



The National Library of Ireland is an Equal Opportunities Employer

Candidates' Information Booklet

Open competition for the appointment to the position of

Head of Special Collections, at Keeper level,

in the National Library of Ireland

Closing date for applications: **7th March 2025, at 3pm**

The National Library of Ireland is committed to a policy of equal opportunity

Contact: HR Department

National Library of Ireland

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BACKGROUND

The National Library of Ireland (NLI) is the library of record for Ireland. Established in 1877, the NLI became an autonomous cultural institution on 3rd May 2005 under the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, with a Board and a Director who operate under the Board's overall governance. The Board, made up of a chairperson and 11 ordinary members, reports to the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The Library employs some 125 staff who work to deliver five priorities under our current strategy, to collect, protect, reveal, engage and innovate.

The NLI shares the story of Ireland with the world through our unique collections. We care for more than twelve million items, including books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, prints, maps, drawings, ephemera, music and digital media. The Library's sites in Dublin, including the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar, are open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult and explore the collections - through reading rooms which are visitor attractions in their own right, via rich and varied exhibitions, and by means of an active public programme. Further information is available at: [About | National Library of Ireland](#)

THE ROLE

The NLI's Special Collections department is responsible for developing and managing our collections of manuscripts, photographs, ephemera, maps, and prints and drawings from appraisal and acquisition, through all collection management processes including accessioning and cataloguing. The Special Collections team is responsible for onsite access to Special Collections via the Reading Rooms in the NLI's Manuscripts department and the National Photographic Archive and through the Prints & Drawings appointment system. The National Library of Ireland's Conservation department is also part of Special Collections, as is currently the Office of the Chief Herald.

The manuscripts material alone, in the care of the Special Collections department, is of national and global importance. It includes volumes, maps, scrapbooks, select published items, as well as handwritten and typescript material originating in or relating to Ireland.

Some of the NLI's major manuscript collections include:

Gaelic manuscripts: dating from the 14th century to the present, covering a range of subjects from literature to the Irish language revival movement to *dinnseanchas* (place-law);

Genealogical Office manuscripts: This manuscript collection contains several key record

series and are catalogued with the call number prefix GO MS. Catalogue entries are found on the NLI [online catalogue](#);

Landed estate papers: deeds, leases, rentals, financial accounts, wills, marriage settlements, mortgages, legal documents, maps, correspondence, as well as family and household papers from landed estates from all over the island of Ireland, with some material dating back as far as the 11th century;

Literary collections: correspondence, diaries, notes, drafts and working copies of published and unpublished works of writers and playwrights such as James Joyce, WB Yeats, Seamus Heaney, Edna O’Brian, Maura Laverty and others;

Theatre collections: material from the Abbey Theatre, the Gate Theatre, the Focus Theatre, the Field Day Theatre, the Lantern Theatre and the Project Theatre, as well as the diaries and papers of Joseph Holloway;

Political, social, economic and labour history: papers of political parties, trade unions and notable figures in Irish politics including Edmund Burke, Wolfe Tone, Daniel O’Connell, Patrick Pearse, Roger Casement, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and others;

Women’s history: papers documenting the history of women and the women’s movement in Ireland including those of organisations such as Cumann na mBan and the Irish Countrywomen’s Association, and individuals such as Rosamond Jacob, Áine Ceannt and Helena Molony;

Irish Queer Archive: a living archive documenting the LGBTQIA+ movement in Ireland.

The Head of Special Collections is responsible for leading and overseeing the development and management of a major department of the NLI as well as contributing to its strategic planning and overall management. They will have a clear understanding of the position of the National Library of Ireland in the digital age, the challenges faced by the NLI and the potential that exists for the NLI to contribute positively to the development of Irish life. Awareness and understanding of developments in the wider library community nationally and internationally and the challenges facing that community and how those developments might impact on the National Library will be essential.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Currently reporting to the Director of the National Library of Ireland, the successful applicant’s duties will include the following:

- Leading, supporting and developing the Special Collections department, including strategic and business planning, procurement, project management, staff management and development, resource and budget management, health and safety;
- Provision of support and policy advice to the Director and the Board;
- Working as a member of the NLI’s Leadership Team;

- Representing the Library on external bodies;
- Leading preservation and stewardship for the Special Collections department, including strategic collection development and policymaking;
- Contributing to strategic planning and development of the NLI;
- Developing partnerships and fostering collaboration across the NLI, on campus, and in the public communities beyond the NLI to raise awareness and promote active engagement with Special Collections.
- Working with the Director's Office, the Communications and Development department and the Exhibitions, Learning and Programming department on public engagement pertaining to special collections
- Provide reference services, along with other Special Collections staff, including answering questions, assisting researchers, and curating intake of new collections.
- Lead for the NLI, working with the team to manage the development of a cataloguing programme for Special Collections, and working in collaboration with Digital Collections on the introduction of a new archival management system;
- Collaborating with Digital Collections on the introduction of a new Archival Management System, and all attendant new processes.
- Supervise staff and assist in planning for future special collections and archives space needs, including preservation, storage, and instruction.
- Responsibilities for such activities as may be delegated by the Director from time to time;

The above is a general guide to the role and is not an exhaustive description of duties which are associated with the role or tasks which may be assigned to the role of Head of Special Collections in the Library.

