



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## Frequently Asked Questions – 6 April 2020

### Temporary Assignment Arrangements for certain staff in the education and training sector

The purpose of this document is to provide further information on the arrangements for the temporary assignment of certain staff to different areas of work. These FAQs should be read in conjunction with Department of Education and Skills [Circulars 0027/2020](#) and [0028/2020](#).

A separate FAQ document is available for SNAs.

**An individual staff member MUST NOT upload their details to the temporary assignment website/questionnaire without having been authorised to do so in advance by school management or the HR section of their employer. If you do so, you will delay the assignment of staff who have been validly released. If in doubt, contact your school management or HR section to confirm whether they have deemed you to be releasable.**

#### **REASON FOR TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT**

##### **1. Why are temporary assignments required?**

COVID-19 is the most significant crisis faced by our country in living memory. The primary focus in the civil and public service is to support the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. To achieve this, and to keep delivering the essential services to society, especially for the most vulnerable and at-risk, we need to come together and work as a unified public service.

Temporary assignment of staff will help to ensure the continuation of essential public services and is one of the many responses of Government and the health authorities to the unprecedented challenges posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

All public servants who are not medically advised to self-isolate must be available to carry out work either to deliver services in their current post (as a priority) or for temporary assignment within the wider public sector.

## **EMPLOYEES COMPREHENDED BY TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT**

### **2. Who is comprehended by these arrangements?**

The Temporary Assignment arrangements set out in Department of Education and Skills circulars 27/2020 and 28/2020 are in respect of public servants only.

### **3. I am a Teacher/ Lecturer or am involved in delivering tuition. Am I required to be available for temporary assignment?**

All public servants who are not medically advised to self-isolate must be available to carry out work either to deliver services in their current post (as a priority) or for temporary assignment within the wider public sector.

The priority for staff in the education sector is to continue the provision of education. You must wait to be nominated by your school management or HR Section before uploading your details to the questionnaire for temporary assignment.

### **4. I am a Special Needs Assistant. Am I required to be available for temporary assignment?**

A dedicated temporary assignment process has been established for SNAs, given the particular skills and experience of these staff in assisting children with additional care needs.

A separate FAQ document is available for SNAs.

### **5. UPDATE: I am in an at-risk group - am I required to be available for temporary assignment?**

There are groups of people who may be at more risk of serious illness from COVID-19. The current advice on this group is available from the [HSE for the current delay phase of COVID-19](#). Under Health and Safety legislation, the employer has a duty to ensure employees' safety, health and welfare at work as far as is reasonably practicable.

If the employee is at home, and is not ill, they are to be considered available for work. What this means is that the employee should be assigned work to complete in their home.

The current advice is that employees in an At Risk Group should not leave their homes to travel to work with the exception of essential workers, until the 12<sup>th</sup> of April. There

may be potential for remote working, depending on the requirements of the role in question, and the availability of technical resources.

**6. I have childcare or other caring responsibilities. Am I required to be available for temporary assignment?**

All public servants who are not medically advised to self-isolate must be available to carry out work either to deliver services in their current post (as a priority) or for temporary assignment within the wider public sector.

There may be potential for flexible hours and remote working, depending on the requirements of the role in question, and the availability of technical resources.

**7. Do all releasable employees have to complete the Temporary Assignment questionnaire?**

Yes, all employees identified by their organisation as currently releasable, are required to complete the linked online questionnaire which they will have received from their school management or HR section. This is to seek to ensure the most appropriate location, skills and experience match, where possible, as needs arise.

**8. NEW: I am a teacher currently on Career Break. I am willing to be considered for temporary assignment, but as I am on Career Break I am not being paid by the Department/ETB. Can I fill out the questionnaire?**

All public servants that are employed that are nominated by their school management or HR Section, are to complete the questionnaire (and commence vetting if required for the role).

The Career Break Scheme for teachers is contained in Chapter 7 of Circular 54/2019. A teacher currently on Career Break may not be considered for temporary assignment as he/she is on an unpaid leave of absence from the school. A return to duty in the school/ETB which granted the Career Break or to the school/ETB where the teacher has been redeployed is not permitted other than at the beginning of a succeeding school year.

**9. NEW: I am currently on other approved leave (e.g. bereavement leave/ordinary sick leave/adoptive leave/carers' leave/maternity leave etc.). Do I have to fill out the questionnaire?**

All public servants that are employed that are nominated by their school management or HR Section, are to complete the questionnaire (and commence vetting if required for the role). Nominated staff will not be assigned if they are sick (COVID-19 related or

ordinary sick leave), self-isolating or on any other type of approved leave (e.g. Bereavement Leave, Maternity Leave, Adoptive Leave, Carers' Leave etc.).

The status of the staff member (including their employment and health status) will be considered by PAS, or the HSE in the case of SNAs, in conjunction with the School Management/HR section at the time of making the temporary assignment.

For example, if someone is well now, but needs to self-isolate later and is called for assignment during the self-isolation period, the assignment process will be paused and HSE will contact them again after the self-isolation period has passed.

**10. NEW: I am currently serving notice with my current employer, and am due to start with them again after the Easter holidays. Should I fill out the questionnaire?**

See answer to Q9.

## **PROCESS FOR TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT**

**11. Can I volunteer for temporary assignment?**

No. You cannot volunteer for temporary assignment. You must wait to be nominated by your school management or HR Section before uploading your details to the questionnaire for temporary assignment.

School Management Authorities, Chief Executives of ETBs, and Human Resources sections will identify staff necessary to provide and support the essential delivery of tuition to all students during the closure period and which staff are available for temporary assignment and will inform you if you have been nominated for assignment.

