



CROWN OFFICE  
& PROCURATOR  
FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

# LEGAL TRAINEESHIP GRAMPIANS, HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS APPLICATION PACK

# INTRODUCTION

This guide is to inform you about our Grampian Highland and Islands Legal Traineeship and help you through the recruitment process to become a Trainee Solicitor with COPFS. It is recommended that you read this carefully as there are helpful hints and tips.

It is for information only and does not form part of the service's conditions of employment.

Completed application forms should be submitted to [recruitment@copfs.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@copfs.gov.uk) prior to the closing date.

## Questions?

If you have any further questions or require the application pack in an alternative format, you can contact:

07879 150850

Or

07717 699270

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# ABOUT COPFS

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service is Scotland's prosecution service. We receive reports about crimes from the police and other reporting agencies and then decide what action to take, including whether to prosecute someone. We also investigate sudden and suspicious deaths that require further explanation; and investigate allegations of criminal conduct against police officers.

COPFS plays a pivotal part in the justice system, working with others to make Scotland safe from crime, disorder and danger.

The public interest is at the heart of all we do as independent prosecutors. We take into account the diverse needs of victims, witnesses, communities and the rights of those accused of crime. We support the Strategy for Justice in Scotland and, in particular, its priorities of:

- Reducing crime, particularly violent and serious organised crime
- Tackling hate crime and sectarianism
- Supporting victims and witnesses
- Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime

# OUR VALUES

Our values are:

- Being professional
- Showing respect



“ As the largest employer of lawyers in Scotland, we have a long tradition of recruiting quality trainees from a variety of backgrounds. We value diversity and actively promote equal opportunities across all areas of the business. COPFS is committed to its traineeship programme and to providing a unique opportunity to contribute to the crucial service COPFS provides to the people of Scotland. Our trainees are highly valued members of staff who, with support and structured learning, contribute to the investigation and conduct of cases in court with skill and expertise and are trusted with a high level of responsibility. Having started my career as a trainee with COPFS I am aware of the unrivalled opportunity to learn about all aspects of our work, appear in court from an early stage of the traineeship, engage directly with victims and witnesses and support the law officers, senior leaders and advocate deputes in some of our most complex and sensitive casework. Undertaking a traineeship with COPFS provides an outstanding opportunity to build a successful career as a prosecutor.

**John Logue**  
Crown Agent

# OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBJECTIVES

## The main roles and responsibilities of COPFS are to:

- investigate, prosecute and disrupt crime, including seizing the proceeds of crime
- establish the cause of sudden, unexplained or suspicious deaths
- investigate allegations of criminal conduct against police officers.

Our aim is to meet the Law Officers' strategic priority of achieving operational effectiveness in all cases.

## Our key objectives are:

- to secure the confidence of our diverse communities by improving the delivery of justice through the timely, efficient and effective prosecution of crime
- to give priority to the prosecution of serious crime, including drugs trafficking and persistent offenders
- to provide services that meet the information needs of victims, witnesses and next-of-kin, in co-operation with other agencies
- to ensure that all deaths reported to the Procurator Fiscal are investigated appropriately and speedily



# THE OFFER

COPFS are offering 2 legal trainee posts with anticipated start dates commencing in:

- September 2024

Appointments will be offered on merit to the top performing candidates.

Trainee Solicitors will receive a salary of £28,702 for their first year of training and £32,003 for their second year.

Positions are full time with a 37 hour working week, excluding lunch breaks. Flexible working arrangements are also in operation.



The traineeship is helping me to understand the wide variety of roles COPFS plays in Scotland and the need to always work in the public interest. What has been great is the level of support we get from our colleagues, there is always someone there to help you if you need anything. That support has been invaluable.”

**Lynne Donaghy**  
Trainee Solicitor 2020

This Traineeship is for Grampian, Highland and Islands only.

If you are based in Aberdeen travel will be required on occasion to the Banff and Peterhead offices.