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Essential Requirements:

- A primary degree in a relevant area;
- A qualification in archives and / or library management
- A minimum of five years' relevant post-qualification experience;
- Demonstrated experience of leading teams, in particular in the area of collections management;
- Experience working at a senior management level within a library or archive;
- Demonstrated experience developing and delivering strategic plans and being accountable for ensuring that the team meets both internal and external requirements;
- Excellent understanding and knowledge of the remit, mission and strategy of the National Library of Ireland;
- Excellent knowledge of Irish culture and heritage;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Proven track record of building collegial and productive working relationships;

- Proven excellent track record of stakeholder relationship management;
- Proven ability to identify and manage opportunities, with demonstrable ability to generate and deliver on innovative ideas;
- Excellent research and analytical skills, and the ability to make critical judgments.

Desirable Requirements

- Experience of health and safety and business continuity planning, via risk assessments, policies, and procedures;
- Experience of budget management and financial implementation through project, departmental and library-wide strategies, plans, policies, and procedures;
- Experience overseeing the introduction of a Library Management System /Archival Management System
- Experience of contributing to or leading external groups and collaborative projects as well as promoting the work of a library through professional forums and public media;
- Experience of managing digital resources.
- Demonstrated project management skills and experience;
- Experience of managing a multi-functional service;

Person Specification

- Proactive approach to identifying new opportunities to enhance services;
- Ability to work independently and in a collaborative environment with peers and team members;
- A high degree of analytical, conceptual and problem solving skills;
- A strong track record in the exercise of sound professional judgement;
- Flexibility, ability to work under pressure and achieve tight deadlines with accuracy and attention to detail;

PRINCIPAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

PAY: The payscale applicable to the position is as follows (rates effective from 1st October 2024):

Personal Pension Contribution (PPC)

The PPC pay scale will apply where the appointee is an existing civil or public servant appointed on or after 6th April 1995 and is required to make a personal pension contribution. It will also apply to new permanent employees and fixed term un-established employees.

€83,272 €85,887 €88,509 €91,123 €93,736 €96,845 €100,383* €103,925**

**LSI 1 is Long service Increment after 3 years on Max of scale*

***LSI 2 is Long service increment after 6 years on Max of scale*

Non-Personal Pension Contribution (Non-PPC)

The Non-PPC (Personal Pension Contribution) salary for the position will 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.

€79,162 €81,591 €84,081 €86,571 €89,049 €92,002 €95,366* €98,732**

**LSI 1 is Long service Increment after 3 years on Max of scale.*

***LSI 2 is Long service increment after 6 years on Max of scale.*

Important Note

Entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration will not be subject to negotiation and may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Candidates should note that different terms and conditions may apply if immediately prior to appointment you are a currently serving civil or public servant.

Subject to satisfactory performance increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy (see Public Service Stability Agreement 2021 - 2022 paragraph 5.1 for recent changes).

The rate of pay offered will be payable fortnightly in arrears by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) into a bank account of your choice. Payment cannot be made until you supply an IBAN and IBIC number to the HR Unit.

Statutory deductions from salary will be made as appropriate.

You will agree that any overpayment of salary or of travel and subsistence may be deducted from future salary payments due to you in accordance with the Payment of Wages Act 1991. You will be advised in writing of the amount and details of any such overpayment and you will be given at least one week's notice of the deduction to take place, which will be deducted at an amount fair and reasonable having regards to all the circumstances.

Tenure

The successful candidate will be appointed to a permanent post, subject to successful completion of a 12-month probationary contract.

This does not preclude an extension to the probationary period in appropriate circumstances. During the period of probation, the appointee's performance will be subject to review by the relevant manager(s) to determine whether the appointee:

- (i) has performed in a satisfactory manner.
- (ii) has been satisfactory in general conduct.

(iii) is suitable from the point of view of health with particular regard to sick leave.

Outside Employment

The position will be full time and the appointee may not engage in private practice or be connected with any outside business which conflicts in any way with his/her official duties, impairs performance or compromises his/her integrity.

Location

The successful candidate will initially be based at The National Library of Ireland premises in Kildare Street, Dublin 2, but can be based at any of the Library premises in Dublin.

Organisation of Working Time Act 1997

The terms of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 will, where appropriate, apply to this position.

Hours of Attendance

Hours of attendance will be as fixed from time to time but will amount, on average, to not less than 41.25 gross hours per week (35 net hours per week).

Annual Leave

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

Health

A candidate for and any person holding the office must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the office and be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

Important notice:

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

COMPETITION PROCESS

How to Apply

Applicants should submit a copy of their current Curriculum Vitae with a letter of interest by e-mail to the Human Resources Unit of the National Library of Ireland at careers@nli.ie

Please note that all application documentation should be submitted in a single PDF document.

Applicants will be short-listed on the basis of the information contained in their application. It is the responsibility of applicants to be available for interview on the allotted time and date.

