

TLAC

Procedures & Practices

Procedures and Practices

of the

Top Level Appointments Committee

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Foreword

The Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC), was established in 1984. The Committee's role is to recommend candidates to Ministers and Government for the most senior positions in the Civil Service - at Assistant Secretary level and upwards. By carrying out this function in an independent manner, and by making its decisions strictly on the basis of the relative merit of the candidates for the positions concerned, TLAC aims to strengthen the management structure of the Civil Service, and to provide a means by which the best Civil Servants can aspire to fulfilling their potential.

Following a review completed in 1998, TLAC decided to make changes to its practices to ensure that the TLAC process continues to reflect best practice in candidate selection. With the assistance of consultants, an extensive job analysis exercise has taken place so as to identify the most important competencies for top management positions. For the future, selection of candidates will be carried out on the basis of an assessment of these competencies and the requirements of the particular job being filled. This booklet is intended to set out for candidates the procedures which TLAC will use in assessing their suitability for promotion.

In virtually every competition there are a number of very good candidates in addition to the successful candidate. These candidates should be aware that each person is judged on her/his suitability in the context of the particular post being filled and against the particular set of candidates who compete for that post. The fact that TLAC has not recommended a candidate for a particular post is therefore no indication of how that particular candidate would do in subsequent competitions and is certainly no reflection on how the candidate has performed in his or her existing work to date.

TLAC for its part undertakes that each candidate will be treated fairly, courteously and in a spirit of openness, each time they are considered.

Since the establishment of TLAC, I am satisfied, as are other TLAC members, that it has had a positive impact on how the Civil Service is managed at the most senior levels. We are determined to develop further the many strengths of the current system through adapting our selection method to reflect developments in best practice. I hope that this booklet will be of

benefit to all those involved in or interested in the TLAC process and, in particular, will serve to encourage as wide a pool of potential candidates as possible to apply for positions filled through TLAC.

Tom Considine, Chairman TLAC.

November 2001

Eddie Sullivan, Chairman TLAC since 26 March 2002

Ciarán Connolly, Chairman TLAC since 01 January 2008.

Section A

Background Information

Role of TLAC

TLAC recommends candidates for the most senior appointments in the Civil Service. Subject to certain exceptions, TLAC deals with all posts at or above Assistant Secretary level or equivalent across the Civil Service. The Government is the appointing authority for posts at Secretary General level. In accordance with a decision of the Government, TLAC recommends up to three candidates, if found suitable, for posts at this level. The Government appoints the Secretary General from among the recommended candidates.

In the case of posts below Secretary General level, e.g. Assistant Secretary posts, the appropriate Minister is the appointing authority. One candidate is recommended by TLAC to the Minister for appointment.

Membership of TLAC

The Taoiseach appoints the members of TLAC in consultation with the Minister for Finance. There are normally five members on the Committee, as follows:-

- Secretary General, Public Service Management and Development, Department of Finance (*ex officio*),
- Secretary General to the Government, Department of the Taoiseach (*ex officio*),
- a private sector member, appointed for a three year term, and
- two other Secretaries General, appointed for three year terms
- one other Secretary General, where not already a member and where a post in his/her Department is being filled. Where the post being filled is below Secretary General level he/she is present as an observer but where his/her successor is being appointed he/she is a full member.

While this document is intended to give an in-depth overview of the TLAC process, TLAC is responsible for determining its own procedures and remit, subject to Government decisions as appropriate. The information in this booklet is therefore subject to change either generally, or

in relation to specific circumstances identified by TLAC as requiring adjustments in the usual procedures.

Excluded Posts

TLAC does not make recommendations in relation to the filling of the following posts:

- Secretary General to the Government and to Department of the Taoiseach
- Second Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach
- Secretary General, Department of Finance
- Secretary General, Public Service Management and Development, Department of Finance
- Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Chairman, Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

Guide to the TLAC process.

Initiation of process.

The TLAC process commences when either a vacancy in a TLAC grade or a new post in such a grade is notified to the TLAC secretariat. Following clearance from the Department of Finance to fill the vacancy or new post the Department concerned is requested to prepare a job description.

Open competitions.

At this stage TLAC have the discretion to decide whether posts should be filled by open competition or by a competition run amongst eligible officers across the civil service.

Normally, positions are filled in the latter way, although TLAC may decide, and have decided on occasions, that a competition open to persons not already serving in the civil service should be held. If this option is exercised then the competition is organised by the PAS. The PAS interview board appointed normally contains a member of TLAC.

Civil service wide competitions

Where it is decided to fill the post by way of civil service wide competition, applications are invited by circular from eligible officers for each individual vacancy as it arises (ie. officers serving in grades with pay maxima equal to or greater than the Principal (Standard Scale) maximum). The Committee discusses the merits of each applicant in relation to the particular vacancy and, when doing so, have regard to the CVs, the nature of the applicant's experience,

the assessment of their work and their suitability for further promotion made by the immediate superiors and by the Heads of their Departments. The Head of the Department in which the vacancy has arisen is involved in the process. The Committee does not exclude any candidate from consideration on grounds of age. As a result of this process an initial list of candidates is drawn up by the Committee.

Posts below Secretary-General level

If the number of applicants for posts below Secretary-General level e.g. at Assistant Secretary level, is relatively large, then the Committee usually refers their initial list to the Public Appointments Service for short-listing. When this is being done the Secretary-General of the Department in which the vacancy occurs is invited to nominate (if he/she so wishes) up to 2 applicants from his/her Department who will meet the Committee without going through the Public Appointments Service shortlisting procedures. The Committee meets a number of applicants (usually 5) before recommending an appointment. A single name is forwarded to the appropriate Minister.

It is open to the Committee not to use the Public Appointments Service short-listing procedures nor to meet candidates themselves before making a recommendation. This procedure is very rarely used but might arise, for example, in circumstances where the Government requests a very early appointment to be made. Short-listing by the Public Appointments Service is dispensed with occasionally, when the field of applicants is small.

The Committee appreciate that many applicants who are not short-listed have done, and are doing, first class work in their Departments. The Committee would stress that the fact that candidates are not short-listed for a particular post in no way reflects on their merit or ability and certainly does not rule them out for consideration for any other post for which they may wish to be considered.

Secretary-General level posts.

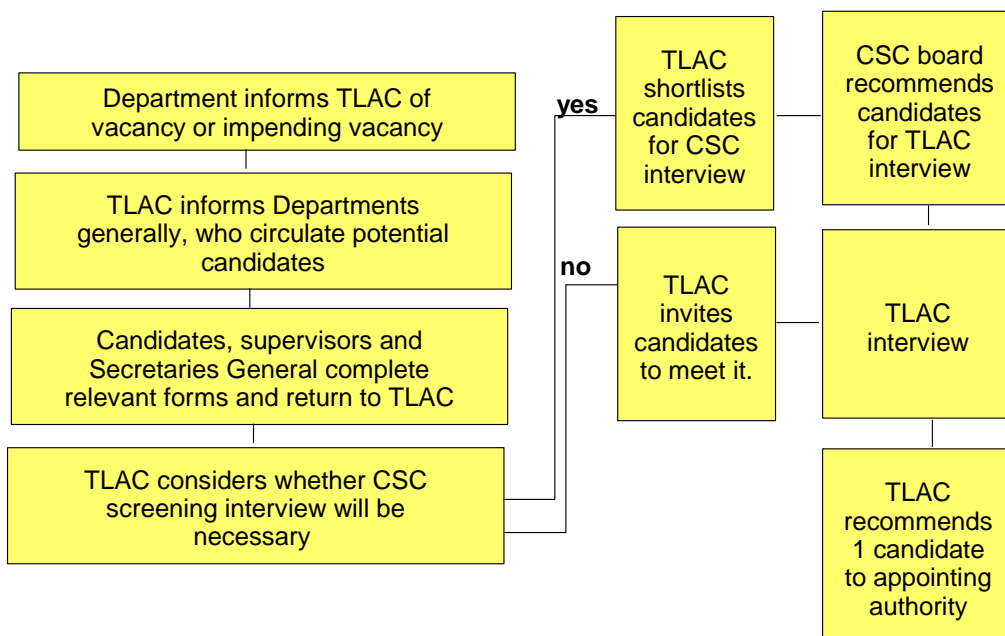
In the case of vacancies at this level the same procedure is employed by the Committee, except that candidates are not referred to the Public Appointments Service for short-listing. The Committee itself screens and short-lists the candidates and usually devotes a full day to meeting the short-listed candidates before making its recommendation. Because these posts are the most senior posts at official level in departments, the Government decided that up to

three candidates, if found suitable, are to be recommended in alphabetical order. The final decision is made by the Government.

In the case of Secretary-General posts the outgoing Secretary-General participates as a full member of the Committee.

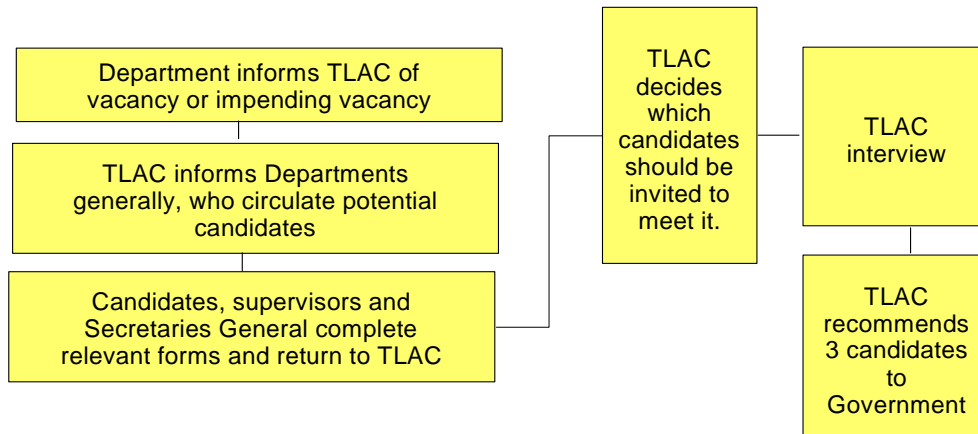
The usual procedures for post at Assistant Secretary level are as follows:-

Procedures for posts at Assistant Secretary Level



The usual procedures for posts at Secretary General level are as follows:-

Procedures for posts at Secretary General Level



The diagrams above reflect the usual practice where a competition is confined to persons already serving in the Civil Service. TLAC may decide, and have decided on a number of occasions in the past, that a competition open to persons not already serving in the Civil Service should be held. In such a case the competition is organised by the PAS, and the PAS interview board would normally contain a member of TLAC. A Civil Servant who wishes to apply for a TLAC competition should be serving in the grade of Principal (standard scale) and upwards, including Departmental and Professional equivalents.

Correspondence

The following contact details should be used by persons wishing to correspond with TLAC or seeking information about the Committee:-

Secretary
Top Level Appointments Committee
Office of the Secretary General, Public Service Management and Development
Department of Finance
Government Buildings
Merrion Street
Dublin 2
Telephone: (01) 604 5621
Fax: (01) 678 5622 Email: tlac@finance.gov.ie

Section B

The Competency Approach

What is a competency based approach to selection for promotion?

Competencies can be defined as “knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes required to successfully accomplish a job”. Competencies for a particular job or grade are established by way of a structured analysis of the requirements of the relevant positions. Such an analysis allows for the identification of those competencies which are consistently linked with effective role performance of the relevant job-holders. Candidates can then be assessed against these requirements, with a view to obtaining the best fit between the position and the successful applicant. Research has demonstrated increased reliability and validity through the use of competencies in the selection process.

Development of the competencies to be used for the TLAC process

The competencies to be used by TLAC for the Assistant Secretary and Secretary General posts were developed following a comprehensive job analysis.

The job analysis used a combination of research methods including the following:

- (i) A structured task analysis survey conducted with 17 Secretaries General and 15 Assistant Secretaries and equivalent grades
- (ii) A combination of focus group discussions and 1:1 interviews with officers at Secretary General, Assistant Secretary and Principal levels across all Departments and Offices
- (iii) Focus group discussions with incumbents at both Secretary General and Assistant Secretary level on the likely future developments in these roles in the context of the SMI process
- (iv) A focus group discussion with a number of senior female executives in other public sector agencies to gain a better understanding of gender relevant issues.
- (v) Individual interviews with senior politicians from the major political parties, including the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Finance, to explore their views on the critical qualities for effective performance at Secretary General and Assistant Secretary levels.

- (vi) A literature review of public sector competency studies for the senior management roles in other countries with particular reference to those pertaining in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. This study also reviewed private sector competency models at equivalent organization levels.

The information collected from these various research strands was then used to inform the definition of competencies for the two target job levels. This emergent competency model was then verified by a second sample of job holders. This second validation group critically reviewed the competency definitions, added additional points of emphasis and commented on the relative significance of individual competencies for specific roles.

The resultant competency model for Secretary General and Assistant Secretary clusters into four main dimensions as illustrated below:

Generic Competency Domains	Leadership	Judgement	Managing Relationships	Personal Drive for Results
Secretary General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing Vision and Purpose Providing Developmental Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judgement and Systemic Perspective Steering through the political environment Environmental Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Relationships Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing for Results Personal Drive and Accountability Professional Integrity
Assistant Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads on the Management of change Focus on Human Resources Corporate Contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and Thinking Skills Strategic Contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Critical Relationships Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational Skills Results Orientated Approach Professional Integrity

Based on this job analysis, the following generic competencies were developed for Assistant Secretary and Secretary General level positions.

TLAC – Secretary General Competencies

Professional Integrity

Adheres to and promotes values and an ethical approach in keeping with the mission of the Civil Service. Brings a consistently high level of personal and professional commitment to

serving the Government of the day. Commits to the development and implementation of policies and programmes within the overall central corporate framework.

Establishing Vision and Purpose

Establishes and communicates a clear vision and sense of core purpose for the department in line with Government policy. Personally shapes and champions this vision, translating it into practical terms that secures the buy-in of staff at all levels. Converts this vision into meaningful objectives and ensures that departmental structures and systems are aligned to deliver on these objectives.

Environmental Awareness

Shows a very broad perspective and a wide knowledge base on issues. Scans the environment on an ongoing basis and anticipates how future policies, practices and events could impact on the organisation. Sees ahead and anticipates future consequences and trends accurately. Develops future scenarios and can create adaptive strategies to position the department in a proactive way.

Judgment and Systemic Perspective

Takes a systemic overview of issues and evaluates them comprehensively in the context of the broad political and legal environment, both at National and International level. Appreciates the complexity of issues and sees the linkages between several strategic priorities and their environmental backdrop, understanding how they interact with one another. Is incisive and focussed on the priorities when evaluating problems. Is a systems thinker, identifies knock on implications of decisions being made. Provides and evaluates a number of solutions both in the immediate context and whilst considering the impact on longer-term objectives.

Managing for Results

Shows a strong bias towards execution, ensuring that high-level objectives are translated into practical implementation plans that achieve the expected outcomes. Puts a strong emphasis on productivity and the efficient deployment of financial and human resources within the departments. Puts in place processes and systems that assign accountabilities clearly and that measure the impact and value for money of initiatives.

Communication

Projects personal credibility and expertise to others and fronts the organisation in an authoritative manner. Commands attention and can manage a group process well.

Communicates effectively in a variety of settings including formal presentations and question and answer sessions with external bodies. Successfully influences others by the effective use of information, targeting their communication to meet the anticipated needs of their audience. Develops successful communication strategies on critical, sensitive or high profile issues.

Steering through the political environment

Works effectively within the political process, recognising and managing the tensions arising from different stakeholders perspectives. Anticipates where sensitivities and complexities may arise and plans his/her approach accordingly. Represents the department's view with integrity while negotiating skillfully to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes. Shows diplomacy, discretion and tact in dealing with high tension situations.

Providing Developmental Leadership

Shapes the culture and working ethos in the Department. Inspires and motivates the team to achieve organisational and personal goals. Builds consensus with the MAC and the wider team to deliver on an agreed agenda/set of objectives. Builds the potential of the team and mentors staff to optimise their contribution to the organization in the long term.

Personal Drive & Accountability

Brings a high level of personal commitment to the role and positively embraces accountability for the performance of the department. Relishes leading and taking responsibility for decisions, representing these confidently to others. Demonstrates maturity, keeps calm under pressure and is looked to for direction by others in a crisis. Sustains a high level of performance and resilience in pressure situations.

Managing Relationships

Works effectively within the service system to achieve objectives. Fosters strongly cooperative working relationships with senior colleagues both within and outside the service. Networks effectively with formal and informal contacts in order to expedite issues.

TLAC – Assistant Secretary Competencies

Professional Integrity

Adheres to and promotes values and an ethical approach in keeping with the mission of the Civil Service. Brings a consistently high level of personal and professional commitment to serving the Government of the day. Commits to the development and implementation of policies and programmes within the overall central corporate framework.

Strategic Contribution

Initiates and develops long term plans and strategy options for own designated sectoral responsibilities. Shapes the formulation of policy at own sectoral level and influences key stakeholders to ensure engagement and buy-in to policies. Shows a strong understanding of the ‘whole government issues’ and sees the bigger picture impact on own sectoral responsibilities. Contributes to the shaping of the strategy and policy development of public sector agencies within own remit, ensuring alignment with broader Government and departmental strategy. Looks forward, takes a long-term view and anticipates development in own sectors/ area of responsibility, proactively positioning responses.

Corporate Contribution

Maintains a broad overview of policy issues across the department and the wider Civil Service. Contributes fully to the debate and inputs into policy formulation on other departmental issues. Engages in issues, which do not strictly fall into own area of responsibility in order to take forward the Department's business. Promotes debate, idea sharing and teamwork across the senior management levels within the department and seeks to build and support a common identity. Encourages liaison with other departments and agencies fostering exchange of views and jointly developing positions on issues.

