



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Post Title & Subject Area:	Head of Employee Relations
Unit:	Human Resources
Post Duration:	Permanent
FTE:	1 FTE
Grade:	AO
Reports to:	Deputy Director of HR - Employee Engagement
Comp Ref:	011413



1. Job Advertisement

Applications are invited for an appointment as Head of Employee Relations, AO, 1 FTE, in the Human Resources Office at University of Galway.

Information on the University's Strategic Plan is available at: [Strategy | Straitéis 2025-30 - University of Galway](#)

For informal enquiries, please contact Sinead Wynne, Deputy Director HR Employee Relations sinead.wynne@universityofgalway.ie

Salary: €84,391 - €107,651 per annum pro rata for part time/short term roles (applicable to new entrants effective from January, 2011) and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the [QA321 University's Remuneration & Payroll Policy](#).

This appointment will be made on the Administrative Officer pay scale in line with current Government pay policy.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 17:00 (Irish Time) on Thursday 20th November 2025. It will not be possible to consider applications received after the closing date.

Garda vetting may apply.

Appointments will be conditional on work authorisation validation. Further details are available at www.dbei.ie

For more information and Application Form please see [Jobs - University of Galway](#). Applications should be submitted online. Please see further information on how to apply here: [E-Recruit - University of Galway](#) and [Guidelines for On-line Applications \(universityofgalway.ie\)](#)

Please note that appointment to posts advertised will be dependent upon University approval, together with the terms of the Employment Control Framework for the higher education sector.

University of Galway is an equal opportunities employer.

2. Role Relationships

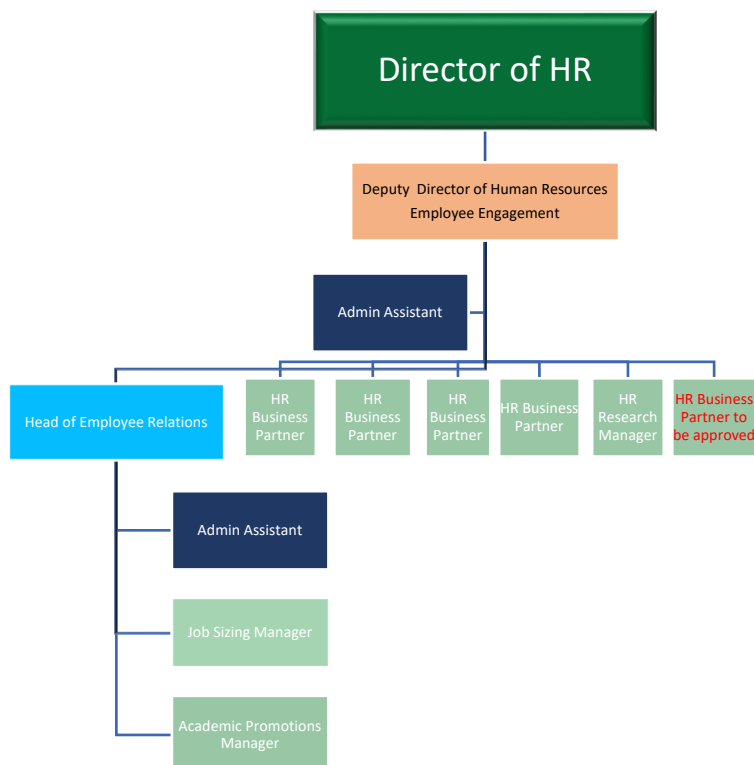
Reporting directly to the Deputy Director of HR - Employee Engagement the post holder will have specific daily contact with

- Director of Human Resources
- Deputy Director HR – Employee Engagement
- Senior HR Managers
- All other HR staff
- Unit Heads, College Deans, College Management Committees, College AOs, Heads of Schools/Disciplines
- Key Stakeholders, e.g. Equality Office; Deputy President & Registrar's Office; Bursar's Office
- External agencies e.g. IBEC, HEA, WRC

The post holder has general contact with:

- Managers within the areas of responsibility

Organisation chart to illustrate position of job holder:



3. Main Purpose of Job

- Reporting to the Deputy Director of HR – Employee Engagement, the Head of Employee Relations will play a critical role in leading the University’s approach to employee relations and its transition toward a resolution-focused culture.
- The post holder will ensure the alignment of the employee relations agenda with the University’s Strategic Plan and relevant Irish public sector agreements, underpinned by exemplary knowledge of employment law and best practice.
- They will be a key collaborator with senior leaders and stakeholders in fostering a respectful, just, inclusive, and sustainable workplace where all staff can thrive.
- The post holder will champion a “Collective Mindset”, promoting proactive engagement with trade unions and staff to prevent conflict and foster mutual understanding.
- They will also be responsible for leading institutional responses to national collective disputes (e.g., sector-wide industrial action), ensuring alignment with guidance from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).
- The post holder will manage and review existing engagement committees and establish new ones as necessary to support the University’s HR strategy.

4. Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Oversee and manage complex and high-profile employee relations (ER) cases in a large, unionised environment—including grievances, disciplinary matters, capability issues, and workplace conflicts—ensuring fair, discreet, and legally compliant outcomes.
- Provide expert support and guidance to HR Business Partners and other stakeholders to ensure effective, timely, and risk-aware management of ER casework across the University.
- Personally lead on sensitive or high-risk cases, including appeals, ensuring appropriate representation and resolution.
- Ensure accurate casework records are maintained, monitor trends, and implement remedial actions or policy adjustments based on data analysis and insights.
- Use strong analytical and problem-solving skills to assess ER risks, interpret trends, and develop practical, legally sound solutions to complex employee relations challenges.
- Interpret and implement government directives, Public Service Agreements, and employment legislation.
- Apply in-depth knowledge of Irish employment law, case law, and industrial relations frameworks to support decision-making and ensure compliance.
- Develop and embed consistent, innovative approaches for interpreting and applying employment law, University policies, and public sector terms and conditions, including the use of automation, self-service tools, and digital guidance.
- Communicate and explain complex employment legislation and policy changes clearly to managers and staff, ensuring organisation-wide awareness and compliance.

- Act as the University's lead representative in external employment rights fora, including Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) hearings, mediation, conciliation, adjudication, and Labour Court proceedings—working closely with legal advisors and insurers to manage institutional risk and secure positive outcomes.
- Prepare ER/IR correspondence and formal submissions, ensuring professionalism, legal accuracy, and alignment with university policy.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with external stakeholders such as the Higher Education Authority (HEA), IBEC, and other third-level institutions.
- Operate with a clear understanding of public sector governance, accountability, and compliance frameworks.
- Lead the implementation, communication, and review of employee relations policies, ensuring legal compliance, reflection of best practice, and effective operationalisation across the University.
- Contribute ER expertise to major organisational change initiatives, such as workforce planning, restructures, and cultural transformation, ensuring fair and legally compliant processes.
- Promote partnership working and engage constructively with recognised trade unions and staff representative bodies, leading or supporting senior-level negotiations and maintaining positive industrial relations.
- Support the inclusion of diverse perspectives in ER policy, actively contributing to the University of Galway's inclusion agenda and demonstrating a strong commitment to its mission and values—especially in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Manage and lead a team of ER professionals, providing direction, support, and performance management to ensure the delivery of a high-quality, resolution-focused service.
- Collaborate closely with the Deputy Director of HR – Employee Engagement to build capability in the team, ensuring it delivers credible, responsive advice and support across the University.
- Champion continuous professional development within the team, fostering a culture of learning, innovation, and continuous improvement.
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal, influencing, and communication skills in building credibility, gaining trust, and engaging effectively with stakeholders at all levels.
- Record, monitor, and analyse ER enquiries and case trends to inform policy development, staff communications, and management training, while identifying opportunities for process improvement.
- Utilise HR systems and digital tools to track cases, generate reports, and support evidence-based decision-making and policy development.
- Prepare and present monthly, quarterly, and annual reports for University Committees and the Governing Authority, providing insights, performance data, and recommendations.
- Undertake other duties as required by the Deputy Director of HR – Employee Engagement, in line with professional HR standards and the strategic objectives of the HR Office.

Note: As the university continues to expand and evolve, it is likely that flexibility in regard to the allocation of specific duties will be necessary. Accordingly, the list of duties specified above is not

intended to be exclusive or restrictive; duties may be added or withdrawn but any such alteration will take place after consultation with the appointee.

Health & Safety:

In addition to the statutory safety duties of all employees (as prescribed in safety legislation and the relevant local safety statement) each staff member is responsible for:

- Discharging any safety functions delegated by your Head of Unit, in relation to the areas/activities under their control
- Co-operating and assisting the University and the Head of Unit in the discharge of their statutory safety responsibilities
- Ensuring that all work under their control, is undertaken safely and without risk to health and complies with the provision of all relevant statutory legislation

5. Requirements for the role:

The successful candidate will demonstrate the eligibility requirements below in terms of qualification, skills and experience:

Essential Criteria

- A Level 8 qualification in Employee Relations, Human Resource Management, or a related discipline.
- CIPD membership or eligibility for membership.
- A strong record of continuous professional development to maintain up-to-date knowledge and expertise in employee relations.
- A minimum of six years' extensive experience managing complex employee relations matters in a large and/or unionised organisation, with a proven ability to handle sensitive issues effectively and discreetly.
- Demonstrated success in leading senior-level negotiations and maintaining constructive, solution-focused relationships with trade unions and staff representative bodies.
- Proven experience in developing, reviewing, and implementing HR policies and procedures that reflect best practice and ensure legal compliance.
- Experience representing an organisation in external employment forums such as the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), Labour Court, or equivalent, with successful outcomes.
- A track record of contributing strategic employee relations expertise to significant organisational change initiatives, including restructures, workforce planning, and cultural transformation.
- In-depth and current knowledge of Irish employment legislation, case law, and industrial relations frameworks, with the ability to apply this knowledge to complex ER issues.
- Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills, with a practical and solutions-oriented approach to employee relations challenges.

- Strong IT proficiency, including experience with digital HR systems, case tracking tools, and data analysis for reporting and decision-making.
- Strong leadership skills, with experience in managing and developing an employee relations team, setting strategic direction, monitoring performance, and embedding a culture of high-quality, resolution-focused service.
- Demonstrated ability to manage multiple competing priorities in a fast-paced, pressurised environment, while maintaining a focus on high-quality service delivery.
- A proactive and adaptable leader who supports and champions positive change in dynamic and evolving organisational environments.
- Excellent interpersonal, influencing, and communication skills, with the ability to build credibility, gain trust, maintain confidentiality, and collaborate effectively with stakeholders at all levels.
- Capable of working independently with initiative, while also being an effective and collaborative team player who contributes positively across teams and functions.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience working in a public sector or regulated environment, with an understanding of governance and accountability frameworks.
- Experience contributing to or leading employee relations responses in the context of national or sectoral frameworks (e.g. national wage agreements or public service reforms).
- Familiarity with the culture and operations of higher education institutions or large multi-stakeholder organisations.
- Advanced knowledge of HRIS platforms (e.g. CoreHR, PeopleSoft) and their application in employee relations case management and reporting.
- Coaching or mediation qualifications, or experience applying mediation skills to conflict resolution in the workplace.

The above criteria will be utilised to shortlist and select candidates for interview.

Application

A. Existing University of Galway employees

If you are an existing University of Galway employee, please use the University of Galway Core Portal to apply for this post. The following is a link to the Core Portal <http://ess.universityofgalway.ie>. Core Portal user guides can be found at <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/human-resources/employeeselfservice/>. Please ensure that you read the attached guide prior to applying for this post and allow sufficient time to make your online submission in advance of closing date. Please note that closing dates/times cannot be extended for user error.

Unfortunately, late applications cannot be accepted.

Please note agency staff will need to have three months' continuous service at the closing date of the advertised post. Further information on CORE portal can be found here [CorePortal User Guide - University of Galway](#).

Employment permit restrictions apply for this category of post.

The completed application document must be submitted online to reach the Human Resources Office no later than **17:00 (Irish Time) on Thursday 20th November 2025**.

B. All applicants will receive an acknowledgement of application.

If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application or if you have any other queries regarding the application process please contact recruit@universityofgalway.ie or telephone 091-492151.

C. 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 debarred from applying for another position in the same employment or the same sector. Therefore, such retirees are ineligible to apply for this position.

D. Pension Entitlements:

This is a pensionable position. Details of the applicable Pension Scheme will be provided to the successful candidate. The Pension element of this appointment is subject to the terms and conditions of the Pension scheme currently in force within the University. This Scheme may be amended or revised by the Irish Government or its agents at any time.

The Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004 set a minimum retirement age of 65 and removed the upper compulsory retirement age for certain New Entrants to the Public Sector on or after 1 April 2004. Effective from 1st January 2013, The Single Public Service Scheme applies to all first-time new 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. Compulsory retirement age will be 70.

F. Collective Agreement: Redundancy Payments to Public Servants:

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform letter dated 28th 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. Thereafter the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will be required prior to re-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) and the Minister's consent will have to be secured prior to employment by any public service body.

Please refer to Revenue circular (www.revenue.ie/en/about/foi/s16/income-tax-capital-gains-tax.../05-05-19.pdf) for information on revised tax arrangements which may apply on rehire if you have previously received a redundancy payment from University of Galway.

G. 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, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.

H. Declaration:

Applicants will be required to confirm whether they have previously availed of a public service scheme of incentivised early retirement and/or the collective agreement outlined above. The above represents the main schemes and agreements restricting a candidate's right to be re-

employed in the public service. However, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list and candidates should declare details of any other exit mechanism they have availed of which restricts their right to be re-employed in the public service. 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.

J. Work Permits:

Work permits are permits which are granted to non-EU/EEA Citizens to allow them to work in Ireland legally. It's an illegal offense to work in Ireland without a work permit and both the employer and the employee are held responsible. For more information on work permits and for future updates, visit the Enterprise, Trade and Employment website www.djei.ie. Please see list of ineligible categories for work permits at <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Workplace-and-Skills/Employment-Permits/Employment-Permit-Eligibility//>

Assessment Procedure

A. Board of Assessors

Applications will be considered by a Board of Assessors, who will shortlist and interview candidates. All applications and other materials submitted by applicants will be treated in strict confidence by all panel members and others involved in the administration of the recruitment. No information about the identity of applicants, or details of their applications, will be released to others, except where it is necessary as part of the selection process.

B. Interview Dates

Candidates will be advised of arrangements in due course. We endeavour to give as much prior notice as possible for interview dates etc. Candidates should make themselves available for interview and presentation on the date(s) specified by the University.

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test when and where required by the University or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the University requires in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

C. Referees

Referees listed on the application form of the successful candidate will be contacted following interview, with the exception of academic posts.

D. Offer

All candidates will in due course be notified of the outcome of their application. The Human Resources Office will offer the post to the candidate appointed once the appointment has been made by the University Appointing Authority. The successful candidate will be required to submit evidence of age, original qualifications and may be required to complete a medical examination.

Once a conditional job offer has been made, the candidate will be asked to complete a confidential pre-employment health questionnaire that the University's Occupational Health Service will use in order to assess medical fitness to undertake the duties of the post. The information provided on the questionnaire will be used (i) to assess the candidate's medical capability to do the job applied for; (ii) to determine whether any reasonable adjustments may be required to accommodate any disability or impairment which the candidate may have; and (iii) to ensure that none of the requirements of the job for which the candidate applied would adversely affect any pre-existing health conditions the candidate may have.

Human Resources Office