Public Servants are not eligible to volunteer for 'Be on Call for Ireland'.

**12. I have not heard from my employer, but I am aware of the Public Appointments Service (PAS) survey link. Can I go ahead and upload my details?**

No, you MUST NOT upload your details to the temporary assignment website/questionnaire without having been authorised to do so in advance by school management or the HR section of their employer. If you do so, you will delay the assignment of staff who have been validly released. If in doubt, contact your school management or HR section to confirm whether they have deemed you to be releasable.

**13. I have been informed by my School Management /Chief Executive of my ETB/my Human Resource Officer that I am being made available for temporary assignment. What is the next step?**

- (i) The School Management/Human Resource Section will send you a link to a questionnaire which is hosted by the Public Appointment Service (PAS).
- (ii) You must fill in this questionnaire, which will collect information relating to you, your location and details of your skills and work experience. This is necessary for the coordination of temporary assignments.
- (iii) You must inform your School Management/Human Resource Section once you have completed the survey

**14. I don't have a laptop. How can I complete the questionnaire?**

The questionnaire can be completed on a mobile phone, tablet or laptop for ease of use.

**15. I've filled in the questionnaire. What will happen now?**

By filling out your details on the questionnaire you received from your school management / local HR, you have now been added to the Public Appointments Service database underpinning the Temporary Assignments Scheme.

Those public service bodies who are requesting additional help are similarly providing us at Public Appointments Service with a list of their current skills gaps and roles that they need to cover.

PAS, or the HSE in the case of SNAs, then match the skills, experience and location preference(s) of the civil & public servants with the roles and requirements identified by the public service bodies in need.

When a match is established PAS, will initially contact your school management or HR section to confirm a match has been identified. You will then be provided with all the details you need to take up your allocated Temporary Assignment.

The assignment may be for an initial period of anything from several weeks to three months, with a possible extension where required.

As this is an evolving situation, demands may change in line with Covid-19 contingency measures however PAS, , will endeavour to keep school management or the HR section and employees informed of any updates.

## **16. Will I be Garda Vetted?**

Garda vetting requirements may apply depending on the nature of the post to which the individual is being assigned.

## **17. UPDATE: Will all employees who complete the questionnaire be temporarily assigned?**

The temporary assignment scheme will be used to ensure essential public services continue to be delivered over the coming weeks. As part of the wider national effort during the current crisis, the Department has been working closely with the HSE and other Government bodies to support the temporary assignment of education sector staff, including SNAs, to where they can be of most support.

Employees who have registered with PAS will be assigned as required to support the delivery of essential public services as needs are identified by public service bodies in consultation with the Public Appointments Service.

While all releasable staff, including SNAs, are being asked to sign up to the process, the PAS will engage with staff and their managers before they are assigned to ensure that they are not self-isolating or have restricted movements at the time of assignment.

We do not envisage that all staff that complete the questionnaire (and Garda Vetting if required), will be immediately required for assignment.

## **LOCATION**

### **18. What location will I be temporarily assigned to?**

In completing the questionnaire, you are asked to indicate your preferred location choices in order of preference. If you only have one preference, then only one location should be indicated.

### **19. Is there a potential to work remotely while on temporary assignment?**

There may be potential for remote working, depending on the requirements of the role in question, and the availability of technical resources.

## **CONTRACT, PAYMENTS & REPORTING**

### **20. Will a temporary assignment affect my Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID)/Contractual requirements?**

Your regular employer will remain your employer for all contractual purposes. For the purposes of CID entitlement, the temporary assignment will not be counted as a break in service.

### **21. My contract is due to end in a few months. What happens if I am on a temporary assignment?**

If you are on a contract the temporary assignment will terminate at the current end date of your contract if that occurs during the assignment period.

### **22. Who will pay me?**

You will continue to be paid by your regular paymaster.

### **23. Who will be my manager?**

For the duration of the temporary assignment direct management and supervision will be provided by the temporary line manager.

### **24. What hours will I work?**

You will not be required to work beyond your current contracted hours. Working hours will be dependent on the particular needs and circumstances of the organisation. Some workplaces may operate different working arrangements which may be across an extended working day or week. These arrangements can support staff to manage caring responsibilities and facilitate social distancing measures.

### **25. Is Travel and Subsistence (T&S) payable to staff on temporary assignment?**

Normal T&S arrangements will apply to staff who are temporarily assigned in the current crisis. Staff who are temporarily assigned should be treated as being headquartered at the new location. In this regard, normal Public Service and Revenue rules on non-payment of T&S for home to work travel apply.

**26. Can employees on temporary assignment return to meet business needs in parent organisation if required?**

Where the need arises, staff who have been temporarily assigned can return to their original jobs.

**ROLES**

**27. When can I expect to start my assignment?**

The temporary assignment scheme will be used to ensure essential public services continue to be delivered over the coming weeks and months.

Employees who have registered with PAS will be assigned as required to support the delivery of essential public services as needs are identified by public service bodies in consultation with PAS.

Where the need arises, staff who have been temporarily assigned can return to their original jobs.

**28. What role will I be temporarily assigned to?**

You may be temporarily assigned to work in a different role and organisation in order to support the delivery of essential public services. PAS will advise of role details upon assignment.

While the initial call is from the Health Service Executive (HSE), many other essential public services may require additional short term support. This is an evolving situation and demands may change.

**See response to: Q17. I've filled in the questionnaire. What will happen now?**

**29. Will I be trained?**

Training/up-skilling will be provided as necessary in order to ensure that staff are equipped to undertake the roles in question.

**Contact for further queries**

[ESR@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESR@education.gov.ie)