Analysis /Thinking Skills

Consistently seeks to broaden knowledge base and is open to new information and fresh perspectives. Quickly masters own brief, assimilating information from a wide range of sources both internal and external to the department. Probes and critically evaluates information considering all angles before committing to a decision. Will develop a number of options and is open to innovative approaches when addressing issues. Is comfortable dealing with financial data, trend analysis and broader macroeconomic data. Knows how to access, commission and interrogate research to resolve issues.

Organisational Skills

Structures the planning and delivery of work within own area to ensure that resources are matched to priority. Sets up effective systems to track and quality assure work in progress. Actively promotes value for money and cost benefit as key evaluation criteria for programmes of work. Ensures that working parties and project teams have clear terms of reference and a clear accountability process. Encourages the optimal use of information technology to expedite processes and enable knowledge and information sharing. Ensures that professional expertise and knowledge is fully harnessed in delivery of the business.

Leads on the Management of Change

Develops and oversees the implementation of change initiatives within own remit. Defines the high level objectives and ensures their translation into practical implementation plans showing strong project management skills. Negotiates and influences skillfully to achieve buy-in to change and sustain momentum towards the achievement of the broader objectives. Acts as a positive role model for change seeking continuous improvement in the delivery of the Departments objectives. Acts as a positive role model and force for change by coming up

with new ideas and encouraging fresh perspectives on issues. Encourages a climate of innovation by encouraging judicious levels of risk taking and establishing processes to encourage new ideas and initiatives at all levels within the department.

Managing Critical Relationships

Relates effectively to a diverse range of people internal and external to the department. Demonstrates empathy and seeks to build reciprocal understanding and trust. Manages key influencers positively and is responsive to their agenda. Is confident and credible communicating with senior management and Government ministers, heads of industry etc. Is proactive at engaging with colleagues across other Departments and building a strong professional network. Manages conflict situations constructively, seeking to achieve clarity of understanding and to build common ground in order to achieve broad objectives.

Results Orientated Approach

Takes personal responsibility for getting things done and achieving organisational objectives. Is proactive and action orientated. Is prepared to commit to a position using the best available information. Will tackle difficult issues demonstrating patience and persistence. Is proactive in shaping and steering issues. Invests a high level of energy and personal commitment into the role. Sustains discipline and poise under pressure. Looks for opportunities to get feedback and seeks to develop own performance on an on-going basis.

Communication

Makes an impact through fluent and articulate communication skills. Encapsulates difficult ideas in language with which people are comfortable. Can translate functional or departmental knowledge into meaningful communication in order to bridge professional divides. Is proactive at networking within the Civil Service and with critical external individuals and organisations. Writes in a coherent and concise manner.

Focus on Human Resources

Is committed to the positive management and development of staff as a key resource. Takes a personal interest in the development of staff, holds career development discussions and encourages career moves for the longer term benefit of staff and the wider organisation. Shows good judgement in identifying and deploying talent into critical areas. Has a track record of tackling performance problems and improving the contribution of staff. Blends disparate individuals into a team and builds strong team morale. Shows a good understanding of individual and group behaviour and values. Is sensitive to work life balance issues and their impact on individuals.

Section C.

The Application Process

Procedures when a vacancy arises

The TLAC selection process starts when either a vacancy or impending vacancy in a TLAC grade or a new post is notified to the TLAC secretariat. Whenever possible, TLAC will seek to facilitate an overlap between new appointees and serving staff, by ensuring that the competition will be held in good time, so Departments are encouraged to start the process in good time.

TLAC will require some information about the post, including the following:

- grade and title of post to be filled
- job description, including information about the roles, mission and challenges associated with the post and any particular qualifications, capabilities or experience essential to the post. A brief statement should include relevant external context/environmental information about the post and the Department concerned, as well as the challenges of the particular job, a note on the team situation, etc.
- notification of any special competencies required for the particular post

At this stage, TLAC will issue a competition notice to all Departments and Offices informing them of the vacancy which has arisen, and of the deadlines within which documentation must be completed and returned. It is a matter for each Department/Office to circulate the notice to its eligible staff members, and TLAC will take no responsibility for the failure of a Department or Office in that regard.

Application forms

Appendices 1 and 2 contain the forms used for competitions at Assistant Secretary and equivalent level and Secretary General level respectively. TLAC reserves the right to alter or amend these forms either in respect of particular competitions or generally.

The following documents must be completed and lodged with TLAC in respect of each application for a post:

1. Application form for the particular post	To be completed by the candidate and sent directly to TLAC - a copy should be given by the candidate to his/her immediate manager
2. Curriculum Vitae 3. Self-Assessment form	To be completed by the candidate and sent to TLAC - a copy should be given by the candidate to the immediate manager - it is not usually necessary for these forms to be completed and returned each time a person applies for a TLAC post. However, a new form should be completed each time there is a significant change in the CV or self-assessment of a candidate, or annually.
4. Assessment of Candidate by Immediate Manager	To be completed by the immediate manager and forwarded to the Secretary General or Head of the relevant Department or Office (if not the same person) - a manager may keep a copy of his/her assessment for use in relation to later competitions, within one year of the date of the initial assessment, and provided there has been no significant change in the meanwhile.
5. Form to be completed by Head of Department/Office	The Head of the Department or Office concerned (where not the immediate manager of the candidate) should, on receipt of the assessment of the candidate by the immediate manager, complete the form at Appendix 3, indicating whether he/she agrees with the immediate manager's assessment. The Head should then ensure that this form (where appropriate), and the immediate manager's assessment, are forwarded to TLAC, and that copies are retained by the Department or Office concerned.

Copies of documents forwarded to TLAC by the Head of Department/Office should be made available to candidates by the Head, at the same time as they are sent to TLAC, and a candidate who disagrees with any assessment or comment made in relation to his/her application may furnish a short note to TLAC stating the reasons for disagreement.

All documentation must be completed within the time scales indicated in the competition notice and TLAC is not required to grant requests for extensions.

Decision on whether to make use of a PAS interview stage as part of the selection process for posts below Secretary-General level

At this point in the process, TLAC will decide whether it deems it necessary to arrange for a preliminary round of interviews to be carried out by the PAS. The principal criterion in this regard will be the number of candidates for a position, and the time which TLAC intends to make available for the TLAC interview process. The PAS preliminary interview is not used in relation to competitions for Secretary General posts, while this option is used in relation to the majority of posts at Assistant Secretary level.

Nominees

At this stage, also, TLAC will ascertain from the Secretary General of the Department with the vacancy whether, and how many, persons he or she intends to nominate for TLAC interview. These persons, not exceeding two in number, will not be required to go through shortlisting or a preliminary PAS interview and will be informed accordingly by the TLAC secretariat.

Shortlisting for posts below Secretary General level

Whether the next stage of the process is to be a PAS interview, or a TLAC interview, TLAC may wish to shortlist candidates for that next stage, based on the documentation supplied by and in respect of the candidates concerned. The aim of such a process will be to ensure that an appropriate number of persons are interviewed (at the discretion of TLAC, but usually not more than twelve in the case of a PAS interview and 5, including nominees, in the case of a TLAC interview). The following criteria will be used in making the decisions:-

A. Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying criteria are criteria which must be met in order for a candidate to be entitled to be considered for interview, viz.

- **eligibility:** the candidate should be eligible to apply for TLAC and for the particular competition concerned
- **suitability:** the candidate should have been adjudged suitable for promotion by the head of his/her Department or Office
- **competence:** the Committee should be satisfied on the evidence of the documentation supplied that there is a significant probability that the candidate would, at interview, be found to reach at least an acceptable standard in relation to the competencies being considered.

A candidate must meet all of the qualifying criteria to be allowed to progress.

B. Shortlisting Criteria

It will often arise that there is a relatively large number of qualified candidates for a particular position, and that it is therefore necessary to reduce the numbers to the appropriate level for interview. In such a case, TLAC will consider whether, having regard to the other candidates involved, a candidate is in their opinion likely to be successful in securing promotion at this competition. In making this judgement the Committee may consider such factors as it deems appropriate including:

- the strength and breadth of the experience and background of the candidate, by comparison with the general run of other candidates and having regard to the particular post concerned
- the likelihood, on the basis of the candidate's self-assessment, that the candidate can demonstrate a high standard in relation to all or a sufficient number of the competencies
- the strength of the assessment of the candidate by his/her immediate manager and/or Head of Department or Office.

TLAC may make arrangements for informal feedback on their applications to be available to candidates who are not shortlisted, via senior management in the Department or Office concerned or directly, as appropriate.

Section D

The PAS interview

Where the PAS has been asked to hold a preliminary round of interviews, this will be done within procedures established by the PAS. All documentation supplied by candidates and their Departments relevant to the position is supplied by TLAC to the PAS. The PAS then makes appropriate arrangements to call candidates for interview. It is a matter for candidates to ensure they are in a position to attend for interview.

The PAS interview Board will usually consist of three persons considered qualified in terms of their overall experience and background to make judgements about the requirements of the most senior levels of the Civil Service, and the PAS may make such arrangements as it sees fit to ensure an appropriate balance within the Board.

