



## Director, Craft Apprenticeship - Capacity and Integration Role Specification

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Director, Craft Apprenticeship Capacity &amp; Integration (Grade 4)</b>
<b>Employer:</b>	<b>SOLAS</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>* Castleforbes House, Castleforbes Road, Dublin 1</b>
<b>Tenure:</b>	<b>Three-Year Fixed-Term Contract</b>
<b>Salary:</b>	<b>€97,207 to €120,237</b>
<b>Reporting to:</b>	<b>Joint reporting structure – Executive Director, Delivery / NAO</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>488</b>

### Background

SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna), the Further Education and Training (FET) Authority of Ireland was established on 27 October 2013. Its mission is to set the strategy, fund, co-ordinate and monitor FET to support economic and social wellbeing, while simultaneously playing its part in influencing and supporting the development of a FET sector that is more responsive to the needs of learners and employers. The general functions of SOLAS are set out in the Education and Training Act 2013, with the full text of the act available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2013/en/act/pub/0025/index.html>.

SOLAS is an agency of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). It works in close collaboration with Education and Training Boards (ETBs) on provision of high-quality further education and training, equipping learners with relevant skills and knowledge, providing a pipeline of talent into employment and to the Irish economy and society. SOLAS leads actions in delivering key Government skills strategy including Future FET Transforming Learning and the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021 – 2025.

SOLAS also has statutory responsibilities in relation to the national apprenticeship system. In January 2022, as per the *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025*, SOLAS established the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) in partnership with the Higher Education Authority (HEA). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place between both agencies on the functions and operational arrangements of the NAO with a management board consisting of the CEOs of both SOLAS and the HEA and the Director of the NAO.

A primary function of the NAO is to implement the Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025. The Plan sets out a policy to integrate the national apprenticeship system, which now includes 72 apprenticeship programmes and over 26,000 apprentices in training with 9,000+ employers. When the Action Plan is fully implemented, the NAO will have responsibility for all aspects of the management, oversight and development of the apprenticeship system.

The coordinating provider role for SOLAS is a legacy from its previous incarnation as an organisation where it served as a national training provider. Providing apprenticeship training is not aligned with the current remit of SOLAS as a strategy, funding and oversight body. As part of implementation of the apprenticeship Action Plan, the role of coordinating provider for 25 craft apprenticeships will transfer from SOLAS into the new integrated model.

The COVID pandemic had a major impact on craft apprenticeship capacity and provision in Ireland. Workshops were closed for 9 out of the first 12 months, with capacity constraints lasting for most of the pandemic. This created a major backlog and resulted in thousands of apprentices having to wait over 6 months to access off-the-job training. A multifaceted plan was progressed by SOLAS and its partners to tackle this backlog and significant progress has been made. However, increased levels of craft apprentice registrations have resulted in continued delays in training. Further focused action is needed to ensure that no apprentice is waiting over 6 months to access off-the-job training.

Over the period 2023-2025 there are two major apprenticeship goals for delivery. Firstly, off-the-job training capacity for craft apprenticeships must be expanded to ensure that no apprentice is waiting over six months to access training. Secondly, SOLAS must oversee transfer of its coordinating provider role for craft apprenticeships into the single integrated apprenticeship model.

SOLAS has therefore decided to appoint a Programme Director for Apprenticeship Capacity and Integration to lead a team and ensure delivery of these two major goals, each of which are critical and time-bound in nature.

### **The Role**

The Programme Director will lead the craft apprenticeship team and be a member of the senior leadership team in SOLAS, reporting directly to the Executive Director for Delivery as well as reporting to and working closely with the Director of the National Apprenticeship Office. There will be a management structure and methodology for the joint working arrangements and reporting to SOLAS and the NAO. The successful candidate will play a major role in driving implementation of the apprenticeship integration project, managing change within SOLAS and supporting change across the wider stakeholder landscape. In tandem, there will be an operational imperative to continue to ensure craft apprenticeship provision operates smoothly and effectively, and that capacity continues to be ramped up in order to address the remaining waiting lists. Consultancy expertise will support the change process.

