

**Candidate**

**Information**

**Booklet**

**Executive Director**

**Funding, Performance**

**and Construction**

**Closing Date: 23 July 2026**



## Position

Executive Director - Funding, Performance and Construction

## Office

SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority

## Location

The headquarters of SOLAS are currently based in Castleforbes House, Dublin 1.

## Tenure

Permanent

## WHO WE ARE

SOLAS is the state agency responsible for Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland. Working with the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and other bodies, we drive the responsiveness, innovation, transformation, sustainability, and success of the FET and apprenticeship systems. We do this by setting strategy, channelling investment, leading implementation, and ensuring accountability across FET providers, with an overriding focus on the needs of their learners and apprentices.

Established in 2013 under the Further Education and Training Act, SOLAS is an agency of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), governed by a Board, and have been tasked to build an integrated FET sector to respond to the needs of learners, society, and the economy.

Our mission is to fund, co-ordinate, and monitor a range of FET provision to support economic and social wellbeing, while simultaneously playing its part in influencing and supporting the development of a FET sector.

## Objectives

The vision in the current further education and training strategy '[Creating Futures](#)' is that "Further education and training in Ireland is at the heart of a thriving, inclusive economy and society, creating opportunities for people through career development, upskilling, and lifelong learning."

The strategy sets out four strategic objectives aimed at delivering economic prosperity and social inclusion: (a) Future-Ready Knowledge and Skills, (b) Inclusion for Prosperity and Cohesion, (c) Quality with Innovation and, (d) Collaborating for Impact.

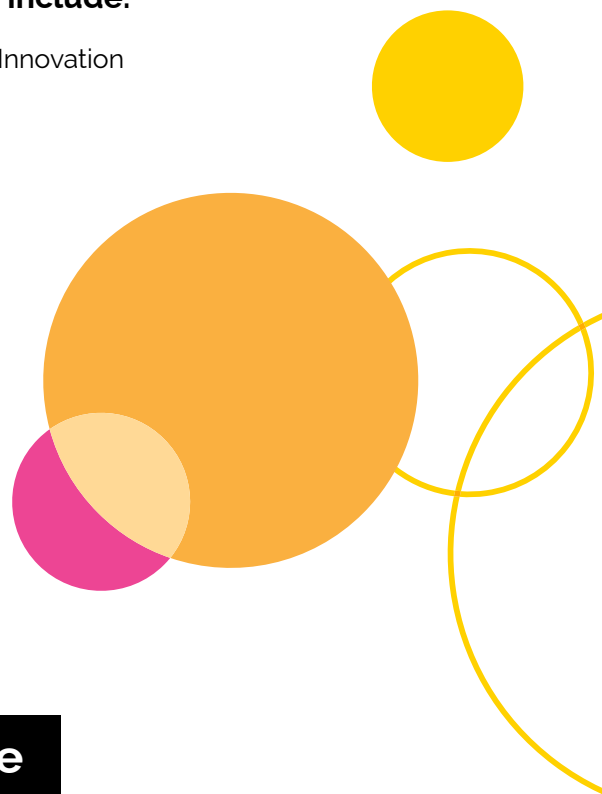
SOLAS has a statutory responsibility to oversee and support the ETBs and other providers, ensuring relevant functions are performed in an economic, efficient, and effective manner. The general functions, as set out in the Further Education and Training Act (2013), include:

- Lead the preparation, submission, and implementation of the FET Strategy for delivery to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, ensuring it is responsive to Ireland's evolving needs.
- Promote the value and impact of the FET sector, both nationally and internationally, highlighting its role in lifelong learning, skills development, and social inclusion.
- Coordinate, fund, and support Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and other organisations involved in delivering further education and training, fostering collaboration across the wider FET system.
- Consult and engage with Ministers, government departments, and public bodies—including Education, Social Protection, Public Expenditure, and Enterprise—to set and review priorities for the FET sector. Champion equality of opportunity and advance social inclusion within the FET sector and in the wider community.
- Oversee and contribute to the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of all FET programmes, ensuring quality, relevance, and continuous improvement.
- Support and enable continuous professional learning and development for everyone involved in delivering FET, nurturing a culture of excellence and innovation.
- Deliver and share relevant research, data analysis, and knowledge management to inform the future direction of the FET sector and benefit all those impacted by FET.