Generally speaking, the majority of board members will have experience at or close to Secretary General level in the Civil Service. Appropriate private sector persons may be invited to sit on boards, and the PAS will seek to ensure female representation on all boards. The PAS will provide a secretary to the Board.

In making its assessments of candidates, the PAS board will consider the qualities of the candidate relative to the TLAC competencies for Assistant Secretary level posts, having regard to the information gleaned from the interview and, to the extent deemed appropriate by the Board, the supporting documentation. Interviews will last approximately 50 minutes.

Subject to the Board being satisfied that a sufficient number of candidates are qualified for promotion, it will recommend three to five candidates (depending on the number of nominees), for interview by TLAC.

The PAS will maintain such records as it deems appropriate in relation to candidates, and will provide a mechanism whereby candidates can obtain feedback, on an informal and confidential basis, in relation to their performance at interview.

Section E

The TLAC interview

Candidates who are successful at the PAS interview (where relevant) and appropriate nominees will be informed of a time and date for their interview by TLAC

For the purposes of the interview all available members of the Committee will be in attendance. Where a Secretary General post is being filled, the outgoing Secretary General is also a full member of the Committee. Where the post being filled is below Secretary General level, the Secretary General of the Department in which the vacancy arises is present as an observer. In normal circumstances, each candidate will be interviewed by the Chairman and two other members of the Committee. The outgoing Secretary General or Secretary General of the Department in which the vacancy arises, does not actually participate during interviews

The interview takes place in a relatively informal manner. In view of the numbers involved, the candidate and Committee members will generally be seated in a roughly circular arrangement, rather than in a more traditional layout. The length of interviews will vary, at the discretion of the Committee, but on average will last around 45 minutes.

From time to time TLAC arranges for such training of its members as it thinks necessary.

As a basis for the interview, and for consideration as part of the decision making process, the Committee will have available to it the candidate's self-assessment, application form and *curriculum vitae*, the assessment(s) by the immediate manager and Head of Department/Office and the job description and other information about the post to be filled.

In making its assessments of candidates, the Committee will consider the qualities of the candidate relative to the TLAC competencies for the level of post being filled, as well as the requirements of the particular post, having regard to the information gleaned from the interview and, to the extent deemed appropriate by the Committee, the supporting documentation and assessments. A copy of the rating scale to be used by the individual TLAC members is attached at Appendix [4], but may be varied from time to time, where TLAC believes it necessary to do so.

Acting collegially, the Committee will decide which single candidate or, in the case of Secretary General posts, which three candidates, it wishes to recommend. The recommendation will then be forwarded to the appointing authority. TLAC will endeavour to ensure that successful and unsuccessful candidates are informed as soon as possible of the outcome of the competition, and will provide a mechanism whereby candidates can obtain feedback, on an informal and confidential basis, in relation to their performance at interview.

Section F TLAC and FOI

Since records of TLAC are held within the Department of Finance, formal FOI requests may be made in relation to TLAC records through that Department. However, it is the intention of the Committee that the process be carried out in a transparent and open manner, subject only to necessary privacy and confidentiality. For that reason, the Committee maintain an administrative access policy which will in the normal course make available to candidates, on being satisfied as to the identity of the requester, all records held in relation to their candidature, while retaining the right to ask candidates to lodge a formal FOI request in exceptional cases. For the most part, therefore, it should not be necessary for candidates to make formal FOI requests for access to their TLAC records.

As regards the policies of and criteria applied by TLAC, this document constitutes the principal source of such information, both for the Committee itself and for others. The Committee may, of course, amend or revoke this document as and when it deems necessary.

Much information received by TLAC, in particular the details of assessment forms etc., is received and held on the basis of an understanding that such information will be treated confidentially. Information which is personal within the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act will not be made available to a person other than the individual to whom the information relates and the persons who must see the information as part of the TLAC process, (except where required under the Act, and then only after consultation with the person concerned). For this reason, while candidates can expect to be granted access to such information in relation to themselves, they cannot expect to be granted information in relation to other candidates, even where the granting of such information might, in the eyes of the requester, be of personal interest.

Candidates should note, however, that the following information will not be considered to be personal or held in confidence:

- Name(s) of candidate(s) recommended to the appointing authority
- Dates and times of interviews

- Such other information as might be regarded by the Committee or its secretary as being of a routine or widely known nature.

APPENDIX 1

**FORMS TO BE COMPLETED IN RELATION TO POSITIONS AT ASSISTANT
SECRETARY LEVEL OR EQUIVALENT**

APPLICATION FORM

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Assistant Secretary

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Forenames

Surname (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.,)

Home Address

Home Telephone No:

Work Tel. No.

Email:

Name of Position for which you are applying:

TLAC Reference No. of
position:

Date:

2. CORPORATE CONTRIBUTION

Having regard to the specifications for the position on offer, please write a brief note (not exceeding 2 A4 pages) on how you feel you will make an unique contribution and add value at the management table. In your commentary please cover the qualities and attributes you feel you will bring to the role.

3. CAREER PATH – EXPERIENCE RELEVANT TO THE POST ON OFFER

From your employment record to date, state briefly the experience you already have which would be most relevant to the position.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please highlight any other information relevant to your application.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Assistant Secretary

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Forenames	Surname (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.)		
Home Address			
Home Telephone No.	Work Tel. No.	Email:	
Current Department		Current Grade	

2. EDUCATION & TRAINING HISTORY

Examining Body	Year / Date	Courses Studied Give examination results with grades and dates		
Language Skills:	Ability Level (tick as appropriate)			
	Fluent	Moderate	Elementary	
1. Irish				
2. French				
3. Other (Specify)				
4. Other (Specify)				

Additional Information [in relation to Education/Training]

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3. CURRENT WORK EXPERIENCE

Please outline your current role description, primary responsibilities and main achievements to date in that role (Indicate the resources for which you are responsible including staff numbers, if relevant). Insert additional page if required.

Name and Grade of Officer to whom you report:

4. WORK HISTORY

Please list work experience including previous positions and grades within the Civil Service. For each role indicate the name and grade of officer to whom you reported (insert additional pages as necessary).

Post/Grade	From	To	Position held and main duties
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5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Include any information relevant to progression in the Civil Service.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Assistant Secretary

1. YOUR SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

This document gives you an opportunity to detail some of your skills, qualities and values in areas that will be important should you be successful in promotion to the next level of management. It will also give you greater insight into the demands of the role.

Your responses may be utilised at the interview stage in any application for promotion.

1.1 Professional Integrity

What do you consider are the key values that you would bring to the role of Assistant Secretary?

1.2 Strategic Contribution

Give an overview of your experience in contributing to the development of strategy in the organisation

What was your specific role?

What was the outcome?

1.3 Corporate Contribution

Give an example of an occasion where you worked collaboratively outside your own strict remit in the interests of the broader Departmental or Civil Service agenda?

What was your specific contribution?

What was the outcome?

1.4 Analysis/Thinking

Please give an example which illustrates your approach to using information and interrogating research or other data in making a complex decision. What was the situation?

How did you go about the task?

What was the outcome?

1.5 Organisational Skills

Please give a specific example of when you have been involved in managing and co-ordinating a service/system/team in the pursuit of objectives.

What was your role/contribution?

What was the outcome?

1.6 Leadership on the Management of Change

Please give a brief overview of your experience of working in the area of change/change management.

Please give an example of an occasion where you were instrumental in introducing change.

How did you go about it?

What was the outcome?

1.7 Managing Critical Relationships

Please give a brief overview of your values and approach to developing relationships with stakeholders critical to your role.

Please give an example of an occasion when you worked very successfully to build a relationship with others in order to achieve mutual objectives?

1.8 Results Orientated Approach

Please give an example which reflects your values and approach to achieving results at work?

What was your specific contribution to the situation or issue?

What was the outcome?

1.9 Communication

Give an example which demonstrates your skills in getting across a message to a group of people across functions or departments.

What factors did you take into account?

What was the outcome?

1.10 Focus on Human Resources

Give a brief outline of your vision for Human Resources in the Civil Service.

Give an example of an initiative that you have taken in this area:

1.11 Readiness for Promotion

Give one or two examples which in your opinion illustrates your readiness to make the step up to Assistant Secretary level.

2. RANKING YOUR SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Thank you for completing this section. In the Table below please rank your skills (from 1-10) in terms of the qualities/skills which you feel that you will bring to the role of Assistant Secretary (they are listed in random order in the Table below). Rank order your skills/qualities as they currently are, rather than those you think are required for any particular position.

