

## **Candidate Information Booklet**

**Please read carefully**

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) is undertaking a competition for the purpose of identifying a suitable candidate for appointment to the position of:

### **Chief Specialist, Food Science and Technology**

The Exchange, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin D01 P2V6

Closing Date for receipt of completed applications: **Midnight, Sunday, 21 December 2025**

# Job Description

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**TITLE** Chief Specialist, Food Science and Technology

**REPORTS TO** Director, Food Science and Standards

## Job Environment

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) is a statutory, independent and science-based national agency, dedicated to protecting public health and consumers' interests in the area of food safety and hygiene. We are Ireland's independent regulator and the competent authority for the enforcement of food safety legislation. We focus on building a culture of food safety, improving food safety within a risk analysis framework and leading a robust food safety control system whilst continuing to drive organisational excellence.

The FSAI is responsible for the enforcement of food law in Ireland as it relates to food safety, labelling and claims on food as well as certain food compositional standards. Nearly all food law is harmonised at European level and is initiated by the European Commission and developed in consultation with Member States. The Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine are responsible for setting Irish policy with respect to food law, thereby coordinating national input into the development of food law at European level and enacting national legislation to bring European legislative acts into force.

We provide policy advice to Government regarding the requirements of food law and develop detailed compliance guidance for food businesses to ensure the highest standard of food safety and hygiene are respected. We also ensure that food law is implemented consistently by coordinating a seamless system of food control activities to an agreed high standard through our Official Agency partners.

The work and governance of the FSAI is overseen by a Board appointed by the Minister of Health and we are advised by a Scientific Committee of independent scientists and a Food Safety Consultative Council of stakeholders.

## The Person

The Chief Specialist Food Science and Technology is a senior position in FSAI supporting the Director of Food Science and Standards and the Senior Leadership Team. The person appointed should be a peer-recognised expert in one or more aspects of the food science and technology field. However, the ideal candidate will need to be flexible and adaptable to deal with food safety and compliance issues that not only fall within their area of expertise but also encompass new areas in which they may need to develop expertise. Hence, they should be a self-motivated scientist with considerable scientific and leadership experience and an established national and international network of senior scientists working in their area. The ideal person will be a good communicator and a team player, focussed on developing their team and collaborating with colleagues both inside and outside the FSAI. They should be able to think strategically and bring that knowledge into the development of the strategic objectives of the organisation.

## Job Purpose

The Chief Specialist will lead, manage, and develop a team of scientists to collaboratively design, plan, and implement a work programme aimed at enhancing the safety of food. The core role includes responsibility for safety and compliance assessments of novel foods and genetically modified organisms as well as leadership of the FSAI's emerging risks assessment activity. However, the role is broad and also covers responsibility for other food science and technology related activities e.g. food fraud detection methodology, food allergen risk assessment, packaging material safety and compliance, food processing

aids. The work will extend to assist food business compliance with the technical aspects of relevant food law including advice on the implementation of certain official controls by Official Agency partners.

The Chief Specialist is expected to maintain awareness and detailed knowledge where appropriate, of emerging trends in food science and technology and will be the main source of scientific and technical advice within FSAI on these issues including European and National legislation falling within their field of expertise. The Jobholder will support the FSAI Scientific Committee in developing independent food safety opinions to underpin the work of the Authority and will build good working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties both nationally and internationally.

As a senior leader, the Chief Specialist will contribute to the broader organisational development and governance of both the FSAI and the Food Science and Standards team. The role also includes supporting the Senior Leadership Team and collaborating across FSAI departments to help contribute to and deliver the organisation's strategic objectives.

## **Key Accountabilities**

### **Strategic Leadership & Governance**

- Advise the Director of Food Science and Standards and Senior Leadership Team on strategies and projects to address the food safety risks posed by developments in food science and technology.
- Make a significant contribution to the delivery of the FSAI's strategic objectives and governance responsibilities.

### **External Engagement & Representation**

- Represent the FSAI in national and international forums, ensuring the Authority's position is effectively communicated and upheld.
- Liaise with Government departments on the development of assigned EU food legislation and international food standards.

### **Team Leadership & People Management**

- Lead, manage, and motivate the food science and technology team to develop and deliver on an ambitious work programme.
- Promote a collaborative, inclusive, and accountable working environment aligned with FSAI's values and leadership standards.

### **Scientific Risk Assessment & Technical Expertise**

- Represent FSAI and Ireland on technical matters relating to the EU authorisation, monitoring and overall management of novel foods and genetically modified foods, liaising with policy makers as necessary.
- Ensure risk assessment and emerging risk identification activities align with best practice and achieve scientific excellence.
- Provide technical support to the FSAI Scientific Committee, including leading a scientific secretariat for subcommittee work on food science and technology matters.

### **Monitoring, Controls & Incident Management**

- Advise official agencies on the risk-basis and legal compliance of official control activities within assigned areas of responsibility.
- Provide scientific and technical support for food safety incidents, investigations, and crisis management.

### **Research and Education**

- Contribute to the development of science in FSAI by leading on projects aligned to the FSAI's Science Strategy.
- Collaborate with academic institutions to advance education in regulatory science and foster research initiatives aimed at closing data gaps in food safety risk assessment.

## **Knowledge and Experience**

### **Essential Qualifications and Experience**

- An honours degree and Ph.D. in food science, food technology, food chemistry or food microbiology, or a related discipline where study involved a significant element of food science or food technology.
- At least seven years post-doctorate experience in food science, food technology and/or food safety.

### **Essential Knowledge and Skills**

- Demonstrated ability to lead, develop and motivate a team with experience of managing people effectively and efficiently.
- An understanding of the food industry and food industry innovation.
- Ability to present and communicate science clearly to scientific and lay audiences.
- Extensive experience of collating, summarizing, analysing and critically evaluating data and scientific publications.
- A good publication record either in peer reviewed journals and/or expert reports and related 'grey' literature.
- Aptitude for collaboration and engagement with multiple stakeholders including universities, internal customers, food industry, government agencies and consumers.
- Strong project management skills including the ability to manage a number of projects at any one time and think laterally across a wide range of issues.
- Ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines and demonstrate sound judgement.
- Strong computer literacy and data analytic skills. The standard business software in the FSAI is Microsoft Windows 11 Enterprise and Microsoft Office 365 including MS Teams and MS Power BI.

### **Advantageous, but not essential knowledge**

- Specialist knowledge of novel foods, genetically modified organisms, food contact materials and the food legislation surrounding them.
- An understanding of allergen detection and risk assessment.
- An understanding of food authenticity analytical detection approaches.
- Experience of horizon scanning and an understanding of emerging risk identification systems and approaches.

## **Required Competencies**

### **Leadership and Strategic Direction**

- Leads the team, setting high standards, tackling any performance problems & facilitating high performance.
- Facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication.
- Contributes to the shaping of FSAI strategy and policy.
- Develops capability and capacity across the team through effective delegation.
- Develops a culture of learning & development, offering coaching and constructive/supportive feedback.
- Leads on preparing for and implementing significant change and reform.
- Anticipates and responds quickly to developments in the sector/ broader environment.
- Actively collaborates with other Departments, Organisations and Agencies

### **Judgment and Decision Making**

- Identifies and focuses on core issues when dealing with complex information/situations.
- Assembles facts, manipulates verbal and numerical information, and thinks through issues logically.
- Sees the relationships between issues and quickly grasp the high level and socio-political implications.
- Identifies coherent solutions to complex issues and can think outside the box.
- Makes decisions in a timely manner and having the courage to see them through.
- Makes sound and well-informed decisions, understanding their impact and implications.
- Strives to effectively balance the sectoral issues, political elements, and the citizen impact in all decisions.

**Management and Delivery of Results**

- Initiates and takes personal responsibility for delivering results/services in own area.
- Balances strategy and operational detail to meet business needs.
- Manages multiple agendas and tasks and reallocates resources to manage changes in focus.
- Makes optimum use of resources and implements performance measures to deliver on objectives.
- Ensures the optimal use of ICT and new delivery models.
- Critically reviews projects and activities to ensure their effectiveness and that they meet Organisational requirements.
- Instils the importance of efficiencies, value for money and meeting corporate governance requirements.
- Ensures team are focused and act on Business plans priorities, even when faced with pressure.

**Building Relationships and Communication**

- Speaks and writes in a clear, articulate, and impactful manner.
- Actively listens, seeking to understand the perspective and position of others.
- Manages and resolves conflicts/disagreements in a positive & constructive manner.
- Works effectively, recognising & managing tensions arising from different stakeholder's perspectives.
- Persuades others; builds consensus, gains co-operation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.
- Proactively engages with colleagues at all levels of the organisation and across other Departments/Organisations and builds strong professional networks.
- Makes opinions known when it is right to do so.

**Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development**

- Develops and maintains skills and expertise across several areas that are relevant to their field and recognised by peers nationally and internationally.
- Keeps up to date with key departmental, sectoral, national, and international developments in the food sector including political and social trends that affect the role.
- Maintains a strong focus on self-development and achievement of scientific excellence seeking feedback and opportunities for growth.

**Drive and Commitment to Public Service Values**

- Consistently strives to perform at a high level.
- Demonstrates personal commitment to the role, maintaining determination and persistence while maintain maintains a sense of balance and perspective in relation to work issues.
- Contributes positively to the corporate agenda.
- Is personally trustworthy, honest, and respectful, delivering on promises and commitments.
- Ensures that public health is at the heart of all work.
- Is resilient, maintaining composure even in adverse or challenging situations.
- Promotes a culture that fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

*This job description is subject to change from time to time, in line with the FSAI's work requirements.*

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

The FSAI is committed to a policy of Equal Opportunities. The FSAI's vision is to be a leader in diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, (DEI&B) in the Irish public sector. The FSAI and its staff is committed to:

- Treating all people equally and respectfully
- Being equitable and fair by working to attract and develop a diverse workforce and ensuring that individuals feel valued in their workplace.
- Being inclusive and seeking out and learning from multiple perspectives.

## FSAI STRATEGY AND VALUES

The FSAI's current strategy sets out our vision, purpose, values, strategic goals and objectives for the period 2025-2029.

### Our Vision

Safe and trustworthy food for everyone

### Our Purpose

As Ireland's independent regulator and the central competent authority for the enforcement of food safety legislation, we will protect consumers' health and interests by:

- Building a culture of food safety
- Improving food safety within a risk analysis framework
- Leading a robust food safety control system
- Continuing to drive organisational excellence

### Our Values

- We develop and inspire people to build a better organisation through **teamwork**
- We act with **integrity** and are honest, open and independent in all we do
- We are **passionate** about protecting consumers
- We act with **respect** and take personal responsibility
- We recognise and value **collaboration** with our partners
- We are **transparent** and open, and we communicate clearly

More information can be found at <https://www.fsai.ie/strategy/>

## **Eligibility to compete and certain restrictions on eligibility**

### **European Economic Area Nationals**

Candidates should note that eligibility to compete is open to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Swiss citizens under EU agreements may also apply. **To qualify candidates must be citizens of the EEA by the date of any job offer.**

### **Citizenship Requirements**

Eligible candidates must be:

- (a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- (b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
- (c) A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- (d) A non-EEA citizen who has a Stamp 4 permission or a Stamp 5 permission.

**To qualify, candidates must meet one of the citizenship criteria above by the date of any job offer.**

### **Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants**

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to Personnel Officers introduced, with effect from 1st June 2012, a Collective Agreement which had been reached between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Public Services Committee of the ICTU in relation to ex-gratia Redundancy Payments to Public Servants. It is a condition of the Collective Agreement that persons availing of the agreement will not be eligible for re-employment in the Public Service by any Public Service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011) for a period of 2 years from termination of the employment. People who availed of this scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility)

### **Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER)**

It is a condition of the Incentivised Scheme for Early Retirement (ISER) as set out in Department of Finance Circular 12/09 that retirees, under that Scheme, are not eligible to apply for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees may not apply for this position.

### **Department of Health and Children Circular (7/2010)**

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 dated 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider Public Service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the VRS, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years. People who availed of the VER scheme are not eligible to compete in this competition. People who availed of the VRS scheme and who may be successful in this competition will have to prove their eligibility (expiry of period of non-eligibility).

### **Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (Circular Letter LG (P) 06/2013)**

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Circular Letter LG (P) 06/2013 introduced a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authorities. In accordance with the terms of the *Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants* dated 28 June 2012 as detailed above, it is a specific condition of that VER Scheme that persons will not be eligible for re-employment in any Public Service body (as defined by the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts 2009 – 2011 and the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012) for a period of 2 years from their date of departure under this Scheme. These conditions also apply in the case of engagement/employment on a contract for service basis (either as a contractor or as an employee of a contractor).

**Declaration**

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a Public Service scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.

## Principal Conditions of Service

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**Location**

There is a hybrid work model in place with the office location based in The Exchange, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin D01 P2V6.

**Probation**

A probationary period of 12 months applies to this position.

**Pay**

As per the current Government pay policy, the starting pay for this position will be at the minimum point of the payscale for the position (first point on scale). *If you are currently a serving civil or public servant, your entry point to the PayScale may be higher based on your current salary.*

The salary scale for this position is as follows: €113,366 - €116,201 - €119,035

Please note the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

**Superannuation**

Pensionable public servants (new joiners) recruited on or after 1 January 2013 will be members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. The Single Public Service Pension 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, e.g. where the public servant was on secondment or approved leave or remains on the same contract of employment, the 26-week rule does not apply. The legislation giving effect to the Scheme is the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

For those who are not subject to the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (e.g. those transferring from another public service employment where the break in service, if any, is less than 26 weeks), the terms of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Staff Superannuation Scheme will apply.

**Pension Related Deduction**

This appointment is subject to the pension-related deduction in accordance with the Financial Emergency Measure in the Public Interest Act, 2009.

**Annual Leave**

Annual leave is 30 days.