See <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2013/en/act/pub/0025/index.html> for the full Further Education and Training Act 2013.

## Along with the SOLAS Board, primary stakeholders include:

- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science;
- Education and Training Boards;
- Learners;
- Enterprise and Enterprise Agencies;
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland;
- Department of Education and Youth;
- Department of Social Protection;
- Relevant agencies (including Aontas, National Adult Literacy Agency, AHEAD etc).



## About the Executive Director Role

### Principal Duties

The Executive Director will have responsibility for the Funding, Performance and Construction Division in SOLAS and, as a member of the executive leadership team, will also contribute to the effective management of the whole organisation, and the successful delivery of the further education and training strategy and other relevant strategies and policies.

The position ensures public finances provides pathways to careers and further study for people of all ages and backgrounds across Ireland and enhances capital infrastructure across the country's further education and training system.

The successful candidate will be responsible for the strategic oversight, allocation and performance assurance for over €1 billion in annual funding. This includes overseeing the annual funding process and the advancement of the FET funding model, ensuring good governance, overseeing financial management and reporting, risk management, meeting statutory and regulatory obligations, implementing policy, and ensuring value for money in the use of public funds.

The position requires strong strategic leadership and the capacity to drive key initiatives, particularly in relation to the delivery of the FET capital programme and the establishment of the new construction licensing authority.

The successful candidate will contribute to the development and assessment of oversight and performance agreements with Education and Training Boards and other providers, reporting on performance and impact and proactively identifying and progressing priorities for system development.

The successful candidate will bring senior level experience from the public or private sector and will have the ability to develop and sustain productive working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, operating with authority and credibility in a complex environment.

## Responsibilities

### 1. Strategy and Leadership

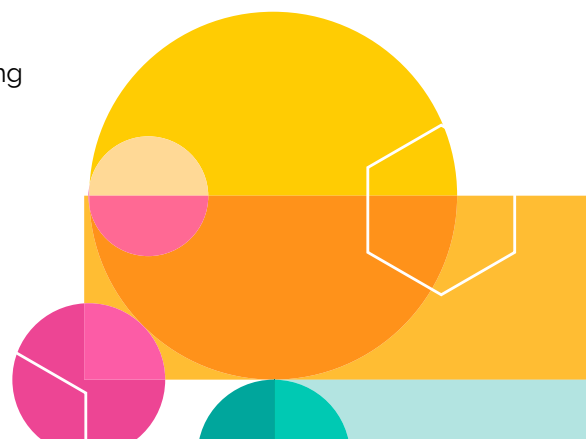
- As part of the executive leadership team, lead the development and implementation of the further education and training strategy.
- Lead the development and delivery of integrated strategic, financial, capital and organisational plans, supported by robust risk management and performance frameworks.

### 2. Organisational Leadership, People and Culture

- Work as part of the executive leadership team to support workforce development and performance management, strengthening organisational capability and capacity to deliver on SOLAS's statutory remit.
- Lead and support managers and staff to innovate and work collaboratively, while embedding a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and high-performance delivery across SOLAS.
- Lead and support the implementation of recommendations in the [2025 Periodic Critical Review of SOLAS](#).

### 3. Funding Allocations

- Lead the strategic planning, allocation, and statutory governance of Ireland's €1+ billion Exchequer and National Training Fund (NTF) budgets.
- Continue the implementation of a sustainable funding model aligned to the strategic objectives for the sector.
- Direct the funding framework and accountability mechanisms for Ireland's 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and other funded bodies.
- Lead on the development of system-level evaluation and impact assessment to measure long-term economic, social, and environmental returns on investment.
- Act as the primary funding authority responsible for briefing the SOLAS Board, its Audit and Risk Committee, and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).



#### **4. Delivering the Capital Programme**

- Lead the strategic development and delivery of the FET capital infrastructure programme, ensuring alignment with national housing, infrastructure and climate objectives.
- Be accountable for the delivery of multi-annual programmes and projects, ensuring delivery within approved timeframes and budgets.
- Work effectively with the DFHERIS, Grangegorman Development Agency and Education and Training Boards to ensure that capital projects are delivered.
- Oversee the development and implementation of a long-term Estate Management model for the FET sector, including governance, funding, and operational arrangements across all stakeholders.
- Support the implementation of the decarbonisation strategy through relevant capital initiatives in particular.
- Ensure compliance with the Infrastructure Guidelines, procurement directives and other relevant requirements.
- Lead on the management of the Specialist Equipment Grant.