The Programme Director role within SOLAS will offer a unique opportunity to be part of transformation of the national apprenticeship system. The successful candidate will be an innovative individual with extensive senior leadership experience in a multi-functional, complex organisation, with the capacity to lead and manage change in an education and training context. They will demonstrate excellent project and change management skills and will also possess the technical and personal competencies required to successfully bring about transformational change, infrastructure planning and apprenticeship delivery within an organisational context. The ability to engage with stakeholders at a senior level, drive and manage change, and lead and develop the team are also key aspects of the role.

### **Key Deliverables**

While leading a team to ensure the continued effective operation of craft apprenticeship in Ireland, the two principal deliverables for the Programme Director are:

- To increase craft apprenticeship training capacity so that no apprentice has to wait over 6 months to access off-the-job training
- Working closely with the National Apprenticeship Office, to drive implementation of the overall apprenticeship integration plan and to implement a transition plan that will complete the transfer of SOLAS responsibilities as sole coordinating provider for craft apprenticeships to a consortia-led provider model

### **Key Responsibilities**

The Director will have senior leadership accountability and management responsibility for the following areas:

- Oversee an overall change management process to tackle the twin challenges of craft apprenticeship capacity and integration, chairing a Programme Board and reporting regularly on progress and milestones to that Board and other relevant stakeholders
- Drive implementation of a programme of work to integrate craft apprenticeships into the new integrated model in a clear timeframe of short, medium and long term priorities
- Lead implementation of a programme of work to eliminate the need for any craft apprentice to wait over 6 months in order to access off-the-job training
- Work closely with the Director of the National Apprenticeship Office and team on implementation of the overall integration plan
- Ensure that the capabilities and structures exist internally within SOLAS and externally to ensure the effective transition of craft apprenticeships into the single integrated model
- Lead communication of the transition approach with all relevant staff and stakeholders
- Work in partnership with stakeholders across the tertiary sector to ensure that the effectiveness, quality

and integrity of craft apprenticeship provision are maintained and enhanced in the transfer of responsibilities from SOLAS into the integrated model

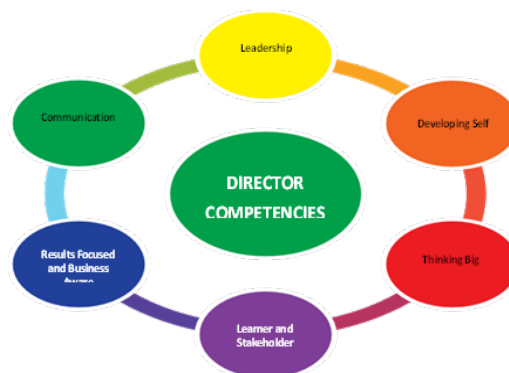
- Work closely with the HEA to effectively plan future capacity for off-the-job craft training in line with future demand and the need to eliminate 6 month-plus waiting lists
- Coordinate the effective delivery of craft apprenticeship provision until coordinating provider responsibilities are transferred from SOLAS
- Support existing providers in delivering reform and taking on new coordinating provider responsibilities in accordance with terms and conditions of funding and the transformation agenda
- Further develop programme and project governance and planning structures, working closely with the NAO and engaging with the national advisory body the National Apprenticeship Alliance
- Create and manage stakeholder relationships, including with government departments, employers, unions, providers and the public, to ensure the successful delivery of capacity and integration imperatives
- Actively monitor and report on programme budgets, costs and progress against schedule, as well as risks and oversight of control measures
- Procure and actively performance manage external multi-disciplinary advisors, including ongoing communications and reporting
- Prepare and deliver reports, recommendations, board papers and presentations as required
- Actively engage with the SOLAS senior leadership team on resource planning and the development and delivery of the SOLAS strategy and business plan objectives.
- As part of the Senior Leadership Team, ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

### Core Competencies

The successful candidate will have demonstrated the following core competencies for the role of Programme Director

- **Leadership** - *Inspiring and energising self and others to achieve personal and organisational success.*
- **Developing Self and Others** - *Finding ways to keep skills current and maintain up-to-date knowledge of specific and broad-range topics; providing developmental opportunities to others and taking ownership for own learning and others.*
- **Results Focused and Business Aware** - *Maintaining a focus on the important issues to achieve and improve results and awareness of and applying sound business principles and effective operational practices to drive successful outcomes.*
- **Learner & Stakeholder Focus** - *Maintaining learner/ stakeholder focus, understanding their needs, providing realistic commitments and taking responsibility for delivering on those commitments.*
- **Thinking Big** - *Generating and implementing creative solutions to achieve SOLAS Strategic goals, conceptualising and articulating future opportunities and trends.*
- **Communication** - *Exchanging information and ideas with others to promote effective discussion and decision making; promoting 2-way communication.*

### Effective Performance Indicators



<b>Leadership</b>	<p><i>Articulates and gives a sense of purpose and direction to the unit; delegates appropriately.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ gives the unit a sense of purpose by linking their efforts and contributions to the SOLAS overall vision, strategy, and goals.</li> <li>✓ demonstrates a passion, high energy, and accountability for achieving the desired future state.</li> <li>✓ listens without prescribing answers to ensure people feel comfortable voicing their opinions.</li> <li>✓ asks questions (rather than providing solutions) to help others make informed decisions.</li> <li>✓ delegates full authority and gives latitude to the individuals/team to do the job in their own way.</li> <li>✓ takes leadership responsibility for issues, inside and outside of his/her portfolio.</li> <li>✓ uses realistic but positive language to inspire others and make them feel part of a highly successful team.</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Self and Others</b>	<p><i>Takes an active role in guiding others in their developmental activities.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ makes time to discuss career aspirations with team members.</li> <li>✓ identifies developmental opportunities for team members (e.g. cross-functional projects)</li> <li>✓ acts as champion and sponsor for high performing team members.</li> <li>✓ volunteers' individuals for organisational projects even where the team is disadvantaged in the short-term</li> <li>✓ acts as a mentor to individuals at various levels within SOLAS.</li> </ul>
<b>Thinking Big</b>	<p><i>Scans the environment for potential opportunities, engaging individuals in the development of innovative yet achievable goals and work plans.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ scans the economic, academic, business and/or technical environment to spot opportunities and plan for future needs.</li> <li>✓ analyses emerging trends and threats over the longer term and effectively interprets this information to demonstrate the potential for SOLAS.</li> <li>✓ focuses the team's attention on the importance of the bigger, longer-term picture rather than the immediate.</li> <li>✓ challenges fundamental and traditional assumptions and encourages others to do the same.</li> </ul>
<b>Learner and Stakeholder Focus</b>	<p><i>Juggles multiple resources to best meet the needs of students or clients.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ continuously updates the team with learner/stakeholder information enabling them to provide the most effective service.</li> <li>✓ reallocates resources as appropriate to best meet learner/stakeholder needs.</li> <li>✓ persuasively lobbies for additional resources where necessary to meet learner/stakeholder needs.</li> <li>✓ challenges individuals to look at issues through the eyes of the learner/stakeholder.</li> <li>✓ considers the needs of both the learner/stakeholder and the overall organisation and finds mutually acceptable solutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Results Focused and Business Aware</b>	<p><i>Keeps current, builds effective business cases and seeks opportunities to raise SOLAS performance to meet organisational goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ keeps abreast of SOLAS's overall business and shares the information with his/her unit.</li> <li>✓ considers decisions from a business perspective to ensure economic viability.</li> <li>✓ uses financial information to evaluate options and opportunities.</li> <li>✓ builds effective business cases, separating the main issues, highlighting benefits, providing realistic cost and time estimations etc.</li> <li>✓ pushes self and others for high value results, not just activity.</li> <li>✓ checks-in with individuals and asks them to do the same, holding people accountable for milestones and achieving results</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<p><i>Proactively and consistently communicates within the unit, across SOLAS and with other stakeholders.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ takes the initiative and makes consistent and regular two-way communication a priority in the unit.</li> <li>✓ finds reasons to walk around to talk to people, being visible and available.</li> <li>✓ prepares and delivers engaging and motivating presentations.</li> <li>✓ considers other peoples' opinions, adapting the message to demonstrate respect for the audience.</li> <li>✓ Considers internal and external stakeholders to ensure effective communication with all.</li> </ul>

## SOLAS TRIBE Values:

The successful candidate will espouse the SOLAS values in all aspects of their work

- **Transparent:** We are Transparent, Accountable and Work with Integrity
- **Respectful:** We Respect and Value our People
- **Innovative:** We Think Big and Encourage Innovation
- **Brave:** We are underpinned by Trust, Support and a Shared Purpose
- **Effective:** We maximise value through our Professionalism and Efficiency

## **The Individual:**

The successful candidate will have:

- A record of accomplishment at a senior management level, preferably in a large multi-function complex organisation, focusing on strategy development within in an education, training or analogous environment.
- Understanding of apprenticeship training, and the ability to work with education providers, employers, staff representatives and Government to find solutions to complex challenges
- Knowledge of the *Action Plan for Apprenticeship 2021-2025*; Project Ireland National Development Plan 2040, and the Climate Action Plan 2021, FET Strategy 2024, with understanding of the consequent implications for infrastructure development, procurement and delivery.
- Knowledge of key issues and management strategies associated with apprenticeship requirements including housing for all climate change/sustainability, environmental, social and governance factors on apprenticeship delivery
- Preferably 10+ years' relevant programme or project management experience relating to the delivery of major reform projects.
- Relevant experience will address the principal responsibilities above and may include:
  - Project/Programme management qualification (desirable).
  - Oversight of planning and delivery of reform programmes or portfolios
  - Recent experience of implementing sustainable, social and environmental management initiatives in project procurement and delivery is desirable.
  - Management of project budgets; and implementation of IT solutions for tracking programme management
  - Recent experience working with major forms of public sector contracts
  - Project Team Leader experience, especially in leading and directing external advisors
- Extensive leadership experience in a complex delivery environment demonstrating delivery of change and operational planning.
- Proven experience in a significant change programme at a senior level
- Ability in relating effectively with a diverse range of people internal and external to the organisation, including government departments, Board members and staff representatives.
- Demonstrate an ability to take a system-wide approach and see connections, risk, and the potential for innovation in the wider environment.
- Ability to build and support complex cross-functional and inter-agency teams.
- Demonstrated achievement in the management of a variant and diversified portfolio in a devolved management structure.
- An excellent understanding of the strategic use and application of both quantitative and qualitative research
- Broad understanding of continuous development, innovation and achievement of results against objectives in career to date
- Capacity to create a vision for the sector and organisation and pulls together divergent and convergent requirements to deliver it.
- Knowledge of data governance practices and technology issues, regulatory requirements and emerging trends and issues.
- Exemplary public service values including the highest standard of professional integrity and operating with probity.
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills, as well as a working familiarity with information technology.
- Self-starter attributes possessing the necessary drive and resilience.
- A record of academic achievement that will include a relevant primary degree, or equivalent, at a minimum.

## **Principal Conditions of Service**

### **Probation**

A probationary period of nine months applies to this role.

### **Remuneration**

The rate of total remuneration for the post of Director (Grade 4X) (effective 01 March 2023) is as follows:

The Grade 4X pay scale (PPC) is **€97,207** to **€120,237**.

Candidates should note that the entry point will be at the minimum (1<sup>st</sup> point) of the relevant scale and the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

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.

### **Location**

The headquarters of SOLAS are currently based in Castleforbes House, Dublin 1 and the headquarters of the National Apprenticeship Office are on the Enterprise Ireland campus, East Point Business Park, Dublin 3. SOLAS has a hybrid working policy in place, in line with public service guidelines. SOLAS reserves the right, at its discretion, to change the primary location to any other place within Ireland.

### **Tenure**

This appointment will be on a fixed-term contract basis for three years. \*\*Please note: a secondment opportunity is not excluded.

### **Hours of Attendance**

Working hours will be in accordance with the standard arrangements for SOLAS.

### **Annual Leave**

The annual leave allowance will be 30 working days a year. This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave and it is on the basis of a five-day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

### **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. Pensionable public servants (new joiners) recruited on or after 1 January 2013 will be members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (Single Scheme). Please note that the Single Scheme applies to all pensionable first time entrants to the public service, as well as to former public servants returning to the Public Service after a break of more than 26 weeks. In certain circumstances the 26-week rule does not apply. The legislation giving effect to this scheme is the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012. For further information in relation to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme for Public Servants please see the following website: <http://www.per.gov.ie/pensions>