

FOI Request (received 04 October 2024) - Reference: DFI/2024-0425

With regards to the SPTO competition IRC297090:

1. Please develop and expand on this response and give me more details as to how the merit order is decided upon, how the business needs are decided upon and what the business needs were for each SPTO post within Dfl Consultancy Services filled by successful candidates from the competition.
2. Was the merit order altered or were the business needs altered according to the qualifications or ability of the successful candidates to act as Principal Designers Category B or Principal Designers Category A as per DA14 from Dfl's Health and Safety Management System or for the successful candidates to be chartered? If so, what is the reason for this requirement that the candidates have these qualifications and/or ability to act as Principal Designers and/or be Chartered?
3. Please provide me with the documents which evidence the analysis behind the decisions on what were the business needs for the SPTO posts in Dfl Consultancy Services filled by successful candidates from the competition.
4. Were there any requests made to alter or attempts to influence the business needs OR the merit order to ensure successful candidates who could NOT act as Principal Designers on category A or B schemes as per DA14 from Dfl's Health and Safety Management System OR did not have sufficient qualifications (as per DA14) or experience (as per DA14) for certain posts were excluded from certain posts or were not matched up with certain posts? If so, what were the requests/attempts and how was this carried out and why?"

Response (issued 31 October 2024)

Thank you for your letter/email dated 4th October 2024 requesting, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), the following information held by the Department:

With regards to the SPTO competition IRC297090:

1. *Please develop and expand on this response and give me more details as to how the merit order is decided upon, how the business needs are decided upon and what the business needs were for each SPTO post within Dfl Consultancy Services filled by successful candidates from the competition.*

2. *Was the merit order altered or were the business needs altered according to the qualifications or ability of the successful candidates to act as Principal Designers Category B or Principal Designers Category A as per DA14 from Dfl's Health and Safety Management System or for the successful candidates to be chartered? If so, what is the reason for this requirement that the candidates have these qualifications and/or ability to act as Principal Designers and/or be Chartered?*
3. *Please provide me with the documents which evidence the analysis behind the decisions on what were the business needs for the SPTO posts in Dfl Consultancy Services filled by successful candidates from the competition.*
4. *Were there any requests made to alter or attempts to influence the business needs OR the merit order to ensure successful candidates who could NOT act as Principal Designers on category A or B schemes as per DA14 from Dfl's Health and Safety Management System OR did not have sufficient qualifications (as per DA14) or experience (as per DA14) for certain posts were excluded from certain posts or were not matched up with certain posts? If so, what were the requests/attempts and how was this carried out and why?"*

In response to your request, I can confirm that the Department does hold information relating to your request and being suitable for disclosure, The responses to your questions are as follows:

1. At the time of competition IRC297090, the Transport and Road Asset Management (TRAM) Group had a total of 49 vacant SPTO positions. All were deemed as critical vacancies by the respective Directors and therefore all 49 positions, including the 9 in Consultancy Services, were allocated candidates from the merit list of 66 initially provided by HR Connect. The remaining candidates were allocated to the Water and Department Delivery (WADD) Group which includes Rivers. As far as is possible, staff are allocated to posts which are geographically convenient to their home address. Consideration is given to the skills and experience that an individual may have, for example those with flood risk management experience are generally allocated to Rivers. Professionally Qualified staff are generally allocated to those posts which require those skills.
2. The merit order was not altered nor were the business needs altered according to the qualifications or ability of the successful candidates. As all 66 names were allocated to positions at the same time this ensured that the merit order was preserved.
3. No such document is held.

4. The allocation of staff to suitable posts is outlined in the answer to question 1. An initial allocation list is considered by the Director of Engineering, as Head of Profession for Civil Engineering. This is subsequently discussed with other Directors, before it is finalised.

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