#### **5. Construction, Training and Skills**

- Oversee Safe Pass, Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and Quarry Skills Certification Scheme operations and establishment of the Construction Licensing Authority for construction training which will be hosted in SOLAS.
- Oversee delivery of key actions from Housing for All, the Climate Action Plan and Skills for Zero Carbon and working with the Executive Leadership team to position FET as a key delivery partner in addressing Ireland's construction needs.
- Lead system-wide planning for construction and infrastructure skills, including workforce forecasting and collaboration with industry and Government partners to meet national targets.

#### **6. Digital Transformation**

- Contribute to the development of a digitally enabled and agile organisation, including the adoption of systems, data capabilities, and innovation in project delivery and organisational management.
- Work collaboratively with Education and Training Boards and Education and Shared Business Services on joint projects to improve budget and financial management.

## 7. Stakeholder Engagement, Influence and Communication

- Represent SOLAS at various fora regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Lead on negotiations and engagements on behalf of SOLAS and the FET sector.
- Support a culture of collaboration across the system to deliver on the strategic objectives for FET.

**Please note: The above is a general guide to the key duties and responsibilities of the role and is not an exhaustive description. Other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the role may also be assigned from time to time.**

## Candidate Requirements

Candidates must on the latest date for receipt of completed applications have the following:

### 1. Personal Attributes and Qualifications

- A recognised third level qualification (minimum Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications) or equivalent, in a relevant discipline; a postgraduate or professional qualification is desirable.
- Sound judgement, high integrity, and a demonstrated ability to make evidence-based decisions under pressure.

### 2. Strategic Leadership and Experience

- A proven senior leadership career record in the public or private sector that demonstrates the necessary leadership, management capability, and strong interpersonal skills.
- Significant senior leadership experience working in complex organisations and operating environments.
- Proven ability to develop, communicate, and deliver strategies that support the long-term vision and objectives for a complex organisation or sector.

### 3. Funding and Performance

- Strong financial stewardship experience, including responsibility for significant budgets, financial control, audit, risk management, and assurance frameworks.
- Experience in strategic management of funding, including development of funding approaches and models.
- Managing relationships and financial allocations with associated public sector bodies.
- Experience of performance and impact assessment.

### 4. Governance, Risk & Accountability

- A strong understanding of public service administrative, financial, and governance procedures.
- Senior experience in public sector governance, including a clear understanding of State Body accountability, Ministerial oversight, and engagement with Government Departments and public sector bodies.
- Proven ability to identify, manage, and mitigate risks effectively.

### 5. Stakeholder Engagement, Influence and Communication

- Excellent communication, influence, and negotiation skills, with the ability to build effective relationships internally and externally with a range of stakeholders.
- Ability to foster a collaborative working relationship between a team and key stakeholders.

### 6. Key Competencies for Effective Performance

- The attention of candidates is drawn to the key competencies that have been developed for use for posts at this level [TLAC Assistant Secretary Level.pdf](#)



# Principal Conditions of Service

## General

Recruitment will be carried out in line with the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) Code of Practice for the Appointment to positions in the Civil and Public Service.

## Probation

A probationary period of nine months applies to this role.

## Remuneration

The rate of total remuneration for the post of Executive Director (effective 01 June 2026) is as follows: Personal pension contribution (PPC) rate: at Grade 03X from €171,517 per annum. This rate will apply where the appointee is newly recruited to the civil or public service or is an existing civil or public servant appointed on or after 6th April 1995 and is required to make a personal pension contribution.

A different rate may apply where the appointee is a civil or public servant recruited before 6th April 1995 and who is not required to make a personal pension contribution.

## Tenure

Permanent

## Location

The headquarters of SOLAS are currently based in Castleforbes House, Dublin 1.

## Hours of Attendance

Hours of attendance will be fixed from time to time but will amount to not less than 35 hours per week, excluding lunch breaks. The successful candidate will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of their duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations. The rate of remuneration payable covers any extra attendance liability that may arise from time to time.

## Annual Leave

In addition to the usual public holidays, the annual leave for this position is 30 working days.

## Sick Leave

Pay during properly certified sick absence, will be in accordance with relevant SOLAS policies and the requirements of the Public Service Sick Leave Scheme.

