

Careers in Defra

This brochure will give you an idea of the variety of jobs available in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. There are many further posts that are only available through promotion once you are employed by us.

Defra operates a competency based recruitment system.

In common with other Government Departments, Defra will advertise posts in the national/local press and on our website: www.defra.gov.uk as and when they arise.

You may also wish to visit the Cabinet Office Recruitment Gateway: www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk



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Equal Opportunities



The Department is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. Our aim is to create and promote an environment in which all staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. No one in the Department should suffer discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

We are always willing to consider ways to help our staff combine a career with domestic responsibilities. As well as part-time working and job sharing opportunities we also offer a career break scheme. Childcare facilities are also available at many of our offices.

Administrative Assistants

The first step on the administration ladder is the position of Administrative Assistant. In this post you would help with the smooth running of your office and its work within Defra as a whole. You might be asked to deal with telephone enquiries from the public, write straightforward letters, file documents or keep records of the work using computer technology.

Applicants for Administrative Assistant positions should have two GCSE passes (grade A, B or C), one of which should be English Language, (or an equivalent qualification) or one year's relevant work experience.

Administrative Officers

As an Administrative Officer you will find yourself working alongside Administrative Assistants and other people. You may be asked to deal with incoming mail, replying to some letters and passing others on to specialists more able to deal with the enquiry. You may be asked for example to calculate the amount of grant money which should be given to farmers and the like, handle invoices and keep simple accounts. It may also be part of your duties to keep up-to-date records of the work being done in your office.

Applicants for Administrative Officer positions should have five GCSE passes (grade A, B or C), one of which should be English Language (or an equivalent qualification) or at least two year's relevant work experience.

Executive Officers

As an Executive Officer you could be involved in policy, formulation and implementation on subjects as varied as food commodities and marketing, environmental protection, plant/animal health or flood protection and land utilisation. Most posts are office based, some (in the Rural Development Service Centres) involve inspection of livestock and crops. There are also opportunities to travel abroad to international meetings, as well as challenging career opportunities in such areas as information technology, personnel, economics, statistics, accountancy and audit.

Applicants must have at least two GCE 'A' level passes, and three acceptable passes at GCSE (grade C or above). One of the qualifications must be in English Language; and for accountancy trainee posts, an acceptable pass in GCSE Mathematics. Equivalent qualifications including BTec, SCE and SCOTvec may be accepted as alternatives.

Many direct entrant Executive Officers also have a degree. Graduates in all disciplines are eligible to apply.

You may also be eligible for consideration if you have three years relevant office-based experience.

Rural Payments Agency Inspector

As a RPA Inspector you would visit farms to verify claims for grants and subsidies and to ensure compliance with the CAP scheme rules. The post involves extensive travelling and day-to-day liaison with farmers and Defra staff within the Rural Development Service Centres.

Entry qualifications are the same as those given above for Executive Officers.

Accountants

As an Accountant in Defra you might be responsible for overseeing Funding for Research and Development, Value for Money audit, EU support pricing or Financial Control. Recruitment is normally at Senior Executive Officer level, but vacancies for higher graded posts also arise.

You must be a member of one of the CCAB bodies and you will normally be expected to have a minimum of two years' post qualification experience.

All posts are in London.

Fast Streamers

The fast stream is designed to provide opportunities for rapid development for its members. Fast streamers are given new posts on average once a year to enable them to develop a broad skill and knowledge base to prepare them for accelerated promotion to the Senior Civil Service.

Applicants should have a 2nd class honours degree or above (in any subject).

For more information on Fast Stream:

Contact: HRSD,
Government Buildings,
Whittington Road,
Worcester WR5 2LQ
or visit www.faststream.gov.uk
and www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk

Horticultural Marketing Inspectors

Horticultural Marketing Inspectors are responsible for enforcing National statutory and EU grading regulations for fresh produce.

Applicants should have an Ordinary National Diploma in Horticulture together with a good general education or an equivalent or higher technical qualification in horticulture or a closely related subject.