If you are based in Inverness there will be regular travel required to the Tain, Elgin and Fort William offices.

There may be an occasional requirement to travel to other offices within the sheriffdom, depending on business needs.

COPFS employees receive an annual leave allowance of 25 days and an additional 11.5 public and privilege holidays per year.

COPFS also operate within the Civil Service employer pension arrangements. Full details are available via

[www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk](http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk)



# TRAINEESHIP SEATS

The COPFS Legal Traineeship offers a wide range of experience and opportunities in the public prosecution service in Scotland.

Candidates will be offered the chance to undertake a range of responsibilities within the Procurator Fiscal's offices. This will include preparation and presentation of cases in summary courts.

The first six months of the Traineeship you will likely be placed in a seat within our Serious Casework division.

In the second six months of your first year and the duration of your second year you will be placed in one of the local court offices across Grampian, Highland and Islands. You will be introduced to the operational work of a Procurator Fiscal Depute in local court and develop your skills as a court prosecutor.

The above is not exhaustive and locations and business placements may be amended as required to take into account business need

# ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS OF POST

Applicants will be required to have the following completed prior to the traineeship start date:

- a Scots Law LLB (or an equivalent Honours Degree in other subjects, combined with a degree in Scots Law)
- a valid diploma in Legal Practice obtained from a Scottish university
- an Entrance Certificate from the Law Society of Scotland
- A full UK driving license

Throughout the duration of the traineeship successful candidates will be required to work in their allocated location in the North of Scotland. There will be a requirement to travel to other offices within the sheriffdom.

Suitability for the job will be the determining factor for selection. There are no age limits.



I have been in seats with SOCD, Appeals, SFIU and SOCD again. I was able to return to SOCD to work on a particular case I spent much of my first seat working on, so I really felt part of the team and that my work really was appreciated from the off.