Qualities	Rank
Professional Integrity	
Strategic Contribution	
Corporate Contribution	
Analysis/Thinking skills	
Organisational skills	
Change Management skills	
Managing Critical Relationships	
Results Orientated Approach	
Communication	
Focus on Human Resources	

ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATE BY IMMEDIATE MANAGER

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Assistant Secretary

1. RELATIONSHIP BACKGROUND

Name of Candidate			
How long have you been the direct manager of the candidate?			
Years	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>	Months	<input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/>
How often do you interact with the candidate on an official level?			
Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	2/3 Times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (Please state).	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. EVALUATING YOUR DIRECT REPORT - GUIDELINES

Please read the candidate's self assessment form.
On the following pages you will be asked to evaluate and rate the candidate on the ten core competencies critical to the role of Assistant Secretary, using a 1 to 5 scale as follows:

<p>1. = Excellent Performance</p> <p>2. = Superior Performance</p> <p>3. = Acceptable Standard</p> <p>4. = Needs Development</p> <p>5. = Poor Performance</p>	<p>Candidate is in the top 5% of managers at peer level; Has exceptional strength and could act as a role model.</p> <p>Candidate is in the top 25% of managers at peer level; This is an area of distinctive strength.</p> <p>Candidate's skill level is comparable to his/her peers at this grade.</p> <p>Candidate is in the lower 30% of managers at peer level. He/she has significant weaknesses or uneven aspects to performance.</p> <p>Candidate is in the lower 10% of managers at peer level or there is little evidence of competence.</p>
--	--

3. THE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF YOUR DIRECT REPORT

This document gives you an opportunity to detail some of the skills, qualities and values of the applicant in areas that are important for the role of Assistant Secretary. Please rate the candidate on the areas indicated below recording key comments as appropriate.

Professional Integrity		Rating	
			<input type="text"/>
1	3	5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived as fair by others – is a role model in this respect Adheres to and promotes values and an ethical approach in keeping with the mission of the Civil Service Demonstrates a consistently high level of personal commitment to corporate objectives Strongly promotes and advocates the positive values underpinning public service work Is a role model for others in consistent commitment to an excellent standard in the implementation of policies and programmes Acts as a role model and counsels other staff on the ethical aspects of civil service work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strives to keep promises and adheres to values. Is generally fair except in extraordinary circumstances Adheres to the values of the Civil Service Will work hard to ensure programmes within the corporate framework are successful Is well respected for his/her commitment within the department Shows a strong commitment to the values and principles underpinning public service work Committed to delivery at a consistently professional level in the implementation of policies and programmes Is generally aware of and deals capably with the ethical aspects of civil service work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is perceived as showing preferential treatment to certain individuals and groups Shows little understanding or interest in the principles and values of the Civil Service Demonstrates low interest in the development or implementation of programmes within the corporate framework Shows little overt commitment to the values and principles underpinning public service work Is inconsistent in the level of personal commitment to implementing policies and programmes Perceived as paying little attention to ethical aspects of civil service work 	

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Strategic Contribution		Rating
1	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates and develops long term plans and strategy options for own designated sectoral area • Personally shapes the formulation of sector strategies based on a sound conceptual analysis • Consults widely and proactively influences stakeholders to ensure that sector strategies gain broad acceptance • Sees where sectoral strategies fit into the bigger picture of government and department policies • Has successfully led cross-departmental initiatives with a strategy dimension • Consistently takes a long term view on issues and proactively positions appropriate responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops medium term plans and strategies for own sectoral areas • Makes a strong personal impact in the development of sectoral strategies • Works to keep stakeholders abreast of strategy developments • Integrates sectoral strategies into departmental higher order objectives • Has been centrally involved in cross-department issues with a strategic dimension • Evidence of taking a longer term view on significant issues and of emergent response development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not engage in long term planning, spends most time focussing on the immediate issues • Facilitates the development of sector strategies but without a strong personal input • Tends to consult mainly at a written level on sector strategies • May let strategies develop in a way that is unconnected with broader policy issues • Little experience of active involvement in cross-department issues with a strategy dimension • Little evidence of real long term thinking on issues

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Corporate Contribution		Rating
		<input type="text"/>
1	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is clear about the corporate requirements within the role of Assistant Secretary • Maintains a broad overview of policy issues across the department and the wider Civil Service • Contributes fully to the debate and inputs into policy formulation on wider departmental issues • Promotes debate, idea sharing and teamwork across the management levels within his/her area • Engages positively with issues which have a broad departmental impact and volunteers a contribution • Has led to discussion of issues a management advisory committee level and achieved positive outcomes in doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an appreciation of the broader corporate contribution required at Assistant Secretary level • Has a reasonably broad overview of policy issues across the department and the wider Civil Service • Willing to be involved in debates on wider departmental issues • Encourages the sharing of ideas and debate across his/her area of responsibility • Willingly gets involved on broader departmental issues and will offer some personal time • Has been involved positively in deliberations of managers at management advisory committee level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is somewhat vague on the corporate contribution required at Assistant Secretary level • Awareness of policy issues is limited and only relates to his/her own particular remit • Avoids contributing to debates around policy formation on wider departmental issues • Tends to restrict debate and ideas within functional areas under his responsibility • Tends to concentrate on issues that fall strictly within his/her own area of responsibility • Has not made an active contribution at management advisory committee level

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Analysis/Thinking Skills		Rating
		<input type="text"/>
1	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently seeks to broaden knowledge base and is open to new information and fresh perspectives • Assimilates information from a wide range of sources both internal and external to the department • Deals with financial data, trend analysis and broader macroeconomic data very effectively • Shows acute perception in cutting through complex information to the core critical issues • Considers a complex issue from a number of different perspectives before committing to a view • Creates a climate which encourages innovation and fresh thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will broaden knowledge base when major changes occur • Assimilates information from a number of sources both internal and external to the department • Is comfortable dealing with financial data, trend analysis and broader macroeconomic data • Distinguishes the critical from less important issues when dealing with complex information • Sees a complex issue from more than one perspective • Is comfortable supporting new thinking and can be innovative in approach at times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will only utilise the information which he/she already possesses and is less receptive towards new perspectives • Uncomfortable assimilating information from a wider number of sources, preferring to focus on information within the department • Less comfortable in working with economic and quantitative data • Sometimes has difficulty distinguishing the core and critical issues within complex information • Inclined to see complex issues from a singular perspective • Tends to favour established viewpoints and ways of thinking at the cost of innovation

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Organisational Skills		Rating <input type="text"/>
1	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently achieves efficiencies in resource usage by intelligent deployment, adjustments and monitoring • Demonstrates the capability to accurately match resource usage against activity level for key areas • Implements effective monitoring systems for all key resource deployments • Can skilfully deploy and adjust human resources to meeting changing demands and contingencies. Takes a developmental approach to staff deployment • Has successfully deployed a “value for money” analysis in reviewing service delivery • Has championed the use of information technology to expedite work processes and facilitate knowledge sharing • Manages projects and working parties with clear accountability processes to achieve outstanding results • Skillfully brings in professional expertise and specialist knowledge to add extra value to a piece of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the need to achieve efficient resource usage and works towards this aim • Schedules staff deployments accurately and efficiently against business needs • Can do basic financial monitoring of the system • Is cognisant of the need to consider human resources management issues in planning • Actively promotes “value for money” and “cost-benefit” as analytical criteria for service evaluation and review • Takes a positive approach to deploying information technology as a business tool • Manages projects and working parties to ensure delivery to time and quality standards • Deploys professional or specialist expertise effectively within assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages resource usage in a reactive and historically informed way • Operates standard rotas and scheduling with lesser consideration of changing service needs and opportunities • Monitors resource usage mainly by significant exceptions or on an ad hoc basis • Gives limited attention to the human resources aspects of planning and organising work • Does not use value and cost benefit as critical criteria in service review • Less proactive and forward thinking in the use of information technology • Perceived as having a less structured approach to project management • Less effective in the focussed use of professional or specialist expertise
<p>Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).</p>		

Leads on the Management of Change

Rating

1	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and oversees the implementation of successful change initiatives within own remit • Defines the objectives of a change programme before commencing • Ensures “buy-in” of the relevant parties through negotiation and positive influencing. Successfully engages all critical stakeholders in the change process • Acts as a strong positive role model for change • Encourages and promotes a climate of continuous improvement within his/her own areas of responsibility, challenges the team to question the status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has had some involvement in significant change initiatives • Outlines to some extent the objectives of any change initiative • Works to get the commitment and cooperation of all relevant parties within a change process • Recognised as having a positive attitude towards change • Encourages a positive approach to developing the service, sees change as a positive opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not engage substantively in change initiatives. Perceived as passive towards change within the Civil Service • Introduces change without a clear specification of the desired outcome • Does not think through fully the need to positively engage all relevant parties within a change process. May favour a more direct “tell and direct” approach • Could be seen as a less enthusiastic advocate of change • Tends to be overly cautious in responding to new ideas or suggestions for change. May promote a risk averse climate.

