

**DEFENCE FORCES**

**CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF  
TECHNICAL OFFICER (CONDUCTOR) IN THE  
DEFENCE FORCES SCHOOL OF MUSIC - 2023**

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**IMPORTANT NOTE**

A person who wishes to apply for this competition should read this document carefully prior to completing the application form. An application should only be submitted if the applicant is satisfied that they fulfil all of the governing conditions detailed in this document.

The acceptance by the Chief of Staff - Defence Forces, of an application form from a person desiring to be a Defence Force officer should not be regarded as an admission by the Chief of Staff that such a person satisfies all or any of these conditions or that they are not disqualified by law from becoming an officer of the Defence Forces.

Everything contained in these conditions, notes and annexes is subject to the over-riding authority of the governing statutes, regulations and schemes, including the Defence Act, 1954 (as amended and extended) and statutory provisions made, or to be made, thereunder, and any other relevant provisions, agreements, legislation, public service policy, circulars and/or instructions and any errors which may appear herein are subject to correction at any time.

In addition, all terms and conditions outlined in this document are subject to change under the Defence Forces conciliation and arbitration scheme and public service agreements as may be concluded from time to time.

Appointments are open to all eligible candidates, on an equal basis, regardless of their gender identity.

Exceptions to the governing conditions cannot be made in individual circumstances.

Candidates, when completing their application form, will be required to confirm that they have not:

- *knowingly or recklessly provided false information*
- *canvassed any person with or without inducements*
- *impersonated a candidate at any stage of the process*
- *interfered with or compromised the process in any way*

**CANVASSING WILL DISQUALIFY**

## **1. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS**

All applicants for appointment as a Technical Officer (Conductor) in the Defence Forces School of Music must:

- a. At the time of application be -
  - (i) a citizen of the State,  
or
  - (ii) have a legal entitlement to reside and work in the State for the period of any such appointment, and
  - (iii) be of good character and satisfy any security clearance requirement.
- b. Demonstrate a standard of instrumental competence consistent with performance in a professional military band.
- c. Meet the required minimum standards of medical and physical fitness (as outlined at Paragraph 4.)

## **2. AGE REQUIREMENTS**

Candidates must be 18 years of age and less than 35 years of age on the closing date for receipt of applications, which for this competition is **15 December 2023**.

## **3. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

A candidate for appointment as a Technical Officer (Conductor) in the Defence Forces School of Music must hold a Bachelor of Music Degree or equivalent qualification from a recognised University or third level institution. Knowledge of conducting and/or experience of woodwind, brass or percussion instruments would be an advantage as would, proven experience in the creation of musical arrangements.

## **4. MEDICAL & PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Candidates will be required to undergo a detailed medical and dental examination, which may include urine and blood tests. This examination is to ensure that candidates are in good mental and bodily health and free from any condition, abnormality or past history of serious illness likely to interfere with the efficient performance of military duties.

The following are the minimum requirements in respect of:

### **1. Height**

The minimum height requirement is 157.48cm (5ft 2ins). Physical standards and weight must be in keeping with height and age.

### **2. Vision**

Colour vision must be normal. Both eyes must be free from disfiguring or incapacitating abnormality and free from acute or chronic disease. There must be no evidence of squint or latent squint. The eligibility of applicants who have had previous incisional or laser treatment to correct visual acuity will be determined at the Medical Examination. Please see Annex B for further information. Vision must not be less than 6/36 in each eye, corrected to not less than 6/6 in one eye and 6/9 in the other.

### **3. Hearing**

A good standard of unaided hearing is essential. Candidates will be required to undergo an audiometric examination at which:

- (1) The sum of the hearing threshold levels, at 1,2,3,4 and 6 KHz should not exceed the age and gender related warning levels contained in the "Guidelines on Hearing Checks and Audiometry Regulations 2007" issued by the Health and Safety Authority, and,
- (2) All Candidates must be able to hear all measured pure tones up to and including 8kHz at 20dB in each ear Candidates must also be free from acute or chronic ear disorders.

***Candidates are advised to note that exposure to sources of loud noise and music within the period of 48 hours prior to this examination may adversely affect the result of the examination***

## **5. APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT**

**Candidates must apply online to [www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie)**

**Candidates must apply online** to [www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie). Candidates wishing to undertake the assessments through Irish must make this request known to the Defence Forces Recruitment Section at [recruitment@defenceforces.ie](mailto:recruitment@defenceforces.ie)

All correspondence with candidates will be done by email for the duration of the competition. Candidates should ensure the email address given is accurate and correct.