# Selection Procedure

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## How to Apply

A completed application form must be uploaded online no later than **Midnight, Sunday 21 December 2025**. If you would like to complete the application form in Irish, please contact [recruitment@fsai.ie](mailto:recruitment@fsai.ie)

## Selection Process

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland will convene a selection panel to carry out the competitive stages of the selection process to the highest standards of best practice. The approach employed may include:

- Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in the application form to reduce the list of candidates to a more manageable number for interview
- A preliminary interview which may include a written exercise or assessment
- A final competitive interview which may also include a presentation
- Any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate

## Note:

The number of applications received for a position generally exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, FSAI may decide that a smaller number will be invited to the next stage of the selection process. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience.

## Interview Dates

The onus is on all applicants who are shortlisted for interview to ensure they are available for interview on the identified date. It may not be possible to facilitate alternative times and dates.

## Queries

Please email [recruitment@fsai.ie](mailto:recruitment@fsai.ie) with any queries.

# General Information

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## Interview Expenses

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland will not be responsible for any expense, including travelling expenses, which applicants may incur in connection with their application for this post.

## Candidates Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

Candidates must not:

- Knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- Canvass any person with or without inducements
- Impersonate a candidate at any stage of the process
- Interfere with or compromise the process in any way

Where a candidate is found guilty of canvassing or in breach of any of the above then:

- Where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; or
- Where he/she has been appointed to a post, he/she shall forfeit that appointment

### **Deeming of Candidature to be Withdrawn**

Candidates who do not attend for interview when and where required by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the Food Safety Authority of Ireland require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, their application will be considered withdrawn and they will have no further claim for consideration.

### **The Importance of Confidentiality**

We would like to assure applicants that protecting confidentiality is our number one priority. Applicants can expect, and we guarantee, that all enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings to the extent that they are managed by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process. Applicants should note that all application material will be made available to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

## **Data Protection and the Recruitment Process**

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### **Confidentiality**

Candidate confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the recruitment process. All personal information provided on the application documents will be stored securely by the FSAI and will be used solely for the purposes of processing your candidature.

### **Legal compliance**

The FSAI is committed to complying with all relevant legislation over the course of this recruitment campaign. This includes, but is not limited to, the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

### **Protecting personal data**

Personal data is collected and processed as part of the recruitment process. This section sets out the relevant information under the following headings:

1. Personal data collected
2. Lawful basis for processing personal data
3. How your information may be shared
4. How long your information may be stored
5. Your data protection rights

#### **1. Personal data collected**

The FSAI collects personal data from prospective candidates as part of the recruitment process. In meeting its data protection obligations, the FSAI is committed to being accountable and transparent about how it gathers and processes this information.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) defines 'personal data' as meaning any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. It defines types of 'personal data' as being name, address, date of birth, etc. The GDPR also sets out 'special categories of personal data' for more sensitive information which include, for example, data concerning health.

#### **2. Lawful basis for processing personal data**

The FSAI processes personal data provided by you in your application documents during the recruitment process on the lawful basis of 'consent'. Your consent is required in order to process any personal data provided in the application for the specific purpose of progressing an application through the recruitment process.

### *Contractual*

In the case of a successful candidate, personal data provided during the recruitment process may form the basis of the contract of employment.

### *Legal obligation*

Personal data of prospective candidates and current employees (full-time, part-time, contract and agency) are processed on the basis that they are required for the FSAI's compliance with legislation (e.g., employment legislation).

### **3. How your information may be shared**

Your information may be shared with other parties as part of the recruitment process. Where this occurs, information is shared by necessity and in confidence.

### **4. How long your information may be stored**

The FSAI has a Data Retention Policy that it applies to all information it stores. This policy is updated on an ongoing basis to keep pace with all relevant legislative changes.

### *Unsuccessful candidates*

For those individuals who have been unsuccessful in the recruitment process, all information provided to the FSAI will be retained by the FSAI for a period of no more than 12 months. At the end of this period, or if you withdraw your consent, your information will be securely destroyed.

### *Successful candidates*

For those individuals who have been successful in the recruitment process, all information provided to the FSAI will be placed on your employee file. It will be retained during the course of your employment with the organisation and for an appropriate period thereafter. At the end of this period, or if you withdraw your consent, your information will be securely destroyed.

### **5. Your data protection rights**

You have rights in relation to the personal data collected, processed and stored by the FSAI. Further information is available on our website under the heading 'Data Protection and Access Requests.' That section outlines what your data protection rights are and how to make a Data Subject Access Request to the FSAI.

### **Further information**

If you have any questions or would like to make a Data Subject Access Request, you may contact the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at the FSAI. The contact details are as follows:

By post	Data Protection Officer Food Safety Authority of Ireland The Exchange George's Dock IFSC D01 P2V6
By email	DPO@fsai.ie