## Superannuation and Retirement

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the public service, at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, this means being offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme"). Full details of the Single Scheme can be found at <http://www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie/>. The maximum retirement age for most Single Scheme members is age 70. Different terms and conditions related to superannuation and retirement may apply to candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-Single Scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment, or is currently on a career break, or is on special leave with or without pay. The pension entitlements and maximum retirement age, if applicable, of such appointees will be determined in the context of their public service employment history.

## Important Notice

Candidates should note that different terms and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the appointee is already a serving civil or public servant. The above outlines the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

# Eligibility to Compete and Certain Restrictions

## Citizenship

Candidates should note that eligibility to compete for posts is confined to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) or to non-EEA nationals with a valid work permit. The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Swiss citizens under EU agreements may also apply.

## Certain Restrictions on Eligibility

Eligibility to compete may be affected where applicants were formerly employed by a Public Sector body and previously availed of a Public Service Redundancy or Incentivised Retirement Scheme including:

- **Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)**
- **Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)**
- **Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular (Letter LG (P) 06/2013)**
- **Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to the Public Service**

## Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/2009 that retirees, under that Scheme, are debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

## Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider public service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.

## **Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG (P) 06/2013)**

The department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG (P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the Collective Agreement: "Redundancy Payments to Public Servants", dated 28 June 2012, as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER scheme that persons will not be eligible for re-employment in any Public Sector body, as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. Thereafter, the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation will be required prior to re-employment. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor).

### **Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants**

The Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation letter dated 28th June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the public service by any public service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. Thereafter the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation will be required prior to re-employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility) and the Minister's consent will have to be secured prior to employment by any public service body.

## **Declaration**

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a Public Service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.



## Additional Superannuation Contribution

This appointment is subject to the Additional Superannuation Contribution **(ASC)** in accordance with the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017

## Pension Accrual

The Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012 introduced a **40-year limit on total service** that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one pre-existing public service pension scheme. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

## Pension Abatement

If the appointee has previously been employed in the Civil or Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during their re-employment that pension will be subject to **abatement** in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

**Please note: In applying for this position, you are acknowledging that you understand that the abatement provisions, where relevant, will apply. It is not envisaged that the employing body will support an application for an abatement waiver in respect of appointments to this position.**

However, if the appointee was previously employed in the Civil or Public Service and awarded a pension under voluntary early retirement arrangements (other than the Incentivised Scheme of Early Retirement (ISER), the Department of Health Circular 7/2010 VER/VRS or the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular letter LG(P) 06/2013, any of which renders a person ineligible for the competition) the entitlement to that pension will cease with effect from the date of reappointment. Special arrangements may, however be made for the reckoning of previous service given by the appointee for the purpose of any future superannuation award for which the appointee may be eligible.

## Department of Education and Skills Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers Circular 102/2007

The Department of Education and Skills introduced an Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers. It is a condition of the Early Retirement Scheme that, with the exception of the situations set out in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 of the relevant circular documentation and with those exceptions only, if a teacher accepts early retirement under Strands 1, 2 or 3 of this scheme and is subsequently employed in any capacity in any area of the public sector, payment of pension to that person under the scheme will immediately cease. Pension payments will, however, be resumed on the ceasing of such employment or on the person's 60th birthday, whichever is the later, but on resumption, the pension will be based on the person's actual reckonable service as a teacher (i.e. the added years previously granted will not be taken into account in the calculation of the pension payment).



## Ill-Health-Retirement

Please note that where an individual has retired from a Civil/Public Service body on the grounds of ill-health their pension from that employment may be subject to review in accordance with the rules of ill-health retirement within the pension scheme of that employment.

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

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate(s).

## The Selection Process

*Note: Lansdowne Executive Search have been appointed to administer this competition on behalf of SOLAS.*

### How to Apply

To apply, please email Seán McDonagh, Partner, Lansdowne Executive Search Limited at [sean.mcdonagh@lansdownesearch.ie](mailto:sean.mcdonagh@lansdownesearch.ie) or for a confidential discussion please call Seán on +353 87 796 1062.

### What is Required?

You are required to submit:

- i) A short cover letter/personal statement (i.e.no more than 2 pages) outlining why you wish to be considered for the post and where you believe your skills, experience and values meet the requirements of the role.

**and**

- ii) A comprehensive CV, including an organisation chart (See Senior Executive CV Guidance note [here](#)).

Only applications submitted online by the closing date will be accepted. It is your responsibility to ensure all documents are included in your application for it to be considered. Please note that omission of any or part of the requested application documentation will render the application incomplete.

If you feel you would benefit from a confidential discussion about any aspect of this opportunity or if you require assistance or reasonable accommodation during the recruitment process please email [sean.mcdonagh@lansdownesearch.ie](mailto:sean.mcdonagh@lansdownesearch.ie)

The Selection Process may include:

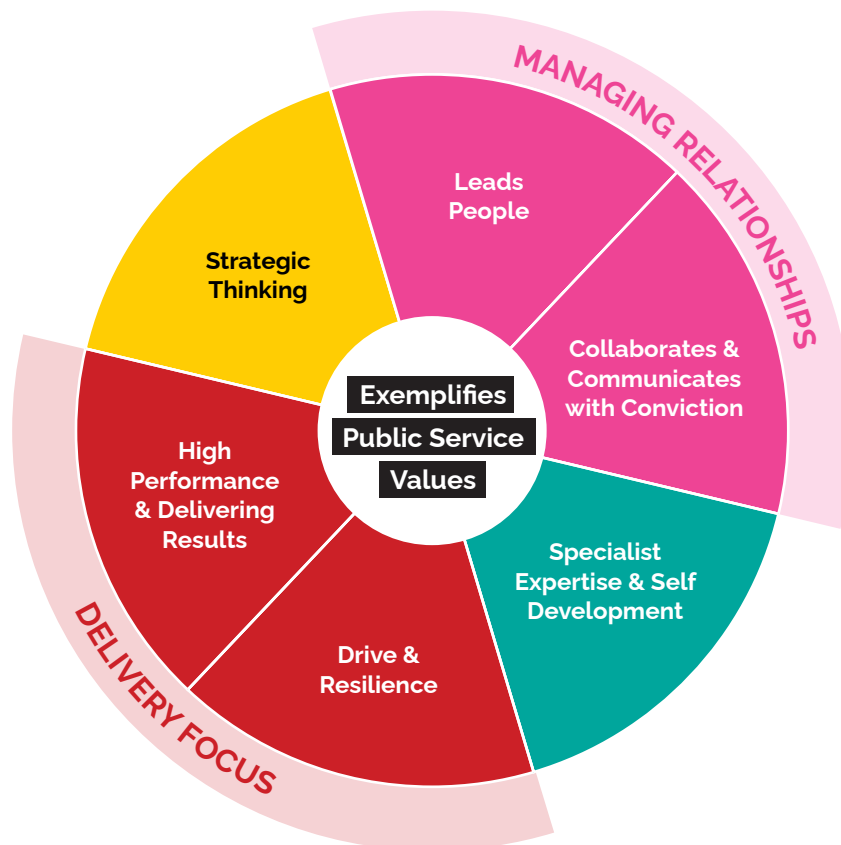
- the shortlisting of candidates, on the basis of the information contained in their application;
- a competitive preliminary interview;
- completion of an online questionnaire(s);
- work sample/role play/media exercise, and any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate;
- a competitive final interview which will include a presentation;
- reference checks and any other checks as to character and suitability deemed appropriate.

## Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, SOLAS may decide to curtail the number of applicants that will be called to interview. In this respect, SOLAS through the Executive Search partner will provide for the employment of a shortlisting process to select a group of individuals for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine the application forms against a pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates who, based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. It is, therefore, in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience on the application.

# Key Competencies for the Role of Executive Director

The attention of candidates is drawn to the key competencies model that has been developed for posts at Executive Director level (equivalent to Assistant Secretary Level) which reflects the complex environment in which this position will operate.



## Exemplifies Public Service Values

Effective Performance is:

- Serving the Government and people of Ireland.
- Acting at all times with integrity.
- Treating others with respect.
- Being responsible for own actions.
- Operating with professionalism and probity.

## Strategic Thinking

Effective Performance is:

- Creating a vision for the organisation and sector and anticipating the requirements to deliver it.
- Analysing complex issues quickly and anticipating knock-on consequences.
- Taking a system-wide approach and seeing connections, risks and the potential for innovation in the wider environment.
- Leading on the implementation of risk assessment practices and engaging in balanced risk taking.
- Showing courage in making difficult decisions.

### Managing Relationships: Leads People

Effective Performance is:

- Being a visible and energetic leader who fully engages others.
- Building and supporting cross functional and interdepartmental teams.
- Delegating responsibility and ensuring accountability in others.
- Setting challenging goals and implementing effective performance management.
- Coaching and supporting others to optimise their contribution and development.

### Managing Relationships: Collaborates and Communicates with Conviction

Effective Performance is:

- Playing a full and active part on the senior team in shaping and leading the Authority.
- Communicating professionally and credibly, managing the expectations of others.
- Skilfully negotiating and influencing with conviction.
- Anticipating political sensitivities and complexities and responding in an informed and constructive manner.
- Building and maintaining effective working relationships with key stakeholders.
- Facilitating collaboration, partnerships and networks internally and externally to achieve common goals.

### Delivery Focus: High Performance and Delivering Results

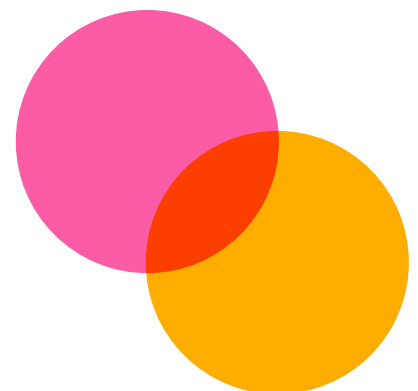
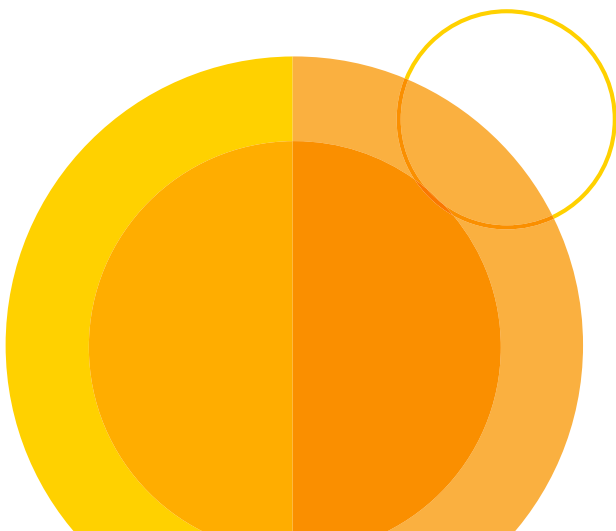
Effective Performance is:

- Assuming accountability for own actions and decisions.
- Ensuring the full range of management disciplines are used to deliver quality services at pace and within budget.
- Challenging processes to improve organisational capacity, responsiveness and citizen focus.
- Ensuring successful implementation through a range of delivery methods, including use of external parties.
- Focusing effort on priority tasks to maximise results.
- Ensuring a strong feedback loop between policy development and operations.

### Delivery Focus: Drive and Resilience

Effective Performance is:

- Showing initiative and sustaining high levels of personal drive and energy.
- Leading and managing multiple complex priorities effectively.
- Speaking own mind with confidence and conviction.
- Keeping perspective and utilising personal support strategies to help maintain focus and bounce back from disappointments.
- Staying positive and professional in the face of difficult situations.

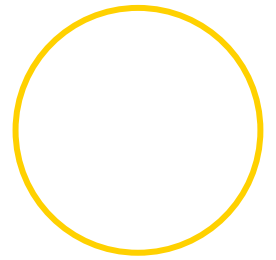


## Specialist Knowledge and Self Development

Effective Performance is:

- Maintaining a sound knowledge of organisational, sectoral, political and
- Continuously updating and demonstrating expertise in relevant areas.
- Being self-aware and seeking opportunities to act on areas for own development.
- Seeking feedback and reviewing own practices and behaviours.
- Being regarded as an expert in own area(s) of specialism.

SOLAS is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace which values and benefits from the diversity of the workforce.



**SOLAS – An tSeirbhís Oideachais  
Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna**  
The Further Education and  
Training Authority

Block 1, Castleforbes House,  
Castleforbes Road  
Dublin 1  
D01 A8N0  
Ireland

T: +353 (0)1 533 2500  
E: [info@solas.ie](mailto:info@solas.ie)  
  
[www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie)

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Further Education and  
Training Authority



Riailtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach  
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