**David Currie**  
Trainee Solicitor 2019

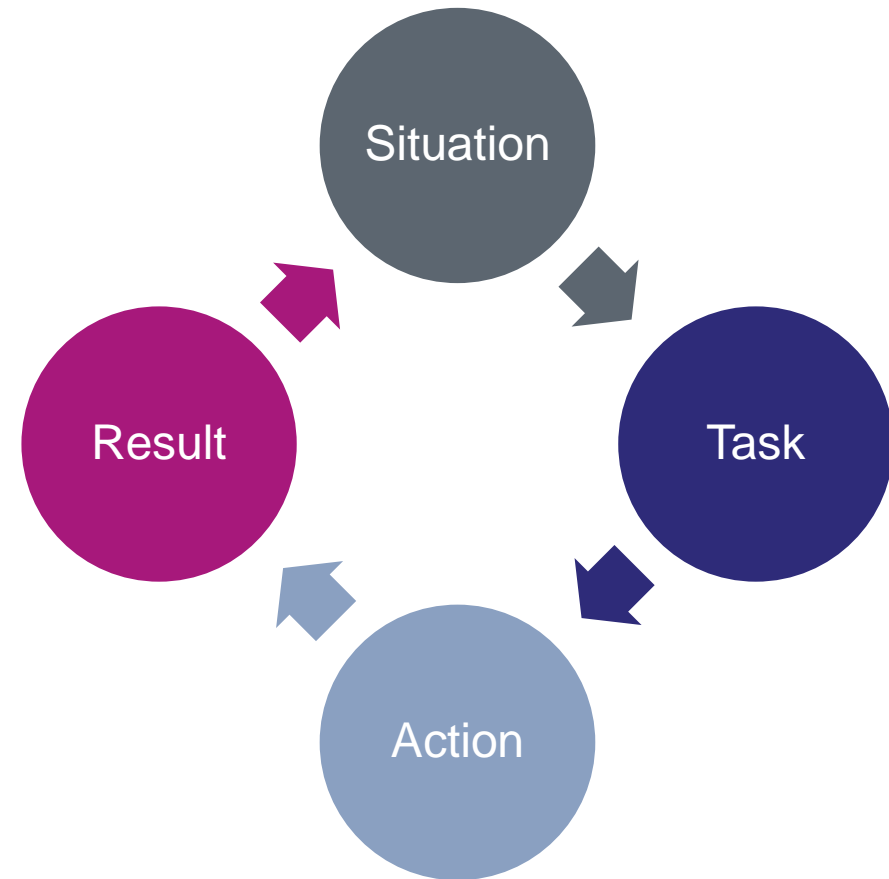
# THE APPLICATION

# THE COMPETENCY BASED APPROACH

COPFS follow a competency based recruitment approach.

This approach allows the panel to assess a candidates past behaviours as a prediction of future behaviours. This means the panel will be looking for real life examples of how you have met the competencies which you will be assessed against. These can be found on the next page.

We recommend you follow the 'STAR' (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method to present your answers.



# THE COMPETENCY BASED APPROACH

General answers of what you might do in a situation will not suffice. You will need to ensure that the examples given in your application form are concise and meet with the recommended word count of 250 words per competency. Answers in excess of 300 words will not be assessed beyond this count, and this will likely affect your score.

Full guidance regarding your application can be found within the Candidates Guide to Competency Based Recruitment section of the application pack.

Although the competencies and specific indicators which you will be assessed against are on the next page of this guide, the full competency framework is available to download as part of your application pack. It is recommended you download this and carefully read through all aspects of the framework to gain a fuller understanding of the competencies.



The traineeship has afforded me a wide range of opportunities to understand the integral role COPFS plays in the Scottish legal system. I appreciate that the work of COPFS is invaluable and I am proud to be a part of that. I am supported at each turn and I know colleagues are always on hand to help

Lauren Pennycook  
Trainee solicitor 2021

# THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

# THE SIFT

Applications received will be subject to a formal sift and will be scored using the 3 point marking scale contained within the Candidates Guide.

Whilst all competencies, as indicated within the Competency Framework, are relevant to the role, for the purposes on your application you are asked to submit evidence against the following :

- Making Effective Decisions (Level 3)
- Collaborating and Partnering (Level 2)

In addition to the competency assessment, you will also be asked to submit evidence against the following category:

- How I am motivated by Work of COPFS

This category will also be marked by the panel using the same 3 point marking scale. Your answer to Motivated by Work of COPFS does not have to be written in the STAR structure.



# THE INTERVIEW

Your judgement, competence and suitability for the Traineeship will be further assessed at interview.

At interview you will be asked questions in relation to the following competencies:

- Making Effective Decisions (Level 3)
- Collaborating and Partnering (Level 2)
- Delivering at Pace (Level 2)

In addition to the competencies, you will also be required to make a presentation, the topic of which will be given to you in reasonable time beforehand and will be assessed under the competency of Leading and Communicating (Level 2).

Guidance as to how your presentation will be assessed will be communicated along with any invitation to interview.

The same 3 point scale used at sift will also be used when scoring candidates at interview.



# FURTHER ASSESSMENT

You may also be subject to further assessment to test appropriate knowledge and skill. This assessment may include a submission of a piece of written work prior to the interview, or completion of an online assessment.

You will be given reasonable notice and access to necessary materials in advance.

“

Ever since I started the LLB, I knew I wanted to be a prosecution lawyer. I worked for numerous defence firms which, while excellent experience, only strengthened my desire to work in prosecution.

**Michael Dunlop**  
Trainee Solicitor 2019

# COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

## Making Effective Decisions (Level 3)

- Identify a range of relevant and credible information sources and recognise the need to collect new data when necessary from internal and external sources
- Recognise patterns and trends in a wide range of evidence/ data and draw key conclusions
- Recognise scope of own authority for decision making and empower team members to make decisions
- Invite challenge and where appropriate involve others in decision making to help build engagement and present robust recommendations

## Collaborating and Partnering (Level 2)

- Demonstrate interest in others and develop a range of contacts outside own team to help get the job done
- Proactively seek information, resources and support from others outside own immediate team in order to help achieve results
- Readily identify opportunities to share knowledge, information and learning and make progress by working with colleagues

# COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

## Delivering at Pace (Level 2)

- Create regular reviews of what and who is required to make a project/ activity successful and make ongoing improvements
- Be interested and positive about what they and the team and trying to achieve
- Take ownership of problems in their own area of responsibility
- Remain positive and focused on achieving outcomes despite setbacks
- Set and achieve challenging goals and monitor quality

## Leading and Communicating (Level 2)

- Display enthusiasm around goals and activities – adopting a positive approach when interacting with others
- Listen to, understand, respect and accept the value of different views, ideas and ways of working
- Express ideas effectively, both orally and in writing, and with sensitivity and respect for others
- Confidently handle challenging conversations or interviews
- Confront and deal promptly with inappropriate language or behaviours, including bullying, harassment or discrimination

# OTHER EVIDENCE

## How I am motivated by work of COPFS

- Demonstrable interest in law, in particular the area of criminal prosecution and be motivated by public service
- Demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the work of COPFS and its role in the wider Criminal Justice System
- A strong focus on continuous learning and the ability to apply knowledge of criminal law gained from study and experience





# TIMESCALES

Please note the scheduled timetable, you should be aware however that all dates are subject to change.

Should you be unavailable for any of the selection stages then please notify us of the reasons why as soon as possible. Given the timeframes involved there is no guarantee we will be able to accommodate you however we will do what we can to help wherever possible.

Date	Action	Location
26 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 11.55pm	Advert closes	COPFS Website, Scottish Universities, Law Society of Scotland, S1 Jobs
W/C 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	Results to be issued for sift	N/A
From W/C 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	Competency based interviews	Microsoft Teams interview
W/C 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	Interview results	N/A



# POST INTERVIEW

# FEEDBACK

Due to the large volumes of applications anticipated, feedback shall only be provided for applicants who have reached the interview stage.

Following interview, copies of scoring and any rating forms completed can be requested via [Recruitment@copfs.gov.uk](mailto:Recruitment@copfs.gov.uk)





# GENERAL PRE EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Should you be successful in your application you will be recommended for appointment subject to our standard pre recruitment checks. These include:

- **Identity** – if successful you will be asked to provide evidence of your identity in order to undertake pre-recruitment checks.
- **Nationality and Immigration Status** – you will be asked to provide proof of your eligibility to work and remain in the UK. Successful candidates will also be required to satisfy the Civil Service Nationality requirements - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules)
- **Employment/ Academic History Verification** – if you are successful, we will conduct a verification of your 3 year history
- **Criminal History** – COPFS has exemptions from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). This check will be undertaken through an Enhanced Disclosure check (of which, COPFS will meet the expense)

- **Health** – prior to appointment, trainees will undergo a pre employment health assessment through our Occupational Health provider.

Successful candidates will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure check immediately after the interviews and again within six months of their expected started date.

When full checks are satisfactorily completed, a formal offer of employment will be made.

If you have any queries or concerns about this, please get in touch.

## Trainee Specific Requirements

Further to the standard pre employment checks, our offer will also be subject to the requirements listed under Eligibility.

# TAKING DIVERSITY SERIOUSLY

COPFS is proud to maintain an inclusive workplace and we encourage applications from all backgrounds.

Our policy is to provide equal opportunities for employment, career development and promotion to all where eligible, on the basis of ability, qualifications and suitability for the work. Selection will be based on fair and open competition and regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or ethnic origin.

Our passion for diversity and equality means that we create a working environment for all employees that is welcoming, respectful, engaging and full of opportunities for development – both professionally and personal.

We hold the Disability Confident employer status from JobCentre Plus.

Current staff network groups include: Proud in COPFS, Equality Ambassadors and the Staff Disability Advisory Group.

“

The part I enjoy the most is exposure to different units and being able to speak and shadow very experienced staff within the organisation.

**Raeesa Ahmed**

Trainee Solicitor 2019

COPFS Equality Ambassador for Race, Dyslexia & Dyspraxia

# CANDIDATES DECLARING A DISABILITY

COPFS is committed to valuing diversity and equality of opportunity and participates in the Disability Confident scheme as awarded by Job Centre Plus.

Under this scheme, all candidates who consider themselves to be disabled in terms of the Equality Act 2010, and who meet the essential minimum criteria for the post, will be guaranteed an interview.

For the purposes of the scheme, the minimum criteria to qualify for interview requires adequate demonstration of all competences tested and to meet the essential criteria.

This will be applicable at all stages of recruitment, i.e. if you do not pass the standard required at sift or technical assessment (if applicable), you will not proceed to interview.

“

The amount of court experience you receive is invaluable, seeing Advocate Deputes in action within the High Court has been great.

**Brian Young**  
Trainee Solicitor 2019

# THE CIVIL SERVICE CODE

As a Civil Servant, you will be expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values. The Civil Service Code defines the core values that you, as a Civil Servant, are expected to work within and uphold. These core values are:

- Honesty
- Impartiality
- Integrity
- Objectivity

The Code forms part of the terms and conditions of every Civil Servant. Further information can be obtained from:

<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values>



# CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT PRINCIPLES

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service's recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles which can be found at <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/>

We hope you do not have cause to appeal, however appeals can be submitted in writing, within 5 working days of receiving a result, and can be made on the following grounds:

1. There has been a procedural irregularity that can be seen to have materially disadvantaged the individual candidate
2. There has been an infringement of the COPFS' equal opportunities policy causing real disadvantage

Appeals out with these grounds will not be considered. Where any appeal is upheld, COPFS will take steps to remove the disadvantage or compensate for actual loss

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Principles and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact The Recruitment Manager, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Crown Office, 25 Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1LA in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the Service you can contact the Office of the Civil Service Commission.

# FAQS

## **I've applied before but wasn't successful. Can I apply again?**

Yes, we would be happy to receive your application. Please ensure you read all supplementary documentation as our processes may have changed from the last time you applied.

## **I applied this year using the same answers in my application form from last year. Last year I got an interview but didn't this year, why?**

Each recruitment exercise is considered separately. The volume and quality of applications will determine the standard of assessment required each year.

## **I am out of the country when interviews are taking place. Do I have to attend my interview in person?**

Given the current health guidance interviews will be taking place over Microsoft teams and so no in person interviews will be required.

## **What adjustments can be made for candidates with a disability?**

We are committed to ensuring reasonable adjustments are put in place for candidates to allow a fair and open recruitment process.

Adjustments may include but not restricted to: more time at interview or assessment, information being provided in a different format, or providing assistance where possible in making you feel comfortable for interview.

Should you require any reasonable adjustments, please note this is your application form or feel free to contact us and discuss.

## **Do you offer extensions to the deadline date?**

Unfortunately not, when the closing date and time passes, we cannot accept any further applications. This post is very popular and we would recommend to get your application in well before the closing date where you can

## **I have to travel to get to my assessment centre/interview. Can you reimburse my costs for assessments?**

No travel is expected to be required. However should travel be required unfortunately we are unable to meet any expenses you may incur in association with this recruitment exercise.

## **Can I apply for this and the National Traineeship board published this year?**

Yes, we would welcome an application from you for both boards if you would be happy to work in either location. However if you accept a Traineeship from our GHI board we will withdraw you from the process for the National Board.

## **Questions?**

**If you have any further questions or require the application pack in an alternative format, you can contact:**

**Recruitment@copfs.gov.uk**

**07879 150850**

**Or**

**07717 699270**