Each application is acknowledged by the system automatically within 24 hours. If an acknowledgement is not received within 48 hours of applying, candidates should immediately contact the Defence Forces Recruitment Section at: 045 492553 or [recruitment@defenceforces.ie](mailto:recruitment@defenceforces.ie)

Likewise, if an applicant's email address should change, the onus is on the applicant to make contact with the Defence Forces Recruitment Section immediately, advising them of the change of email address.

Serving members of the PDF will be required to include their Service Number on the application form.

## **6. SELECTION PROCEDURE**

Candidates called for interview will be required to provide the Interview Board with the following documentation:

- Original documentary evidence of Professional Qualifications
- A Passport sized Photograph (signed on the back)
- An Original copy of Long Form Birth Certificate (photo copies are not acceptable) and
- Their Passport.

Candidates will also be requested to sign the Declaration Form accompanying the application form at the Interview.

## **7. EXPENSES**

Candidates will be liable for all expenses incurred in connection with their attendance at the medical and interview boards.

## **8. EMPLOYEE VETTING BY AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA**

Candidates who are invited to attend before an Interview Board will be required to complete and sign a Garda Vetting Application Form. This will, pursuant to the Data Protection Act 2018, authorise An Garda Síochána to furnish to the Military Authorities, a statement that there are no convictions recorded against the candidate, or if applicable, a statement of convictions.

## **9. NOMINATION FOR APPOINTMENT**

The nomination of a successful candidate for appointment as an Officer of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) shall be made by the Minister for Defence, whose decision shall be final.

## **10. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT**

- a) The successful candidate will be appointed to the rank of Captain on a short service commission of 12 months with the opportunity for extension to a commission without limitation as to time, subject to the rank retirement ages as per Defence Force Regulations.
- b) A Technical Officer(Conductor) inducted from this competition may, on completion of 9 months continuous satisfactory service and on the recommendations of the Director, Defence Forces School of Music and the Chief of Staff, apply for a commission without limitation as to time. A commission without limitation as to time is subject to the approval of the Government, on the recommendation of the Minister to advise the President to make such an appointment.
- c) A Technical Officer Conductor appointed from this competition will be required to serve only in specialist appointments of the Defence Forces School of Music as and when specified by the Military Authorities. Technical Officers (Conductor) of the Defence Forces School of Music may be required to serve in any appointment of the Defence Forces School of Music in the following locations: Athlone, Cork and Dublin.
- d) Successful candidates will be expected to take up duty as soon as possible, allowing for reasonable notice to current employer, or reasonable expiry of current contractual obligations, but subject to the overriding requirement to fill the vacancies in the Defence Forces School of Music.
- e) The successful candidate may, subject to meeting the stipulated eligibility criteria, compete for future promotion competitions within the Defence Forces School of Music.
- f) In general the work of a Technical Officer (Conductor) in the Defence Forces School of Music includes the conducting and rehearsing of military bands on concert and ceremonial engagements, supervision of students in training; arranging music for military bands and other ensembles and administrative duties.

## 11. PAY, ALLOWANCES AND PRSI OF TECHNICAL OFFICER (CONDUCTOR) IN THE DEFENCE FORCES SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The following are the current annual rates of pay payable to Technical Officer (**Conductor**) in the Defence Forces School of Music:

### OFFICERS PAY RATE 2 – Technical Officer (Conductor)

Special Direct Entry (new Entrants on or after 8 Sept 2015)	POINT	RATES OF PAY With effect from 1 October 2023	Military Service Allowance	Total Pay
Captain	1	€59,873	€6,467	€66,340
	2	€60,494	€6,467	€66,961
	3	€64,310	€6,467	€70,777
	4	€65,703	€6,467	€72,170
	5	€67,086	€6,467	€73,553
	6	€68,471	€6,467	€74,938
	7	€69,859	€6,467	€76,326
	8	€71,232	€6,467	€77,699
	9	€74,242	€6,467	€80,709
	10	€75,700	€6,467	€82,167
	11	€78,439	€6,467	€84,906
	12	€78,439	€6,467	€84,906
Max. Scale point	13	€78,439	€6,467	€84,906
1 <sup>st</sup> LSI	14	€79,081	€6,467	€85,548
2 <sup>nd</sup> LSI	15	€81,722	€6,467	€88,189

In line with Department of Finance instructions, dated 23 December 2010 starting pay will be at the minimum of the scale.re

In addition to salary, a Technical Officer (Conductor) in the Defence Forces School of Music is also paid the following:

#### **MILITARY SERVICE ALLOWANCE.**

Military Service Allowance (see table above)

**Note:** It should be noted that the rate of remuneration and payment of the allowances outlined above are subject to review and adjustment on an ongoing basis in accordance with changes applicable across the public service generally as per Government policy. Different rates of pay and allowances apply where candidates appointed under this competition are not members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme.

