoup some of their investment in year 2 of the employment programme.

During the programme review the LGMA will seek to determine which of the following six options best reflect the field of work which the Graduate is working in during the placement with the local authority. While some allowances will be made for individuals recruited under one skills area to enrol in another of the listed courses this will only occur where their employer supports such a switch.

Graduates undertaking the development programme are made aware that the development programme does not offer them a qualification at a higher QQI level than their original qualification. The limited number of course options available to them and detailed below are recognised by industry and as such have been identified by the LGMA as the most relevant to the work likely to be undertaken by the Graduates.

Graduates who already possess a specific undergraduate or post graduate qualification in their chosen field will be accommodated (where applicable) with a route to an appropriate level of membership with a professional body through Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) with that body. Graduates with higher levels of qualification can choose not to take up the industry recognised training course on offer to them. However, where this does occur there is no requirement on the employer to provide an alternative course of equal standing or cost. Local authorities who do wish to provide an alternative course can do so as long as the training provided satisfies the main requirement of being clearly related to the actual work undertaken by the Graduate as part of their employment with the local authority.

Industry recognised training in the six skills areas

As of the 30th October 2020 the courses being considered for the seven skills areas are as follows. This however may be subject to change.

Economic Enterprise & Business Development

Cert in Business Analytics with the Business Analysts Institute Ireland (QQI level 8).

12 days of training spread over 6 months. Expected cost €3,350.

Project & Programme Management

Project Management Institute (PMI) recognised Dip in Project Management delivered by IPA (QQI level 8).

14 days to be delivered over 6-month academic year (Sept to March) Expected cost €2,500 per graduate

Innovation, Strategy & Change Management

Lean Six Sigma Green Belt (QQI level 7)

5-day course. Expected cost of €2750-€3000 per participant

HR Management

Cert/Dip in HR Management (QQI level 6 or 7).

9-day course to be delivered over 6-month academic year (Sept to March). Expected cost €2750-€3000.

Communications & Marketing

Dip in Public Relations with the Public Relations Institute Ireland (PRII). Expected cost €1900.

Or

Dip in Digital marketing with the Digital Marketing Institute. Expected cost €1,750-€2,500.

Data Analytics & Data Metrics

Professional Diploma in Official Statistics for Policy Evaluation (QQI level 8).

9-10-day course to be delivered over 6-month academic year (Sept to March). Expected cost €2500.

Climate Action

Course tbc

Appendix II

Competency Model for Grade IV and analogous

Purpose and Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can demonstrate an understanding of the role played by a local authority and the type and range of work carried out by a local authority on behalf of the citizens.• Can demonstrate an understanding of how organisations implement change.
Delivering Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can demonstrate problem solving and contribution to successful solutions.• Displays the ability to understand and implement instructions as part of a team or under direct supervision.• Understands the need to use Council resources effectively.• Demonstrates the ability to deliver quality work and/or services to prescribed deadlines.
Personal Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently strives to perform at a high level.• Can listen effectively, engage in two-way dialogue with colleagues and managers and develop mutual understanding.• Understands the need to follow instructions.• Demonstrates an understanding of how their skills and knowledge can contribute positively to the efficient delivery of services to the citizen.• Can work effectively with a variety of colleagues and stakeholders.
Personal Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is personally trustworthy and can be relied upon.• Upholds the highest standards of honesty, ethics and integrity.• Maintains consistent effort when working to deadlines and can demonstrate resilience when setbacks are encountered.• Demonstrates high levels of initiative, can take ownership of assigned tasks and is self-motivated and self-sufficient.

IPA central/Regional element of Graduate Development programme

Central induction which will occur after local induction, but within the first two to three weeks of employment, will cover the following,

- Overview of what graduates can expect from the graduate recruitment programme
- Structure of the three-year development period detailing local and central supports
- Role and expectations of employers & graduates
- Description of mentoring supports for graduates
- Details of development programme inputs

The central induction will also cover the following,

- Overview of the development of local government in Ireland
- Overview of the range of services delivered by local government
- Role of elected members
- Role of Chief Executive and Officers/Officials of the local authority
- Role of local government in the overall public service
- Changing face of local authorities and the wider public service
- Exploration of how in practice a local authority delivers services to the public including the income, expenditure and budgetary frameworks within which local authorities operate.

It is envisaged that it will differ from local induction (to be delivered in week 1) which it is expected will cover the following,

- Graduates meet with their line manager
- Graduates meet with the Chief Executive or direct DoS responsible for section where graduates are placed
- Graduates meet with mentor
- Overview of local policies/procedures, etc.
- Input from IT (e.g.) PC set up, access codes, etc.
- Overview of work of business section
- Overview of annual work plan for section and where their work fits in.
- PMDS and/or performance review process including the Probationary period

IPA Regional Skills Sessions

The content of the four regional skills sessions delivered by the IPA in the previous round of Graduate recruitment was as follows. This may vary slightly in this iteration.

Session 1: Purpose & Change

- Review of their experience to date in their local authority
- Understanding personality types in the workplace
- Introduction to team building and team dynamics
- Team effectiveness
- Understanding and co-operating with change

Session 2: Delivering Results

- Reflections on experience to date and how previous learning was applied
- Identifying problems and contributing to solutions to those operational problems
- Delivering quality work and excellent customer service
- The concept of public service and meeting the expectations of management
- Minimising waste and reducing costs

Session 3: Personal Performance

- The context for effective project performance
- Understanding business needs
- Project definition and work breakdown techniques
- Managing teams for effective performance
- Identifying and addressing personal and organisational challenges

Session 4: Personal Effectiveness

- The complex nature of motivation
- Juggling competing commitments
- Connecting in to and embodying the purpose