The names and contact details of two referees will be required following an interview. The Library reserves the right to make such enquiries as it considers necessary in relation to an applicant before making an offer of a post to him/her.

Closing Date

Please note that the deadline for receipt of applications is **7th March 2025, at 3pm**. This closing date and time will be strictly adhered to.

Canvassing will disqualify.

Panel

A panel may be formed from this competition from which applicable vacancies at Keeper Grade, both permanent and temporary, should they arise may be filled.

Special Accommodations

If you require any special accommodations in relation to any aspect of this competition, please notify hr@nli.ie

Format of the Competition

The selection process for this competition may comprise of a number of elements. These may include one or more of the following: -

- Completion of an online Assessment Questionnaire;
- Online and/or paper-based assessment test(s);
- Short listing;
- Interview(s);
- Presentation/Analysis exercise;
- Work sample test or any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate.

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the National Library may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, the National Library provide for the employment of a shortlisting process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine the application forms against a pre-determined criteria based on the requirements for the position and decide if you will be shortlisted, relative to the other candidates applying for the position. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather than there are some

candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience on the application form.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the National Library of Ireland requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature will have no further claim to consideration.

Review Procedures in relation to the Selection Process

Requests for a review are dealt with in accordance with the "Code of Practice: Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service" published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments - the Code can be accessed at www.cpsa.ie

The National Library of Ireland will consider requests (addressed to the HR Unit) for review as follows: -

- informal process to be availed of within 5 working days of the notification of initial decision (Section 7.8 of Code) or within 2 working days of the receipt of a decision in relation to an interim stage (Section 7.9 of Code).
- Formal process: request for review must be made within 10 working days of the notification of the initial decision or if an interim stage the request for review must be received within 4 working days (Section 7.13 of Code).
- The candidate may seek to have outcome of initial review reviewed by decision arbitrator and a request to this effect should be made within 7 working days of the receipt of the outcome of the initial review (Section 7.15 of Code).

Section 8 of the Code deals with the Review/Appeals Procedures in relation to allegations of a breach of the Code of Practice.

Candidate Feedback

In accordance with the principles of the above Code of Practice, the National Library of Ireland is committed to providing clear, specific and meaningful feedback to candidates. In this regard it is the National Library of Ireland's policy to provide written feedback to candidates. This will comprise the candidate marks from the competition, benchmarking the mark relative to the performance of other candidates and a comment from the assessment board in relation to the candidate's overall performance under each of the Capability Framework headings.

Access to Information

Three copies of application material will be generated from the softcopy submitted at the time of application, to be used by the interview board. On completion of the competition

ONE copy will be retained by the HR unit and the remaining **TWO** copies will be destroyed.
Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 will apply.

Appendix 1

Head of Special Collections, Keeper Grade– Key Performance Indicators

Leadership	Actively contributes to the development of the strategies and policies of the Department/ Organisation
	Brings a focus and drive to building and sustaining high levels of performance, addressing any performance issues as they arise
	Leads and maximises the contribution of the team as a whole
	Considers the effectiveness of outcomes in terms wider than own immediate area
	Clearly defines objectives/ goals & delegates effectively, encouraging ownership and responsibility for tasks
	Develops capability of others through feedback, coaching & creating opportunities for skills development
	Identifies and takes opportunities to exploit new and innovative service delivery channels
Analysis & Decision Making	Researches issues thoroughly, consulting appropriately to gather all information needed on an issue
	Understands complex issues quickly, accurately absorbing and evaluating data (including numerical data)
	Integrates diverse strands of information, identifying inter-relationships and linkages
	Makes clear, timely and well-grounded decisions on important issues
	Considers the wider implications of decisions on a range of stakeholders
	Takes a firm position on issues s/he considers important
Management & Delivery of Results	Takes responsibility for challenging tasks and delivers on time and to a high standard
	Plans and prioritises work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, re-prioritising in light of changing circumstances
	Ensures quality and efficient customer service is central to the work of the division
	Looks critically at issues to see how things can be done better
	Is open to new ideas initiatives and creative solutions to problems
	Ensures controls and performance measures are in place to deliver efficient and high value services
	Effectively manages multiple projects
Interpersonal & Communication Skills	Presents information in a confident, logical and convincing manner, verbally and in writing
	Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues
	Promotes teamwork within the section, but also works effectively on projects across Departments/ Sectors
	Maintains poise and control when working to influence others
	Instills a strong focus on Customer Service in his/her area
	Develops and maintains a network of contacts to facilitate problem solving or information sharing
	Engages effectively with a range of stakeholders, including members of the public, Public Service Colleagues and the political system
Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development	Has a clear understanding of the roles objectives and targets of self and the team and how they fit into the work of the unit and Department/ Organisation
	Has a breadth and depth of knowledge of Department and Governmental issues and is sensitive to wider political and organisational priorities
	Is considered an expert by stakeholders in own field/ area

	Is focused on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth to help carry out the specific requirements of the role
Drive & Commitment to Public Service Values	Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level
	Is personally honest and trustworthy and can be relied upon
	Ensures the citizen is at the heart of all services provided
	Through leading by example, fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity