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Background

Employment in central government under the main General Employment Framework (GEF):¹

2009: 37 424 Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

Total employment in the general government sector as a percentage of labour force (2010):[†]

16.7%

Central human resources management body:

Public Service Management Division, along with other bodies.

Government production costs (2010)^{††}



Government centralisation (2008)^{††}



Type of recruitment system (2010)



Legal Framework

GEF covers all employees:	Yes
GEF includes fixed-term contracts:	Yes
Private law applicable in public sector:	No Data

Civil servants are divided into three categories: general service; departmental; and professional and technical classes. The rules governing the GEF are largely provided by four main statutes; however, there are also extra-statutory rules contained in circulars which often make a greater impact than

statutes in practice. The GEF covers all staff, including fixed-term staff who share similar employment conditions to open-term staff. However, casual/temporary staff are employed outside the GEF for specific reasons, such as filling maternity vacancies or internships.

Staff have the right:

to unionise to strike

Benefits, to which employees are entitled to, are:

Full funding of social security Partial funding of social security Some funding of pensions

Firing rules provide:

Different guarantees about job protection / dismissal Guarantees in favour of life-long employment

	to unionise	to strike	Full funding of social security	Partial funding of social security	Some funding of pensions	Different guarantees about job protection / dismissal	Guarantees in favour of life-long employment
Public sector	Yes	Yes	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
Private sector	Yes	Yes	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data

Composition of Employment

Central government employment (2009)¹

Total employment under GEF: 37 424 FTEs

Part-time employment: 5 564 employees

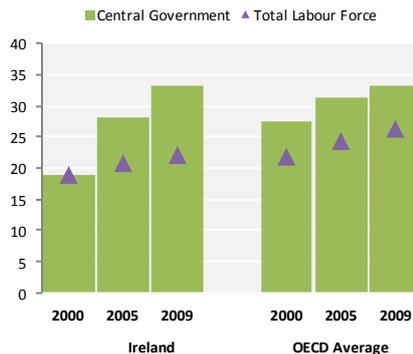
Part time is defined as anything less than full-time hours.

Gender in central government (2009)¹

Female participation in central government workforce: No Data

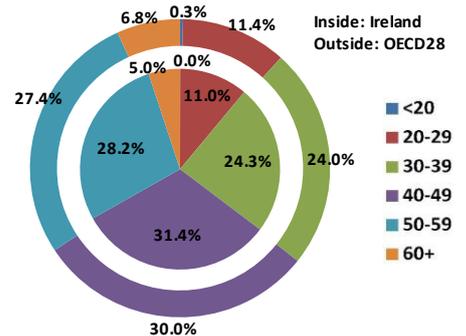
Share of top and middle positions who are women: 42.2%

¹ Data are for central government ministries only.



Percentage of employees aged 50 years or older in central government and total labour force (2000, 2005 and 2009)*

The age structure of the civil service is very close to the OECD average in all age brackets. The most significant deviation is the proportion of employees aged 60 or older, 5.0% in 2009, which is only mildly less than the OECD average of 6.8%. There has been a large increase in the proportion of public employees aged 50 or older since 2000, which has happened at a much faster rate than the



Age structure of central government 2009

average OECD trend. In addition, this increase has caused a significant divergence between the representation of this group in the civil service and the total labour force. Data are unavailable regarding female representation in central government overall; however, the proportion of management positions filled by women, 42.2% in 2009, is significantly above the OECD average of 34.7%.

Public Sector Restructuring

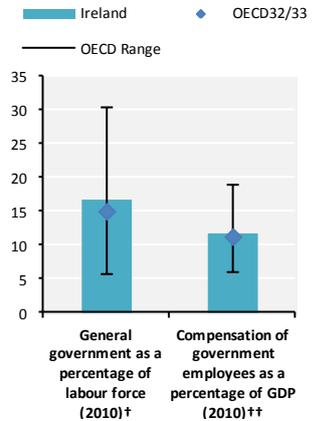
Ireland is one of 27 OECD countries that reported an anticipated decrease in public employment levels as a result of planned reforms. A wide range of reforms affecting employment levels and salaries have already been implemented in response to the crisis beginning in 2008, including an average wage cut of 13.5% over 2009-10. Plans to continue fiscal consolidation include a 12% reduction in the civil service by 2014, representing 24 750 jobs from peak 2008 levels. It is not possible to dismiss employees with open-term contracts when the government seeks to restructure; however, voluntary departures are regularly encouraged through attractive leave allowances and early retirement packages. General government sector employment (excluding public corporations) as a percentage of the labour force, 16.7% in 2010, is above the OECD average of 15.1%. Similarly, compensation of public employees as a percentage of GDP, 11.6% in 2010, is very close to the OECD average of 11.3%.

Anticipated reforms' effect on employment level:

Decrease

Implemented changes in employment levels affecting more than 50% of ministries/agencies since 2000:

- Discretionary hiring / dismissal
- Hiring freeze / non replacement of retiring staff
- Change in retirement age
- Devolution of authority over other levels of government
- Contracting out
- Delegation to other public or semi-public organisations
- Reorganisation / restructuring



Organisation of HR Management

Decentralisation of HR Management

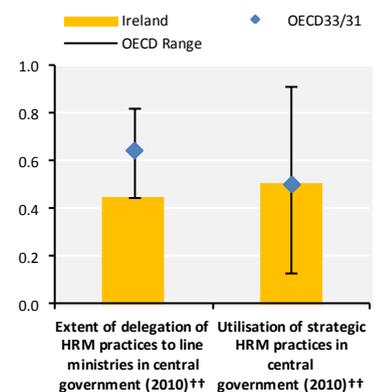
Central HRM unit:	Public Service Management Division, along with other bodies.
Role:	Responsible for defining HR policy
Location:	Department of Finance
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and guidance • Provide advice on legal framework • Design the pay system • Define and control the payroll • Standardise recruitment and skills profiles • Define salary levels and benefits • Provide training • Promote diversity • Manage retirement and pension plans
Personnel, budget and pay delegation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay systems, bonuses, the distribution of posts and budget allocation are set and monitored centrally, with ministries having some latitude over bonuses.
Classification, recruitment and dismissal delegation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post classification system, recruitment and contract duration are managed centrally. • Ministries have some control over recruitment, and also manage dismissal.
Employment conditions delegation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility in working conditions, the code of conduct and equal opportunity issues are set and monitored centrally. • Performance appraisal systems are set centrally, with some latitude for ministries in application. • Adjustments to working conditions are managed by ministries.

Strategic HR Management

Existence of HRM accountability framework for managers:	No, HRM is only marginally linked to planning and reporting.
HRM targets feed performance assessments:	Yes
Regular HRM assessment of ministries and departments:	No
Top & middle management plan and report on:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with HR rules & targets for employment and pay • Participation in whole of central government initiatives
Forward planning use:	Yes, on ad hoc basis.
Forward-planning horizon:	4-5 years
Key aspects explicitly considered in forward planning:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New issues in policy delivery • Civil service demographics • Possibilities for outsourcing • Possibilities for relocating staff • Efficiency savings (for example, through e-government)

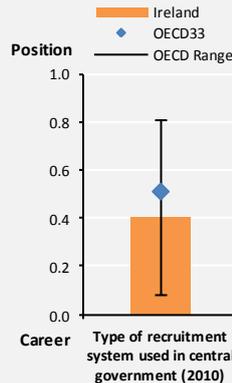
Ireland delegates HRM practices to line ministries to the least extent of all OECD countries. The central HRM unit holds a wide range of responsibilities and is actively involved in managing the majority of HRM issues. Ministries are delegated some responsibility, but are usually subject to centrally defined principles. Units/teams are not delegated any responsibilities. Overall, delegation has led to comparable employment frameworks across the whole of central

government. Ireland makes as much use of strategic HRM practices as the average OECD country. No accountability framework exists for management, who only report on few HRM issues. Performance assessment of management does consider HRM targets, but regular assessment of ministries' HRM capacity is not undertaken. Forward planning is used on an ad hoc basis and covers a full range of issues over a relatively long horizon.

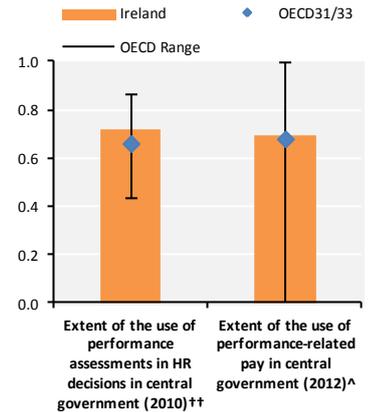


HR Management Practice

RECRUITMENT: Recruitment into many parts of the Irish public service is through a centrally administered competitive examination at a relatively low grade level. The Commission for Public Service Appointments regulates public service recruitment and appointment. It sets standards for recruitment and selection, published as codes of practice. Some posts are open to internal and external recruitment with direct application to the post. Action has been taken to increase the use of external recruitment for all grades, in particular all assistant secretary level positions and above are open to external recruitment. Competitions or sub-panels are occasionally held with the aim of ensuring that three percent of all recruits to the civil service are persons with disabilities, with a range of assistive technology being available. In 2005, all 15 government departments complied with the three percent target, with an overall total of 3.9% disabled persons in the civil service.



PERFORMANCE: Ireland makes slightly more use of performance assessment in HR decisions compared to the average OECD country. Assessment is mandatory for almost all employees and takes the form of six-monthly meeting with, and written feedback from, the immediate superior, as well as an optional system of upward feedback. A wide range of criteria is used, including activities undertaken, timeliness and quality of outputs, interpersonal skills and improvement of competencies. Assessment is of high importance to career advancement, and medium importance to remuneration. In addition, Ireland uses roughly as much performance-related pay (PRP) as the average OECD country. PRP is used only for senior staff and takes the form of one-off performance bonuses that represent a maximum of 11-20% of base salary.



PAY SETTING: Base salary is set in a single, comprehensive agreement for the whole of central government through a collective bargaining framework. Bonuses are based on the recommendations of an independent committee. Remuneration is not indexed to other variables, bonuses are revised annually and base salary is revised as

per the agreement, with a two year minimum. Relevant experience and job content are the most important determinants of base salary for all grades, with qualifications, performance and seniority also factoring in. Seniority based pay is in use; and the number of years in similar positions is considered when setting a new recruit's salary.

Most important factors to determine base salary	Top Management	Middle Management	Professionals	Secretarial Level	Technical Support
Educational qualification	●	◐	●	◐	◐
Job content	●	●	●	●	○
Ministry	◐	○	○	○	○
Performance	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Age	○	○	○	○	○
Seniority in the position	◐	◐	◐	○	◐
Relevant experience	●	●	●	◐	●

● Key importance ◐ Somewhat important ○ Not at all important

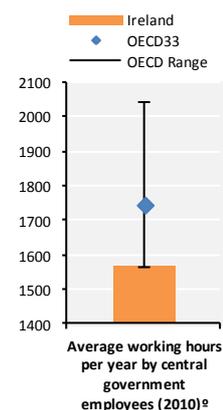
Number of regular working hours per week: ^g	34.75
Average number of annual leave days per year: ^g	20
Average number of bank (public) holidays per year: ^g	10
Total number of hours worked per year: ^g	1 565

PROMOTIONS: Promotions are decided through open competition, consequently, success at competition and interview are the fundamental determinants of promotion, with years of experience, performance appraisals and qualifications used to qualify candidates for the competition. In addition, employees need to undertake a competitive examination to enter a different group in the civil service. Openings are published on transparent listings, a shortlist of candidates is compiled by the central HRM unit, and there is systematic use of selection panels and some use of assessment centres. No diversity policies apply explicitly to promotions.

MOBILITY: Although there are no technical barriers to mobility across the different parts of the public service (such as pay differentials or pension rights) there are no incentives to mobility, despite the possibilities created by the career-based system. External mobility usually occurs through secondment to international organisations, and employees on external postings risk losing pension rights if they do not return to the public sector.

TRAINING: All civil servants have an induction period upon entry to the civil service and other training is dependent on the needs of the organisation. A policy to spend 4% of payroll on training is in place, with employees identifying their training and development needs as part of the Performance Management Development System. Data are unavailable regarding the annual average length of training per employee.

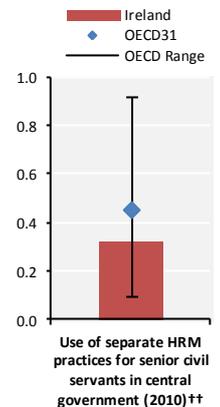
WORK CONDITIONS: The average yearly working hours in Ireland, 1 565 hours in 2010, is one of the lowest rates of all OECD countries and well below the OECD average of 1 745 hours. This is driven by the lowest weekly working hours of all OECD countries. Data on absenteeism are unavailable, but annual paid sick days with a medical certificate are limited.



Senior Management

Ireland uses separate HRM practices for senior civil servants (SCS) to a substantially lesser extent than the average OECD country. SCS are not considered a separate group, although a centrally defined skills profile exists for senior management. There are no policies to regularly identify potential leadership early in their career. Appointment is shorter for senior management than regular employees and a higher part of their pay is

performance related. A good proportion of management positions are open to external recruitment. Ministers have influence over the appointment/dismissal of secretaries general (highest level), whilst an independent body has influence over that of all management levels below the secretary general. All advisors to the ministry's leadership turn over with a change in government, but no management does so.



Industrial Relations

Unions play a minor role in industrial relations in the public sector in Ireland, although they receive partial public funding. Collective bargaining deals with a broad range of topics, such as working conditions, public sector reform and modernisation of social security systems. There is no obligation for agreement before changes can be implemented, but every attempt is made to reach an agreed settlement rather than an imposed solution. Base salary, the

employment framework, the code of conduct and the right to strike/minimum service rules are negotiated centrally. Bonuses, work conditions and the introduction of new management tools are negotiated at both central and delegated levels. Most public employees are granted the right to unionise and strike, except when the latter is during times defined by convention, in relation to particular motives or where minimum service rules apply.

Reforms

No information was provided regarding reforms to HRM policies.

Challenges

No information was provided regarding HRM challenges.

Sources

Unless indicated otherwise, all data are sourced from OECD (2010), *Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments*, unpublished.

* Data for Total Labour Force from OECD *Labour Force Statistics Database*; data for Central Government from OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*.

† Data from International Labour Organization (ILO) *LABORSTA Database* and OECD *National Accounts Statistics*. See Methodological Note.

†† OECD (2011), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

~ OECD (2012), *Restoring Public Finances, 2012 Update*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

° OECD (2010), *Survey on the Compensation of Employees in Central/Federal Governments*, unpublished.

^ OECD (2012), *Rewarding Performance in the Public Sector: Performance-related Pay in OECD Countries*, unpublished.

° OECD (2008), *Public Governance Reviews – Ireland*, OECD Publishing, Paris

Further Reading

OECD (2012), *Public Sector Compensation in Times of Austerity*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2011), *Public Servants as Partners for Growth: Toward a Stronger, Leaner and More Equitable Workforce*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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