Applicants without the prescribed qualifications will be considered, provided that they have had considerable relevant horticultural experience and have obtained GCSE (or equivalent) passes in five subjects including English Language and a Science subject; two of which must be at advanced level.

A full driving licence, or equivalent means of travel to fulfil the duties of the post is essential.

Candidates must have effective colour vision, and will be required to undergo a colour vision test at the time of interview.

Librarians

The Department's library service consists of a network of seventeen major libraries and over one hundred library service points throughout the country. The main library is in London, with specialist and laboratory libraries situated around the country. Librarians are expected to collect, organise and disseminate information that is pertinent to the Department.

Applicants must have passes or be exempted from the registration examination of 1963 or earlier, or the final examination of 1964 or later, or the postgraduate professional examination of the Library Association; or hold an approved degree or diploma in librarianship obtained in the UK; or have otherwise obtained associateship or licencship of the Library Association; or have obtained the Certificate of Prelicencship Training of the Library Association.

All applicants must also have had some practical library experience.

Lawyers

The legal department provides a wide range of advice and legal service which reflects the full scope of the Department's operations. The work encompasses not only most branches of domestic law (including, notably, administrative law) but also to a large and increasing extent, the law of the European Communities.

To join the Legal Department you must be qualified as a barrister or a solicitor. We can also offer limited opportunities to obtain a legal qualification by participation in the Articled Clerks and Pupil Barristers Scheme operated by the Government Legal Service.

Contact: The Lawyers Management Unit,
Queen Anne's Chambers,
28 Broadway, London, SW1H 9JS
Telephone: 0207 210 3386

For more information about careers for Lawyers in Defra contact:
HRSD,
Government Buildings,
Whittington Road,
Worcester WR5 2LQ
or visit www.defra.gov.uk
and www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk

Statisticians

Statisticians in Defra are required to analyse and assess the environmental and trade implications of Government and EU policies and proposals relating to the agriculture, fisheries and food industries. Particular emphasis is laid on the assessment of the Common Agricultural Policy and associated measures.

To join Defra as a statistician you must have a first or second class honours degree in a numerate discipline, e.g. statistics, maths, economics, geography or psychology etc.

Contact: Government Statistical Service Personnel Office for National
Statistics,
1 Drummond Gate, London, SW1V 2QQ
Telephone number: 0207 533 5043.

For more information about careers for Statisticians in Defra contact:
HRSD,
Government Buildings,
Whittington Road,
Worcester WR5 2LQ
or visit www.defra.gov.uk
and www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk

Economists

Economists in Defra provide economic assessments and advice to Ministers, Defra Policy Divisions and other Government Departments on the full range of the Department's operations.

To join Defra as an economist you will need, as a minimum, an excellent academic record, with a good economics or agricultural economics degree (at least upper second class honours) or a relevant postgraduate degree in economics.

Contact: The Economist Group Management Unit,
H M Treasury, Parliament Street,
London, SW1P 3AG
Telephone number: 0207 5073/5622

For more information about careers for Economists in Defra contact:
HRSD,
Government Buildings,
Whittington Road,
Worcester WR5 2LQ
or visit www.defra.gov.uk
and www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk

Sea Fisheries Inspectorate – Fisheries Officer II

Fishery Officer IIs are responsible for:

- the enforcement of UK and EU legislation;
- collection and input of data, evaluation of fish catching and landing statistics for enforcement, quota monitoring, marketing and general policy purposes;
- local liaison with fishing industry primarily to encourage compliance with legislation and to ensure provision of statistical data, and secondly, to promote the Departments interests generally; and
- supervision of industry and Producer Organisation compliance with statutory obligations under EU Fish Marketing Regulations, including certification of FEOGA (European Agricultural Guidance Fund).

Applicants for Fishery Officer II must have as a minimum:

- two GCE 'A' level passes and three acceptable passes at GCSE (grade C or above), two of which must be in English and Mathematics;
- two years' minimum relevant experience at sea in the fishing or maritime industry or other related service, in a position of responsibility.