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Managing Critical Relationships

Rating

1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds consensus and teamwork • Is proactive and takes the lead in establishing and sustaining positive working relationships with key stakeholders both within and outside the department • Shows strong empathy and reciprocation in his/her working relationship • Shows a good ability to understand the needs of Ministers and the political process and skilfully manages engagement on issues with these critical stakeholders • Manages key influences skillfully and is responsive to their agenda in a positive and balancing way • Initiates and takes forward cross department work and engages very positively with colleagues in other areas of the service • Has successfully managed conflict situations, shows tact and judgement and reaching a positive outcome 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of team playing and positive co-operation with others • Has developed a wide range of positive working relationships with stakeholders and diverse groups • Shows a good understanding for other people’s issues, develops and sustains rapport well • Can understand and engage positively with the needs of Ministers and the political process • Can relate well to key influencers and provide a positive response as appropriate • Has worked well with colleagues across departments and disciplines • Has shown the ability to build common ground in conflict situations and to facilitate a positive outcome 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to play to own agenda and overly concerned with process issues • Has a limited range of on-going working relationships with stakeholders and other groups - relates more on an issue by issue basis • Can tend to use relationships with a view to his/her own shorter-term needs. Less adept at developing empathy and on-going rapport • Does not always engage in a helpful manner with the political process nor empathise with a Minister’s critical issues • Has not taken the initiative to work strongly across departments and disciplines • Tends to take a unilateral or directive approach in conflict situations. Will push on or avoid resolution of the conflict

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Results Orientated Approach		Rating <input type="text"/>		
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiastically and energetically tackles very demanding tasks • Sets ambitious targets and objectives for self and others. Frequently exceeds targets • Invests a high level of energy and commitment into their role. Takes personal responsibility for getting things done and achieving difficult objectives • Takes the initiative in shaping and steering issues, will work positively to the full level of autonomy invested in their role • Shows a high level of persistence and determination in steering a difficult issue through to a conclusion • Responds positively under pressure, sustains poise and a high performance level • Leads his/her areas of responsibility strongly in terms of putting a strong focus on outcomes and effective delivery of work • Is deliberate in continuously improving own performance by seeking and acting on feedback for others 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally tackles quite demanding tasks and can handle extra workload • Sets fairly ambitious targets for self and others and generally achieves a result • Ensures that difficult tasks and objectives are achieved and will invest personal energy into doing so • Takes issues forward proactively and will work with autonomy to see tasks through • Shows patience and persistence in following through with a difficult issue until a resolution is achieved • Generally works positively under pressure. Can press on and get the job done • Personally tracks work and makes sure that projects and outcomes are achieved to standard • Looks for feedback and guidance to improve own performance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not always respond adequately to extra workloads. Handles a moderate amount of work • Inconsistent in setting targets or sets self and others moderately challenging targets which are not always fully attained • Does not consistently achieve difficult objectives and may delegate without putting personal energy into seeing the issue through • Has a more reactive approach at times and may seek the input of others rather than use their own initiative • Does not always see difficult issues through fully to a conclusion • Can be inconsistent in his/her performance under pressure • Is not always consistent and visible in tracking work in progress and evaluating outcome • Does not look for developmental feedback on own performance
<p>Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).</p>				

Communication		Rating <input type="text"/>
1	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects high levels of personal credibility and expertise to others Excellent interpersonal/networking skills Has successfully represented the department at significant media and stakeholder briefings. Projected high levels of credibility and expertise in doing this Excels in delivering information in a structured, focussed and high-impact manner Excels at dealing with issues and handling questions on his feet. Checks meaning and clarity and gives concise and appropriate responses Uses information in a targeted way and shapes communication strategies to achieve maximum impact on critical issues Has excelled in making an influential case to senior stakeholders on complex or difficult issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays personal credibility and expertise to others Seeks to network primarily with area covered by our brief Has conducted media and stakeholder briefings successfully. Has projected an image of credibility and mastery of the subject in doing so Comfortable and competent in delivering information in a clear and well-structured manner Is competent at handling questions and issues on his feet. Ensures that the queries are understood and clearly responded to Marshals information well and prepares a communication strategy capability for significant issues Makes a credible and influential case to senior stakeholders on a frequent basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not display personal credibility and expertise to others Does not develop effective networking Does not always secure agreement of relevant stakeholders Is less comfortable leading press or stakeholder briefings. May come across as unsure or defensive. May not project a credible or masterful image Delivers information in a manner which lacks impact, either at a rational or emotional level. May lack structure or incisiveness in presentation style Less comfortable handling inpromptu or unexpected questions or queries. Not so quick on his/her feet. Does not check understanding of the query intent fully Tends to be reactive in shaping communication on issues. Presents factually rather than tactically Lacks rational and emotional impact when making a case to others. The case may fail due to lack of personal impact in communication
<p>Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).</p>		

Focus on Human Resources		Rating
1	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has given strong leadership on people management, promoting modern approaches to development and team building • Proactively leads his/her team in the implementation of organisational reforms, such as those arising from SMI • Shows excellent judgement in identifying and deploying talent in critical areas • Blends disparate individuals into a team and builds strong team morale and identity • Is deliberate in his/her approach to building a positive and empowering work climate. Celebrates success and gives a lot of feedback both positive and negative as appropriate • Takes a leadership role in building a positive partnership relationship with staff representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees staff as a key asset for the service and has promoted positive people management practices • Shows a positive approach towards implementation of organisational reforms • Shows a good judgement in identifying and deploying talent in critical areas • Has had experience of dealing with conflict within groups and has been quite successful integrating people into a team • Encourages a climate of open communication and full contributions by staff. Gives positive feedback and recognition regularly • Contributes positively to the partnership agenda and is aware of using it to take forward issues and build consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not made a distinctive impact in terms of people management practices • Does not tend to lead in the implementation of organisational reforms • Shows poor judgement in allocating staff, giving people too much or too little responsibility • Has difficulty building team cohesion and morale particularly in a time of transition • Takes a more conventional task focussed approach to management of people. Doesn't give a lot of public recognition or feedback • Tends to leave partnership issues to appointed groups and doesn't proactively contribute

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

4. OVERALL EVALUATION

Which of the following best expresses your judgement of the officer's career potential.

1. **He/she is clearly ready for promotion to Assistant Secretary. Such promotion is the next most appropriate career move.**
2. **Makes a strong contribution and shows the potential to work at Assistant Secretary Level in the future.**
3. **Is unlikely to be ready for promotion within the next three years.**

Name of immediate manager: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2

**FORMS TO BE COMPLETED IN RELATION TO
POSITIONS AT SECRETARY GENERAL LEVEL**

APPLICATION FORM

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Secretary General

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Forenames

Surname (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.,)

Home Address

Home Telephone No:

Work Tel. No.:

Email:

Name of Position for which you are applying:

TLAC Reference No. of
position:

Date:

2. STATEMENT OF VISION

Having regard to the specifications for the position on offer, please write a brief note (not exceeding 2 A4 pages) on your vision for the role. In your commentary please cover the qualities and attributes you feel you will bring to the role to realise this vision.

3. CAREER PATH – EXPERIENCE RELEVANT TO THE POST ON OFFER

From your employment record to date, state briefly the experience you already have which would be most relevant to the position.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please outline (in not more than 2 A4 pages) what you would expect to achieve in this role and how your career to-date supports your belief that you can deliver that outcome.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Secretary General

1. PERSONAL DETAILS		
Forenames	Surname (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.)	
Home Address		
Home Telephone No.	Work Tel. No.	Email:
Current Department		Current Grade

2. EDUCATION & TRAINING HISTORY			
Examining Body	Year / Date	Courses Studied Give examination results with grades and dates	
Language Skills:	Ability Level (tick as appropriate)		
	Fluent	Moderate	Elementary
1. Irish			
2. French			
3. Other (specify)			
4. Other (specify)			

Additional Information [in relation to education/training]

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Include any information relevant to progression in the Civil Service.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Secretary General

1. YOUR SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

This document gives you an opportunity to detail some of your skills, qualities and values in areas that will be important should you be successful in promotion to the next level of management. It will also give you greater insight into the demands of the role.

Your responses may be utilised at the interview stage in any application for promotion.

1.1 Professional Integrity

What do you consider are the key values that you bring to your role?

1.2 Establishing Vision and Purpose

Give an overview of your experience in contributing to the establishment of a Vision and Purpose in the Organisation.

What was your specific role?

What was the outcome?

1.3 Environmental Awareness

Give an example of an occasion where you have had to utilise a very wide knowledge base in order to inform the direction you/your team should take?

What was your specific contribution?

What was the outcome?

1.4 Managing for Results

Please give a specific example of when you have been involved in managing a complex system in the pursuit of objectives

What was your role / contribution?

What was the outcome?

1.5 Judgement and Systemic Perspective

Please give an example which illustrates your approach to making important judgements in a complex context. What was the situation? How did you go about the task? What was the outcome?

1.6 Managing Relationships

Please give an overview of your values and approach to develop relationships with stakeholders critical to your role.

Please give an example of an occasion when you worked very successfully to build a relationship with others in order to achieve mutual objectives?

1.7 Steering through the Political Environment

Give an example which demonstrates the effectiveness of your approach to working within the political process.

What particular challenges did you face?

1.8 Providing Developmental Leadership

Give an example which demonstrates your ability to lead others effectively?

Who was involved and what steps did you take?

What was the outcome?

1.9 Drive and Accountability

Give an example which illustrates your personal commitment to your role?

1.10 Communication

Give an example which demonstrates your skills in getting your message across to a group of people in a multi-disciplinary setting.

What factors did you take into account?

What was the outcome?

1.11 Statement of Readiness for Promotion to Secretary General Level

Give one or two examples which in your opinion illustrates your readiness to make the step up to Secretary General Level.

2. RANKING YOUR SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Thank you for completing this section. In the Table below please rank your skills (from 1-10) in terms of the qualities/skills which you feel that you will bring to the role of Secretary General (they are listed in random order in the Table below). Rank order your skills/qualities as they currently are, rather than those you think are required for the particular position.

Qualities	Rank
Professional Integrity	
Establishing Vision and Purpose	
Environmental Awareness	
Managing for Results	
Judgement and Systemic Perspective	
Managing Relationships	
Steering through the Political Environment	
Providing Developmental Leadership	
Drive and Accountability	
Communication	

ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATE BY IMMEDIATE MANAGER

Top Level Appointments
Committee
Secretary General

1. RELATIONSHIP BACKGROUND

Name of Candidate

How long have you been the immediate manager of the candidate?

Years

Months

How often do you interact with the candidate on an official level?

Daily

2/3 Times a week

Weekly

Other (Please state).

2. EVALUATING YOUR DIRECT REPORT - GUIDELINES

Please read the candidate's self assessment form.

On the following pages you will be asked to evaluate and rate the candidate on the ten core competencies critical to the role of Secretary General, using a 1 to 5 scale as follows:

1. = Excellent Performance

Candidate is in the top 10% of managers at peer level;
Has exceptional strength and could act as a role model.

2. = Superior Performance

Candidate is in the top 30% of managers at peer level;
This is an area of distinctive strength.

3. = Acceptable Standard

Candidate's skill level is comparable to his/her peers at
this grade.

4. = Needs Development

Candidate is in the lower 30% of managers at peer level.
He/she has significant weaknesses or uneven aspects to
performance.

5. = Poor Performance

Candidate is in the lower 10% of managers at peer level
or there is little evidence of competence.

3. THE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF YOUR DIRECT REPORT

This document gives you an opportunity to detail some of the skills, qualities and values of the applicant in areas that are important for the role of Secretary General. Please rate the candidate on the areas indicated below recording key comments as appropriate.

Professional Integrity Rating

1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adheres to and promotes values and an ethical approach in keeping with the mission of the Civil Service Demonstrates a consistently high level of personal commitment to corporate objective Strongly promotes and advocates the positive values underpinning public service work Is a role model for others in consistent commitment to an excellent standard in the implementation of policies and programmes Acts as a role model and counsels other staff on the ethical aspects of civil service work 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adheres to the values of the Civil Service Will work hard to ensure programmes within the corporate framework are successful Shows a strong commitment to the values and principles underpinning public service work Committed to delivery at a consistently professional level in the implementation of policies and programmes Is generally aware of and deals capably with the ethical aspects of civil service work 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows little understanding or interest in the principles and values of the Civil Service Is perceived as lacking objectivity or commitment to corporate objectives Is inconsistent in his/her treatment of issues Shows little overt commitment to the values and principles underpinning public service work Is inconsistent in the level of personal commitment to implementing policies and programmes Perceived as paying little attention to ethical aspects of civil service work

Comments (please summarise the key reasons for this rating).

Establishing Vision & Purpose

Rating

1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes and communicates a clear vision in line with Government policy throughout the department Converts this vision into practical terms which secures buy-in of staff at all levels Conveys meaningful objectives and ensures that departmental structures and systems are aligned to deliver on these objectives Has established a distinctive and clear vision and purpose within his/her area of responsibility Keeps this vision alive and vibrant by regular communications with staff at all levels Puts a personal stamp on the strategy statement for their area and clearly links it to the various business plans Proactively addresses structural and resourcing issues to ensure that they are fully aligned with key objectives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to the shaping of a vision but primarily from perspective of own brief Is efficient at making that vision operational under stewardship of Head of Department and the head will endeavour to follow through in order that all staff understand Makes a good contribution to defining both the vision and purpose underlying the contributions of their area of responsibility Ensures that staff are generally aware of the vision and main purpose and kept well briefed Clearly links the strategy statement and business plans in a way that staff can understand Works to ensure that resources and structures are organised to support the main priorities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not make a significant contribution to the shape of the department's vision and strategy Keeps vision and purpose of the department at a theoretical level without seeking buy-in from staff Does not define the vision and purpose of their own area of the department in a distinctive way Doesn't make clear links between strategy statements and business plans Does not address any changes to structures and systems which may help to deliver on key objectives

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Environmental Awareness		Rating <input type="text"/>		
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a broad overview of policy issues across the department and the wider Civil Service • Actively contributes to discussion of issues across the department and the wider civil service • Scans the environment and anticipates how future policies, practices and issues could impact on the department • Looks forward, taking a longer term view in order to anticipate development in their own areas of responsibility. Proactively establishes options and positions in anticipation of events • Is constantly engaged in evaluating and applying emerging trends and best practise in appropriate and relevant areas. Seeks to learn from the experience of other organisations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows a moderately broad perspective and a wide knowledge base on issues outside own brief • Is open and supportive in discussion of policy issues across the department and the wider Civil Service • Scans the environment and uses this information on occasions to anticipate how future policies, practices and issue could impact on the department • Works to anticipate trends and events in their areas of responsibility and develops an early response set • Shows evidence of having learned from experience and events elsewhere. Some evidence of applying models of good practise 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not demonstrate sufficient interest or strategic perspective on issues outside own brief. • Focuses on a narrow range of issues specific to his/her own area • Does not anticipate how future policies, practices and issues could impact on the department. Is reactive to issues arising despite evidence of early warning signs • Anticipates some trends or issues that are emerging in their area of responsibility but without initiating a response in good time • Tends to persevere with current practise and procedures with less consideration of developments elsewhere

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Managing for Results		Rating <input type="text"/>		
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a strong bias towards effective action Translates strategies and business plans into prioritised objectives and specific work plans Has a track record of overseeing major business plan delivery to the highest standards and on time and budget Proactively shifts resources to ensure maximum productivity in business plan delivery. Is creative in this regard Operates a robust work tracking and evaluation process to ensure both delivery and value for money Intervenes assertively when major work plans go off track and ensures that managers take appropriate remedial action on a timely basis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willing to work effectively towards goals Ensures that business plans are clearly broken down into key objectives and defined work plans Has delivered major work plans within an appropriate time and quality standard Generally allocates resources to meet the main business plan delivery demands. Looks for efficiencies opportunistically Tracks major work plan delivery in a systematic way. Encourages efficiency and productivity in doing this Looks to address significant work problems in a constructive and timely way 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't convert business plans into clear work plans. Presides over a mainly reactive style of activity management Has had difficulties delivering major work plans to time or quality standards Allocates resources on a steady state basis. Looks for extra resources without challenging current work allocations Looks for managers to report in on progress and is less focussed on efficiency and productivity Is slow to address work problems and under performances. May be too slow to spot and respond to work analysis
<p>Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).</p>				

Judgement and Systemic Perspective		Rating <input type="text"/>		
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a systemic thinking overview of issues and evaluates them comprehensively in the context of the broader socio-political and legal environment • Will develop a number of options and is open to innovative approaches when tracking issues • Has an excellent track record of making sound decisions/ recommendations • Makes the link between seemingly unrelated issues and builds a “big picture” understanding of complex issues which aids effective decision making • Takes a systemic approach to complex issues and identifies the consequential and knock-on effects from taking specific actions • Commits to a decision or recommendation on a complex issue after balanced consideration of the alternatives and options available 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is relatively systematic in the approach taken to an issue and places most decisions in the context of the relevant political and legal environment • Has made a number of innovative decisions and Recommendations which proved successful • Sees the need to take an overview approach to complex issues and to frame them within the broader socio-political context • Sees how separate issues may be linked and looks to identify the higher order principle • Has anticipated the consequences of particular courses of action including unintended or adverse outcomes • Will make a decision or recommendation in a situation of ambiguity after teasing out the issues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncomfortable assimilating information from a wide number of sources, preferring to focus on information within the department. Has made relatively few innovative recommendations or decisions on issues. • Takes a too simple or direct an approach to complex issues • Fails to see the links between different issues. Tends to tackle issues on a one by one basis without looking for linkages • Does not spot the potential knock on consequences of decisions • Is liable to avoid making a recommendation and decision in a complex situation where there isn't full information
<p>Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).</p>				

