



## Garda Trainee Recruitment 2026

### Frequently Asked Questions

Please refer to [publicjobs.ie](http://publicjobs.ie) for details of any live Garda Trainee Recruitment competitions.

The age range stated is 18-50. If I am 51 years of age can I apply?

The exact date range that applicants need to be born are specified for candidates as follows:

*Be 18 years of age but not yet 50 years of age at midnight on the closing date of the competition.*

I do not have two languages or Irish. Do I still need to have Irish? Is Irish an absolute requirement?

A proven proficiency in either Irish **or** English is required. There is no longer a requirement to have a second language.

Successful applicants are required to study and pass Irish as part of a module in the Garda College.

I have fluent Irish, is there a specific recruitment competition for me?

Tá Coimisinéir An Gharda Síochána agus An Garda Síochána tiomanta go hiomlán dá ndualgais faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021, a chomhlíonadh.

Beidh ar iarrthóirí a chuireann isteach ar an gcomórtas seo agus a fhaigheann cuireadh chuig na céimeanna deiridh den phróiseas roghnaithe agallamh a dhéanamh, a bheidh bunaithe ar inniúlachtaí, trí mheán na Gaeilge sula ndéanfar machnamh orthu don phost seo.. Ní mór dóibh an caighdeán riachtanach a bhaint amach sa Ghaeilge san agallamh seo, i.e. **a léiriú go bhfuil Leibhéal B2, ar a laghad, bainte amach acu ar chreat féinmheasúnaithe Europass**. Ní mór d'iarrthóirí a cheaptar ón gcomórtas seo a bheith in ann réimse iomlán seirbhísí a sholáthar trí Ghaeilge. Má éiríonn leo, is féidir go mbeidh ar iarrthóirí tréimhsí a chaitheamh i gceantair Ghaeltachta, de réir mar a shocróidh Coimisinéir an Gharda Síochána.

## Do I need a degree to apply?

There is no requirement to have a degree prior to entering the police service as a trainee, however if you are in the final year of completing a degree when offered a place in the Garda College, we can be flexible with your start date to enable you to complete your final year.

## What are the educational requirements?

By the closing date of the competition applicants must:

- (a) have obtained an Irish Leaving Certificate with a grade D3 or O6 minimum in five subjects at Ordinary Level\*, **or**
- (b) hold a minimum of a Level 5 Major award (**120 Credits**) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), **or**
- (c) hold a recognised qualification (**at Level 5 or greater**), deemed comparable to the above in terms of both level and volume of learning as determined by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

AND

- (d) be proficient in **either or both** of the following:
  - i) the Irish language
  - ii) the English language

*\* Subjects taken at **Foundation Level** Leaving Certificate are **not** considered equivalent for entry to this competition. In certain cases, a Pass in the Applied Leaving Certificate **may be** deemed equivalent to an Ordinary Leaving Certificate.*

publicjobs may verify the validity of qualifications other than the Leaving Certificate with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Candidates may refer to the [National Academic Recognition Information Centre which offers](#) advice on the academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland.

## Can a citizen from any country join?

To join applicants must: -

- (a) be a national of a European Union Member State; **or**
- (b) be a national of a European Economic Area State, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the Swiss Confederation; **or**
- (c) Under the International Protection Act, 2015 and in compliance with the Admissions and Appointments Regulations 2013, as amended, be **(i)** a **refugee** or a family member of

such a person in relation to whom a refugee declaration is in force and continues to be in force for the entire duration of the Garda Recruit selection and admissions process or **(ii)** a person granted subsidiary protection or a family member of such a person in relation to whom a subsidiary protection declaration is in force and continues to be in force for the entire duration of the Garda Recruit selection and admissions process; **or**

- (d) by the closing date of the advertisement of this competition, have had a period of one year's continuous residence in the State, and during the eight years immediately preceding that period, have had a total residence in the State amounting to four years.

**The onus is on candidates to provide documentary evidence that they continue to meet the eligibility requirements throughout the process and to update the publicjobs and An Garda Síochána of any changes that might impact their eligibility.**

I am a serving Garda Reserve member; how should I apply?

Reserve Gardaí give their time on a voluntary basis to support the work of An Garda Síochána within the community. They have undergone training in many of the skills required to perform their duty as valued members of community policing or regular units delivering proactive, high-visibility policing which contributes to keeping people safe. A separate competition is being held for serving Reserve Gardaí who, by the closing date have:

- (i) completed their probationary period;
- (ii) performed their role to a satisfactory standard;
- (iii) served a minimum of 120 hours per year for two of the last four claim years;
- (iv) fulfil the Conditions for Entry as set out in the Information booklet on [publicjobs.ie](http://publicjobs.ie).

Eligible applicants should apply in the usual way and indicate on the dedicated serving Reserve Gardaí application form that they wish to apply for the Serving Garda Reserve Stream. In order to be considered for this stream, when completing your application form applicants must include:

- 1) Reserve Garda Registration Number;
- 2) Division in which you are currently serving.

**Applicants must be a serving Garda Reserve member at the time of appointment as a Garda Trainee to continue to be eligible under the Eligible Service Garda Reserve Members Competition. Applicants who are no longer a member of the Reserve Garda will not be eligible to be offered an appointment from this competition.**

Further information regarding a Garda Reserve Verification Form, will issue directly to you by email shortly after the closing date of the competition. Applicants will be required to complete the form, and have it signed by their Divisional Officer and forwarded to the Appointments Office in Garda Headquarters within a specified timeframe.

Failure to return the Garda Reserve Verification Form in the timeframe specified will result in your application for the Serving Garda Reserve Member Stream not receiving any further consideration.

## What are the physical requirements?

Applicants are expected to be aerobically fit in order to safely undergo training and to subsequently carry out the duties assigned to them as a Garda. All applicants will undergo a Physical Competence Test as part of the application process and their subsequent training. Applicants must pass all elements of the test and there is strictly no deviation from the format of the test. Successful applicants must maintain their fitness during the Foundation Training Programme, and Physical Competence Tests will be undertaken during the Programme. Failure to maintain the required levels of fitness during training will be a breach of contract and constitute a termination of contract. A demonstration video and detailed information regarding the Physical Competence Test are available on the Garda [website](#).

## What is the pay?

The pay of all public servants is determined by the Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform in consultation with relevant parties. The rates of pay and allowances are indicative and are therefore subject to change. Garda Trainees will receive an allowance of €354 per week for the 36 weeks leading to attestation.

Accommodation and food is provided by An Garda Síochána while resident in the Garda College.

## Additional frequently asked questions

### *What if...*

#### I have a tattoo on my face?

You will not be admitted as a Garda Trainee if you have a tattoo on your face or your head as visible tattoos are not allowed under the Uniform and Dress Code.

If you have any questions about a particular tattoo, please reach out to the recruitment team @ [appointments@garda.ie](mailto:appointments@garda.ie) who will be happy to discuss it with you in more detail.

#### I have a tattoo on my hand?

You will not be admitted as a Garda Trainee if you have a tattoo on your hand as visible tattoos are not allowed under the Uniform and Dress Code.

If you have any questions about a particular tattoo, please reach out to the recruitment team @ [appointments@garda.ie](mailto:appointments@garda.ie) who will be happy to discuss it with you in more detail.

#### I don't have the required leaving certificate results?

Yes, **IF** you hold a minimum of a Level 5 Major award (120 Credits) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or hold a recognised qualification (at Level 5 or greater), deemed comparable to the above in terms of both level and volume of learning as determined by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

I have a foreign qualification instead of a leaving certificate?

Yes, **IF** you hold a minimum of a Level 5 Major award (120 Credits) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), or hold a recognised qualification (at Level 5 or greater), deemed comparable to the above in terms of both level and volume of learning as determined by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

Please refer to the [National Academic Recognition Information Centre](#) for advice on the academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland.

I have just turned 50?

No, as Candidates must be 18 years of age but not yet 50 years of age at midnight on the closing date of the competition.

This means that if you turn 50 on, or any time before, the closing date of the competition then you will not be eligible to apply.

I have a pre-existing health condition?

This will be assessed at the medical examination and you are required to declare it there. Please note that this may require provision of additional reports or clarifications from the candidate's treating doctor(s) or clinical professionals.

It is necessary that candidates make available any relevant clinical reports from their treating doctor(s) or clinical professionals on the day of the examination. This shall expedite the medical assessment process and hence the progress of your application.

English isn't my first language will this prevent me from progressing in the competition?

No, but you need to be relatively confident in it now, as you must be proficient in either the English OR Irish in order to be eligible for admission as a Garda Trainee.

Is this taken into account for the aptitude tests?

The tests are only available in English. More information on this will be provided by publicjobs prior to the online assessment stage.

What are your top tips to get through the recruitment process?

Our top tips are:

- 1) Read all the information which is provided to you and pay attention to the instructions given to avoid any unnecessary delays.
- 2) Pay attention to deadlines!

- 3) You should check your **publicjobs.ie Application Centre** on a regular basis as email notifications about updates/tests/Interviews etc. published in the “**Review Communications**” area can sometimes be filtered into your Junk/Spam email folders. You are also advised to check all these folders regularly.
- 4) Fill out all forms carefully, ensuring that all mandatory information is provided as missing information can cause significant delays.

## What are your top tips to get through the Fitness Test?

Make sure you know what the test entails by checking [out the videos and information available here](#).

- 1) Come along to a Fitness Test Open Day – these will be made available to candidates who have passed the Interview stage.
- 2) Start to practice now!

## How long does the recruitment process take?

This is a very frequently asked question, but not one with a definitive answer as all candidates differ. The initial selection stages of the recruitment process are batched, therefore those who score highest at Stage 1, online testing, will be called to interview first. However, all those who pass Stage 1 will be called for interview during the course of the competition. The timing of the interview will be dependent on your scores at Stage 1, online testing.

Once candidates pass the interview stage, they move across to An Garda Síochána for the Physical Competency Test, Substance Misuse (Controlled Drug and Psychoactive Substances) Testing, Medical and Vetting. As each candidate’s circumstances are different, the length of time to complete all elements of the selection process will vary. It can take between 6-18 months, though a few candidates may fall outside of this timeframe on either side. You will be given 4-6 weeks’ notice of your placement in the Garda College once you have successfully completed all selection stages.

## I take medication for a pre-existing health condition, will this show up on the Substance Misuse Test?

You will be given an opportunity, prior to your substance misuse test, to declare any medication which you are taking or have taken to the Tester. ~~so this shouldn't cause you any issues.~~

## I’m in the last year of a degree at the moment, will I need to drop out to take up a place if I make it through the recruitment process, or could I defer?

If you are in the final year of completing a degree when offered a place in the Garda College, you may defer your start date to enable you to complete your final year.

Am I guaranteed an appointment if I pass the recruitment process?

If you are successful in all elements of the selection and appointments processes, then you will be admitted to the Garda College as a Garda Trainee.

Garda Trainees are attested as Members of An Garda Síochána following successful completion of Phase 1 Foundation Training.

Can I work part time while I'm a student in the college?

No, all applicants must have relinquished all previous employment prior to entry to the Garda College and may not be on a career break from any such employment upon entry.

How much will I be paid while I'm training in the college? Is this before or after tax?

While you are a Garda Trainee in the College, you will be paid €354 per week. This is before tax. While resident in the Garda College, accommodation and meals are provided.

How much will I be paid when I qualify?

After attestation, Probationer Gardaí move to the first point of the Garda incremental pay scale of €39,194 per year rising incrementally to €60,333 per annum after 8 years.

What is life like in the college?

The Garda College Facebook page has a number of videos showing 'A day in the life' of a Garda Trainee. There is also a tour of the College and regular postings with updates on the activities of the current Trainees.

Do I need to live in the College during my training?

Yes, while you are a Garda Trainee you are expected to reside in the Garda College from Sunday evening – Friday every week. There is an opportunity to apply to leave overnight, if you need to return home during the residential phase, however, you will need to apply for permission to do so once you commence training, and each case is assessed on its own merits.

What is life like as a new Garda?

Hugely varied, challenging and rewarding. Check out our website and our social media accounts for updates on what we're doing in communities around Ireland and how you may be playing an active role in when you join.

After my training, do I get to have a say in which station I'm allocated to and/or where in the country I'll go?

Newly attested Garda Members are allocated to specifically designated Training Stations which have the required development structures and supports in place. Candidates should note that members of An Garda Síochána are required to serve at any Garda station or centres within the state at the discretion of the Garda Commissioner.

Following attestation Probationer Gardaí will be allocated to Garda Stations, which is predicated by the operational needs and resource requirements of the Organisation across the country.

I have experience of policing elsewhere in a specialist unit, can you fast-track my recruitment and can I join a specialist unit in An Garda Síochána?

No, every new recruit to An Garda Síochána must come through the open recruitment competition, although your experience of policing elsewhere will provide you with a great starting point for your interview and to take on the training.

Newly attested Garda members must then pass their probationary period (2 years) before they are eligible to apply for specialist posts. Once they have done so then they can apply to a wide variety of specialist policing competitions which are run internally every year.