Preference will be given to candidates possessing a Certificate of Competency, granted by the Department of Transport, to act as an officer of a merchant ship or mate of a fishing vessel or the equivalent Naval qualification. As travel is an integral part of the duties, it is preferable if applicants have a full driving licence, or equivalent.

Animal Health Officers

The Department's State Veterinary Service (SVS) employs Animal Health Officers who work under the direction of the veterinary Field Staff and assist them in a wide range of non-veterinary work such as brucellosis testing and residue collection. Most of the work, which is done on the farms and other premises where livestock are kept, is in connection with the prevention, eradication and control of animal and poultry diseases. Animal Health Officers are not involved in animal production.

The minimum entry requirement for Animal Health Officer is 4 GCSE passes or equivalent, including English and a relevant scientific subject. A degree/diploma in agriculture (or a related subject) or equivalent, is also acceptable. Competition for posts is strong so additional agricultural qualifications, and experience of handling livestock are advantageous.

As travelling is an integral part of the job, you must hold a current UK driving licence or be able to call upon a suitable alternative means of transport.

Veterinary Officers

Veterinary Officers' duties include:

- the control and eradication of notifiable diseases;
- diagnostic and consultancy work on notifiable and non-notifiable diseases;
- epidemiological studies;
- disease monitoring and surveillance;
- special investigation and surveys;
- the operation of health schemes;
- general advisory and extension work in connection with most aspects of veterinary work; and
- the pursuit of improved farm animal welfare.

Applicants for Veterinary Officer must be a Member or a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Egg Marketing Inspectors

An Egg Marketing Inspector is responsible for enforcing the EU Egg Marketing Regulations and Hatching Eggs and Chicks Regulations at all marketing stages up to but excluding retail level. This includes visits to wholesalers, auction markets, collectors and egg processors; making recommendations to the Regional Egg Marketing Inspector concerning breaches of regulations and possible prosecution.

Drinking Water Inspector

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) is one of three independent water industry regulators. It operates on behalf of the Secretary of State in Defra in regulating English water companies, and on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales in regulating Welsh water companies.

The inspectorate is responsible for assessing the quality of drinking water in England and Wales, and taking enforcement action if standards are not being met. It produces an independent annual report covering Wales in both English and Welsh languages, together with associated leaflets.

For administrative purposes DWI is part of Defra and there could be opportunities in the future for interested inspectors to transfer to other work in the Department.

Applicants should have a good honours degree in a subject related to water supply, such as chemistry, engineering, microbiology or biology. This should be supported by substantial post-graduate experience in the practical aspects of water supply.

The nature of the work is varied and ability to work in a small team is essential. You will need to have good organisational and communication skills.

There are three levels of inspector – Assistant Inspector (EO equivalent), SPTO Inspector (SEO equivalent) and Principal Inspector (Grade 7 equivalent).

Investigation Officers

The duties of an Investigation Officer involve investigating fraud and irregularities covering a wide range of subjects, including food hygiene, agricultural subsidies, tree felling and animal welfare. Investigation Officers conduct their enquiries in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Criminal Procedures and Investigation Act 1996 and prepare cases with a view to prosecution. The work entails a considerable amount of travel.

Applicants for Investigation Officer posts must have:

- had considerable experience in criminal investigation work;
- good practical knowledge of criminal law and court procedures;
- interviewing skills in relation to witnesses and suspects with full regard to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act; and
- had dealings with exhibits and submission of investigation reports taking account of the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act.

Applicants must be able to express themselves both orally and in writing. This experience could have been gained in the CID of a Police Service or H M Forces equivalent, but applications from others who are suitably qualified would be welcomed.

As travelling to remote country areas is an integral part of the job, you must hold a current UK driving licence or be able to call upon a suitable alternative means of transport.

Information Officers

The role of the Government Information Service (GIS) is to explain the activities of the Government. The GIS covers nearly every aspect of communication work:

- advertising;
- press office;
- journalism;
- public relations;
- TV and radio;
- marketing;
- publications;
- graphic design;
- exhibitions;
- video and film;
- conferences;
- audio visual.