#### **Method of Payment**

Currently a Technical Officer (Conductor) is paid on a monthly basis by means of electronic funds transfer to a designated financial institution.

## **12. RETIRING AGES FOR OFFICERS**

At present the retiring ages for Technical Officer (Conductor) in the Defence Forces School of Music in the rank of Captain is 58 years.

Please note: mandatory retirement ages in the Defence Forces are subject to review.

## **13. OCCUPATIONAL PENSION**

Members of the Permanent Defence Force may qualify for occupational pension and retirement gratuity (collectively called superannuation benefits) subject to meeting certain terms and conditions. A person's date of first joining the Permanent Defence Force and whether they have any previous Public Service employment will generally decide their specific occupational pension terms. Successful candidates appointed from this competition will be required to pay appropriate employee pension contributions from weekly pay, as well as the 'additional superannuation contribution' (ASC). In general, anyone joining pensionable public service employment on or after 1 January 2013 is a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme.

**Further details are set out in Annex A**

## **14. UNIFORM**

An Officer appointed as a result of this competition will be paid an allowance towards the cost of providing himself/herself with a uniform. Currently, this is:-

Female - €1,594.79  
Male - €1,324.34

An allowance is currently paid to a Commissioned Officer towards the purpose of replenishing their kit as follows;

Female - €1,122.45  
Male - €848.19

It should be noted that the initial allowance is exempt from taxation, while the replenishment allowance paid in subsequent years is subject to taxation under the taxation arrangements in place at the time, currently 40% is taxable and 60% not taxable.

## **15. ANNUAL LEAVE**

Subject to the exigencies of the service, annual leave not exceeding thirty-one days may be granted in any one leave year.

It should be noted that this annual leave provision is currently calculated on a 7 day basis. Leave entitlements may be subject to review and adjustment.

## **16. SICK LEAVE**

Sick Leave may be granted in accordance with the provisions of Defence Force Regulation A.12 (Medical Treatment) and Defence Forces Regulation S.3 (Pay and Allowances). Sick leave entitlements may be subject to review and adjustment.

## **17. HEALTH AND WELFARE**

Medical attendance, hospital and dental treatment are provided free subject to the limitations as required by law.

Personnel in the Defence Forces are subject to compulsory random drug testing and personnel failing a drug test are liable to be discharged from the Defence Forces.

## **18. ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY**

### **Department of Health and Children Circular 7/2010:**

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 of 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) 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.

## **19. COURSES**

In order to ensure that an officer will be competent to carry out the duties of higher rank to which they may be promoted, an Officer will be required to undergo such courses as may be laid down from time to time.

Officers of the Defence Forces School of Music are required to undergo training courses in basic military skills, military leadership, protocol and administration and may be required to undergo special courses of training which will be undertaken subject to the provisions of Defence Forces Regulations.

In the case of certain courses which are undertaken at public expense an Officer appointed under these conditions may be required to subscribe to an undertaking (or undertakings) that, in the event of the officer leaving the Permanent Defence Force voluntarily within a specified period from the date of



termination of the course, they will refund the cost of such training to the Minister for Defence. Such costs may include pay and allowances paid to him/her during the period of attendance at the course.

Payment of the amount involved, including the cost of any pay and allowances paid to them during the attendance at the course, must be made in full and up-front i.e. before the actual date of their retirement. However, in every case, the granting of permission to a Commissioned Officer to retire or resign from the Defence Forces is a matter for the appropriate authority in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Defence Act.

## **20. PAY AND ALLOWANCES - BENEFIT IN KIND**

Certain pay and allowances, including the provision of medical services in the Defence Forces is currently the subject of a review by the Revenue Commissioners. The tax status and taxation of any benefit, payment or allowance paid to members of the Defence Forces as may be determined by the Revenue Commissioners from time to time is a matter, between the individual taxpayer and the Revenue Commissioners and must be disclosed by the individual to the Revenue Commissioners. The Department will not be liable for the financial impact, positive or negative, of any change in the tax status of any current payment, allowance or benefit paid or made available to members of the Defence Forces, or any determination of their tax status, as may be directed by the Revenue Commissioners from time to time.