Managing Relationships

Rating

1	2	3	3	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds the team and is proactive at developing relationships and networking with others both within and outside the organisation Excels in building, cultivating and maintaining a strong network both external to and within the civil service Proactively contacts and seeks to build positive working relationships with key stakeholder groups. Looks to fully understand their agenda and anticipate it Ensures that he/she promotes and communicates the Department's views by regular contact and exchange with stakeholder groups Proactively offers and receives support from colleagues at a senior level. Seeks to build common cause and alliances with other sectors and departments. Leads sensitive interdepartmental groups to a successful outcome Has managed critical and difficult negotiation situations with fact and fairness as appropriate and achieved excellent outcomes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived as a team player and is skilled at relating with others Builds up a reasonably strong network of contacts both external to and within the civil service Has worked well with key stakeholder groups, showing a good understanding of their position and agenda Has communicated the Department's views successfully to stakeholder groups using informal and formal channels Is approached by colleagues for support and advice. Has formed positive alliances across sectors and departments Has contributed to and led interdepartmental groups with a good level of tact and sensitivity Has managed difficult situations and conflict and come to a reasonably successful resolution of the issues involved 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a team player and less effective in dealing with people within and outside the service Has a limited network and may not cultivate contacts outside the service Tends to be reactive to stakeholder groups rather than building contact. May not see things from their view or anticipate their position Has had limited success in communicating the Department view on issues to stakeholders, particularly at an informal level Rarely approached by colleagues for advice or support outside of the reporting relationships Has had limited success or experience in leading interdepartmental groups. Has had limited or no real success in handling difficult negotiations or conflict situations

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Steering through the Political Environment Rating

1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good understanding of the political process • Shows excellent anticipation in identifying where sensitive issues may arise and plans his/her approach appropriately. Regularly gives guidance to staff on these issues • Represents the Department or service view with high integrity while still working to find an acceptable outcome where tensions arise • Excels in laying out the framework of discretion and accountability for the Minister in a positive manner. Provides guidance in a tactful well judged but assertive way • Identifies ways to resolve situations of conflict and tension and achieve win:win outcome 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a good understanding of the political process • Often identifies where sensitive issues may arise. Shapes his/her approach accordingly and also guides other staff as appropriate • Presents the department or service view with integrity and works to find an appropriate solution or outcome • Assists the Minister in clarifying discretion and accountability issues in a complex situation. Provides guidance in a tactful but clear way. • Has been able to help find a solution to situations where a potential conflict or tension has emerged 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a more limited sense of the political process and tends to take a one sided view of issues that may arise • Does not usually anticipate in good time where sensitive issues may arise. May still wait to form a response after the situation breaks • Does not present the department or service view in a clear or open manner. May give an opinion without looking to help take things forward from it • Is quite hands off in advising the Minister in discretion and accountability issues. Is not decisive and does not give a clear message • Generally avoids situations where conflict or tension emerges. May look to others to facilitate or find a solution

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Providing Developmental Leadership		Rating <input type="text"/>		
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invests considerable effort into shaping the culture and working ethos in the Department • Motivates the team to achieve ambitious targets • Builds the potential of the team and mentors staff • Has developed an excellent “esprit de corps” in their own division and area of responsibility. There is a distinctive atmosphere • Has built up a positive culture with a strong “can do” attitude in his/her own area. • Ensures that his/her team get recognised for their achievement. Shares the recognition and frequently gives positive feedback to staff • Has achieved a high collaboration and contribution ethos within his/her area. Staff at all levels contribute to planning and work development. He/she regularly looks for feedback. • Spends a lot of time guiding and shaping the development of his/her staff and the management team • Proactively leads his/her team in the implementation of organisational reforms, such as those arising from SMI 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in shaping the culture and working ethos in the Department • Sets reasonably stretching targets for the division and his/her management group • Is concerned with developing staff and will invest some effort to aid their performance • Puts his/her stamp on the division and builds a good sense of purpose and contribution • Leads by example in promoting a positive “can do” attitude within area of responsibility. Staff are generally motivated and work well • Gives positive feedback and recognition to staff. Manages the boundaries with other area and shares credit as appropriate • Works to ensure that there is a participatory ethos within the division. Encourages a contribution from all levels. Is open to staff feedback and views • Identifies staff with potential and looks to delegate stretching work. Gives feedback to managers • Shows a positive approach to implementation of organisational reforms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not very interested in the culture of the Department or making any changes to it • Does not set demanding targets and personal objectives • Less interested in motivating the team • Is a little too self effacing and diffident or may be too wrapped up in own work to consciously build a distinct identity for the division • May be too cautious or even equivocal about building a strong positive execution culture. No notable positive morale features across the staff group • May be more inclined to manage by exception and note negative aspects of work performance. May not ensure that staff are recognised and supported • Has a less inclusive and empowering management style. Tends to work in a top down manner and seek understanding and compliance rather than original contributions from staff at different levels. • Sees staff development as primarily a training department responsibility. • Does not tend to lead in the implementation of organisational reforms
<p>Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).</p>				

Drive and Accountability Rating

1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positively embraces accountability for the performance of own areas and will seek to add to brief • Relishes leading and taking responsibility for decisions and representing these confidently to others • Positively steps forward in terms of taking personal responsibility for the performance of their areas of responsibility both positive and negative • Relishes taking responsibility for leading on critical issues and will not shirk from demanding briefs. • Engages positively with particularly difficult issues, showing calmness and resilience under pressure. Is looked to as a reference point and anchor in a crisis • Carries a high workload demand and intensity and still performs and executes to a consistently excellent standard 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is willing to take accountability for the performance of own area • Takes a positive and confident approach to carrying responsibilities • Maintains performance under pressure • Takes responsibility for the performance of their area and is comfortable representing this to others • Is comfortable taking the lead on significant issues and will take on difficult briefs with a positive outlook • Manages difficult and demanding issues with a reasonable degree of composure and discipline. Keeps things on track • Generally copes positively with a significant workload and performs reliably under pressure 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not comfortable with aspects of accountability in the role • Is less confident or enthusiastic about the responsibilities of their role • Is less inclined to take personal responsibility for the performance of their area when there are significant constraints or difficulties. Deflects responsibility down the system • Reluctant to take on extra demands or to engage positively with a very difficult brief. Keeps head down at times. • Tends to become less composed or coherent under significantly pressurising situations. Is not seen as a leader in crisis situations. • Performance may fluctuate under workload demand or may be inconsistent under situational pressures.

Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).

Communication		Rating <input type="text"/>		
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects high levels of personal credibility and expertise to others Has successfully represented the department at significant media and stakeholder briefings. Projected high levels of credibility and expertise in doing this Excels in presenting information in a well structured, focussed, high-impact manner Excels at dealing with issues and handling questions on his/her feet. Checks meaning and clarity and gives concise and appropriate responses Uses information in a targeted way and shapes communication strategies to achieve maximum impact on critical issues Has excelled in making an influential case to senior stakeholders on complex or difficult issues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays personal credibility and expertise to others Has conducted press and stakeholder briefings successfully. Has projected an image of credibility and mastery of the subject in doing so Comfortable and competent in delivering information in a clear and well structured manner Is competent at handling questions and issues on his/her feet. Ensures that the queries are understood and clearly responded to Marshals information well and prepares a communication strategy for significant issues Makes a credible and influential case to senior stakeholders on a frequent basis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not display personal credibility and expertise to others Is less comfortable leading press or stakeholder briefings. May come across as unsure or defensive. May not project a credible or masterful image Delivers information in a way which lacks impact, either at a rational or emotional level. May lack structure or incisiveness in presentation style Less comfortable handling inpromptu or unexpected questions or queries. Not so quick on his/her feet. Doesn't check understanding of the query intent fully Tends to be reactive in shaping communication on issues. Presents factually rather than tactically Lacks rational and emotional impact when making a case to others. The case may fail due to lack of personal impact in communication
<p>Comments (please summarise key information to validate rating).</p>				

4. OVERALL EVALUATION

Which of the following best expresses your judgement of the officer's career potential.

1. He/she is clearly ready for promotion to Assistant Secretary. Such promotion is the next most appropriate career move.
2. Makes a strong contribution and shows the potential to work at Secretary General Level in the future.
3. Is unlikely to be ready for promotion within the next three years.

Name of immediate manager: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 3

**FORMS TO BE COMPLETED BY HEADS OF
DEPARTMENT/OFFICE IN RELATION TO
APPLICATIONS TO TLAC BY MEMBERS OF
THEIR STAFF**

FORM FOR COMPLETION BY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/OFFICE

Top Level Appointments
Committee

CANDIDATE DETAILS

Forenames

Surname (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.,)

Department or Office

ASSESSMENT BY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OR OFFICE

Do you agree with the assessment of the candidate's immediate superior, which has been submitted to you?

Yes No

If the answer was "No", please give your overall evaluation of the candidate and specify, in concise terms, the main reasons for your opinion

Please indicate here any other relevant information.

Name of Head of Department/Office _____ Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 4

RATING GUIDE FOR TLAC

Rating Guide for TLAC

Candidate Name	Leadership 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Judgement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Managing Relationships 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Personal Drive for Results 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Suitability for Particular Post. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Note: While these rating dimensions will be used as a guide by TLAC, the Committee’s principal focus is on identifying the candidate or candidates, depending on the level of post involved, that best matches the requirements of the post to be filled. It will not therefore be constrained by any exact arithmetical formula and may, for example, wish to give greater weight to certain competencies, depending on the post to be filled.