Press Officers give a 24 hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week service. They are the link between government departments and the media. When a big story breaks, it is the Press Officer's job to keep the newspapers, TV and radio informed.

Publicity Officers make sure that the right people receive the right message at the right time. They must look at the intended audience, then decide the most effective way to get a message across within the given budget.

Applicants should be graduates of media studies courses or other related discipline, preferably with experience in press relations or publicity. Applicants who left school at 16 to work in newspapers, advertising or in a related field may also apply.

Contact: Marketing, Recruitment and Training Division,
Information Officer Management Unit, Cabinet Office,
Horse Guards Road, London, SW1P 3AL.

For more information about Information Officers' careers in Defra contact:

HRSD,
Government Buildings,
Whittington Road,
Worcester WR5 2LQ
or visit www.defra.gov.uk
and www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk

Scientists

Food Scientists in Defra:

- provide scientific advice to assist in the formulation and application of Government policy for agriculture, horticulture, fishing and food; to tackle a variety of trade and food matters, and to provide for animal health;
- conduct and advise on R & D to acquire knowledge essential to ensure the adequate supply of safe and nutritious foods;
- support negotiation and development of international trade food policies and administration of the EU's Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies and national support schemes.

The work of scientists in Defra varies greatly; in some posts it is largely theoretical, in others it is more experimental. Many posts demand all the knowledge and intellectual qualities of the food honours scientists, whilst others will be more appropriate for a practical person with a sound knowledge of scientific or engineering principles.

Applicants for Scientific Officer posts should normally have one of the following:

- a degree in a scientific, engineering or mathematical subject;
- degree-standard membership of a professional institution;
- a Higher National Certificate or a National Diploma in a scientific, engineering or mathematical subject or an equivalent qualification.

River and Coastal Engineers

Engineers are located at regional offices throughout England, and in London. The work calls for close liaison with engineers from the Environment Agency, local authorities, Internal Drainage Boards and with consulting engineers. Professional advice is provided on a wide range of issues concerned with the Department's Flood Defence and Coast Protection and Fisheries Harbours responsibilities.

Plant Health and Seeds Inspector

The Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate is a highly trained group of inspectors based in England and Wales. They enforce the plant health and seeds legislation in England and Wales by monitoring the health status of plants and plant products moving into, and being traded within the UK, to ensure they are free from quarantine pests and diseases. Where appropriate they control the movement of plants, produce and soil to prevent the spread of quarantine plant pests and diseases. They inspect and sample seeds for health and quality, administer the plant passport system, and inspect and issue health certificates for plant materials for export.

Applicants should be educated to degree, HND or equivalent level in agriculture, horticulture or a related biological science and with relevant experience of the agricultural and horticultural industry. You should be a first class communicator with well developed interpersonal skills. We may also consider exceptional individuals with extensive knowledge and practical experience of horticulture or agriculture, with some relevant formal qualification and who hold 5 GCSE and 2 'A' level passes. The ability to work both independently, and as part of a highly motivated team will be essential. Some familiarity with the use of computers would be an advantage. As driving is an integral part of the job you must either have a full driving licence or be able to call on equivalent transport when required.

These are training grades, normally leading to promotion to Grade 1 Inspector on successful completion of a two year programme.

Defra Rural Development Service Centres (RDS)

In common with other Government Departments, Defra will advertise posts in the national/local press and on our website: www.defra.gov.uk as and when they arise.

Defra Agencies

- **Central Science Laboratory:**
Sand Hutton
York YO4 1LZ
Tel. No: (01904) 462000
- **Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science:**
Pakefield Road
Lowestoft NR33 OHT
Tel. No: (01502) 562244
- **Pesticides Safety Directorate:**
Mallard House
3 Peasholme Green
York YO1 2PX
Tel. No: (01904) 640500
- **Rural Payments Agency:**
Kings House
33 Kings Road
Reading RG1 3BU
Tel. No: (0118) 958 3626
- **Veterinary Laboratories Agency:**
New Haw
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 3NB
Tel. No: (01932) 341111
- **Veterinary Medicines Directorate:**
New Haw
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 3LS
Tel. No: (01932) 336911