## **21. MATERNITY LEAVE**

Statutory provisions in relation to Maternity leave apply in the Permanent Defence Force. Officers claiming maternity benefit payments from the Department of Social Protection will be required to sign over these payments to the Department which will then refund the tax, PRSI and Pension related deduction on these amounts to the Officer.

The Permanent Defence Force is compliant with statutory Leave requirements.

**These conditions apply to the 2023 competition only and will be reviewed in advance of any future competition.**

## RETIREMENT BENEFITS

### Introduction

#### **(A) Single Public Service Pension Scheme**

In general, anyone joining pensionable public service employment on or after 1 January 2013 is a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. This Scheme applies to all military personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards as first-time new entrants to the Public Service. The Single Scheme also applies if you are a former pensionable public servant who re-joins the Public Service in a pensionable position on or after 1 January 2013, with a break of more than 26 weeks between public service employments. These arrangements are provided under the *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* ('the Single Scheme').

*Note: In some limited circumstances, different pension terms may apply for personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards who are not first-time new entrants to the Public Service and/or have previously been in the public service. Some details are given below but any queries in this regard should be referred to the Department of Defence.*

#### **(B) 'Post-April 2004' Defence Forces Pension Schemes**

In some cases, the 'post-April 2004' Defence Forces pension scheme arrangements may apply. This Scheme generally applies to military personnel who joined the PDF **between 1 April 2004 and 31 December 2012**. Those arrangements are governed by the *Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004*.

These 'post-April 2004' pension scheme arrangements may apply to anyone who has worked or is working in other Irish public service pensionable employment, and who is not a *new entrant* as defined under the Single Scheme. For example, if you joined the Public Service before 1 January 2013 and have either, (i) been working continuously there, or (ii) left that public service employment and return after a break of less than 26 weeks, you will be a member of a relevant 'post-April 2004' Defence Forces pension scheme.

#### **(C) 'Pre-April 2004' Defence Forces Pension Schemes**

In certain very limited circumstances, the 'pre-April 2004' pension scheme arrangements may apply.

Where a person joining the PDF is not a *new entrant* as defined:

- under the 2012 Act (see paragraph (a) above); or
- under the 2004 Act (see paragraph (b) above),

the pre-April 2004 Defence Forces superannuation arrangements may apply.

## **Single Scheme – summary of main elements for PDF members**

- It is a *defined benefit* scheme based on *Career-Average Earnings*.
- Retirement benefits – pension and lump sum – are primarily based on % of *pensionable earnings* throughout your public service career as a Single Scheme member.
- PDF members pay a 7.5% employee contribution from salary towards their Single Scheme benefits, as well as an *Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC)* – see **Notes 1 and 2 below**.
- Each year of your PDF Single Scheme membership, you build up money amounts on a *fast accrual* basis towards your Single Scheme retirement benefits. The total of these amounts at retirement, with adjustments for increases in inflation (as measured by increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) produced by the Central Statistics Office), determines what your retirement benefits will be.
- Single Scheme retirement benefits are payable immediately on retirement from the PDF if you serve to the *minimum pension age* of 50, and have the required *vesting period of 2 years*<sup>1</sup>.
- If you finish employment with the PDF before age 50 and have the required vesting period, payment of your retirement benefits is normally *deferred* to the qualifying age for *Contributory State Pension (CSP)*<sup>2</sup> from the Department of Social Protection.
- Retirement pension (but not lump sum) is *integrated* with the Social Insurance system – see paragraph (a) below.
- There is no cap on the length of time over which members can build pension benefits under the Single Scheme.
- Transferring retirement benefits to Single Scheme from other employments:
  - The option for a member of the Single Scheme to transfer-in benefits from private sector pension schemes is generally available, subject to certain terms and conditions.
  - If, before joining the Single Scheme, you hold deferred retirement benefits from previous employments under a ‘pre-2013’ Public Service pension scheme, you cannot transfer those benefits to the Single Scheme. Those benefits remain to be administered under your earlier pre-2013 pension scheme.
  - If you hold deferred benefits under the Single Scheme from an earlier Single Scheme employment, you do not need to arrange for their “transfer” because it is the same Single Scheme in place across the Public Service.

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<sup>1</sup> The *vesting period* for the Single Scheme is 2 years, the minimum length of time you must pay employee contributions into the scheme before becoming eligible for retirement benefits.

<sup>2</sup> The current qualifying age for all State Pensions is 66.

- There is provision for immediate retirement benefits if compulsorily retired on medical grounds, and for death in service benefits (dependents pensions and death lump sum).
- Following retirement, increases to Single Scheme pension are linked to inflation.

**(a) Integration of retirement pension with the Social Insurance system:**

New entrants to the Public Service on or after 6 April 1995, including Commissioned Officers in the PDF, are insurable for full PRSI. For this reason, public service retirement (or spouse's / civil partner's) pensions are subject to *integration* with the State Social Insurance system in accordance with standard Public Service arrangements.

This means that a person's entitlement to the range of Social Insurance benefits (including the Contributory State Pension) is taken into account when calculating the amount of retirement pension payable. In an integrated pension scheme, the Contributory State Pension (CSP) is regarded as part of the employee's total pension package. Under standard Public Service arrangements, this integration of retirement pension with the Social Insurance system applies from the time the retirement (or spouse's / civil partner's) pension commences payment.

This means the retirement pension is adjusted (reduced) from the start by a Social Insurance State Pension *offset*<sup>3</sup>, regardless of whether the person has reached Contributory State Pension age. Integration applies to retirement pension and also to employee contributions, but not to retirement lump sum.

A Contributory State Pension becomes payable upon reaching the qualifying age. The *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* (the 2012 Act), does not provide for the payment of a 'supplementary retirement pension' in the period between Defence Forces mandatory retirement age and State Pension qualifying age.

**(b) Employee pension contributions:**

- **Note 1** – The 7.5% Single Scheme contribution is comprised of 4.2% of *net pensionable remuneration* (which means pensionable remuneration less twice the maximum rate of State Pension Contributory payable from time to time to a person who has no adult or child dependants) plus 3.3% of pensionable remuneration.
- **Note 2** – Subject to certain exemption thresholds, all Public Servants who are in pensionable employment – including members of the PDF – are also liable to pay an *Additional Superannuation Contribution* (ASC). The ASC is separate from the standard employee pension contributions mentioned above. No additional superannuation benefits are earned as a result of the ASC. The ASC applies to pensionable earnings above certain thresholds at different bands and % rates depending on the pension scheme applicable to the member. From 1 January 2020, the ASC bands / rates are as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> The current value of the Contributory State Pension (CSP) reduction is €265.30 per week / €13,795.6 Annually

<b>Additional Superannuation Contributions</b>
<b>All Public Servants who are members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme</b>
First €34,500 of pensionable earnings – exempt
Next €25,500 @ 3.33%
Balance @ 3.5%

**(c) Declarations:**

Under the *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* (the 2012 Act), candidates are required to declare:

- any prior Public Service employment, or
- any pre-existing entitlements to a Public Service retirement benefit (whether already paid, in payment or deferred), or
- any existing remuneration from any other Public Service employment, or
- any such employment in which they received a payment-in-lieu of pension for that service.

**Pension abatement:**

If a person was employed previously in the Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Public Service, the 2012 Act provides for the *abatement* (i.e. reduction / suspension) of any Public Service pension on re-employment within the Public Service, even where the new employment is in a different area of the Public Service. The outcome will depend on factors such as a person's ongoing overall earnings from the Public Service by way of salary plus pension.

**(d) Further information:**

Further information on pension arrangements for Defence Forces members of the Single Pension Scheme can be found on the Department of Defence website at; <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/f65fb1-defence-forces-pension-information/> and <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/2a3969-pension-schemes/> (officers Single Scheme booklet)

See also Department of Public Expenditure and Reform website; <https://singlepensionscheme.gov.ie/> and, <https://singlepensionscheme.gov.ie/for-members/scheme-information/scheme-booklet/#> (for booklet on the 'fast accrual' scheme)

**Laser Eye Surgery**

Applicants, for whom any one or more of the following criteria apply, will be deemed unfit to join the Permanent Defence Force:

- (a) Applicants who have had their visual acuity corrected by non-laser surgery or laser surgery involving the raising of a corneal flap
- (b) Applicants who have had corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, within 12 months of the advertised closing date for receipt of applications
- (c) Where there continues to exist, beyond one year of corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, significant visual impairment or side effects related to the surgery, or both
- (d) Where, following corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, the residual corneal stromal thickness is less than 300 microns.