

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Job Specification

RESEARCH OFFICER (ENVIRONMENT) (Assembly Grade 5)

SALARY RANGE: £37,219 - £42,161

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Application forms are available on the Northern Ireland Assembly website and should be completed online. Completed application forms, which demonstrate the skills and experience sought, must be submitted by the closing date of Friday 28 February 2014.
- 1.2 **Candidates are reminded that the application form must be fully completed. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. CVs or other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (The Commission) is a corporate body established by section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It is required to provide the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes. The Commission employs a Secretariat to serve the Assembly. The Assembly Secretariat comprises of the Office of the Clerk and Chief Executive, and five Directorates – Legal and Governance Services, Clerking and Reporting, Corporate Services, Facilities and Information and Outreach. The management structure of the Assembly Secretariat is illustrated in the attached chart.
- 2.2 The Commission's vision is to be at the forefront of providing outstanding and progressive parliamentary services.
- 2.3 The Information and Outreach Directorate focuses on the engagement and outreach role of the Assembly to the wider community. It is responsible for Communications, Information Systems, Outreach and Education and the Research and Information Service (RaISe).

Research Officers work within the RaISe, which is responsible for providing research and information support to the Assembly, its Members, committees and senior staff.

3. LOCATION

- 3.1 Secretariat staff are accommodated in Parliament Buildings. However whilst a roof refurbishment project is underway the Research Office has been temporarily relocated to Knockview Buildings, Stormont Estate.

4. JOB DESCRIPTION

4.1 Responsibility and Reporting Arrangements

Research Officers will report to a Senior Research Officer under the direction of the Head of RalSe, who in turn reports to the Director of Information and Outreach.

4.2 Duties and Responsibilities

The main duties and responsibilities of the post are:

- Producing peer reviewed, non-partisan, objective and evidence-based research papers and other explanatory material covering the area of environmental issues/planning, as well as a range of subject areas falling within the remit of the RalSe.
- Providing timely, accurate and non-partisan answers to enquiries from Members and their staff. This will include oral and written briefings which often will have to be provided at short notice.
- Writing short briefs both in preparation for and in response to Assembly debates and Committee meetings.
- Providing a full range of research services and support for the Assembly Committees, Members and Secretariat.
- Retrieving and synthesising information from government and external sources, particularly electronic, including on-line databases.
- Liaising with government departments, academics and others to ensure that information is high quality, accurate, comprehensive and up to date.
- Working as an effective team player and contribute to development of RalSe.
- Undertaking such other duties as may be required which fall within RalSe's remit.
- Complying with the Assembly's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures.

5. Essential Criteria

At the closing date for applications, applicants must have:

- (i) An honours degree or equivalent formal qualification in the field of environmental issues/planning;

and

- a) at least three years' post qualification work experience in conducting non-partisan, evidence-based research in the field of environmental issues/planning and compiling written briefings/reports based upon this research;

and

- b) at least three years' post qualification work experience of making oral presentations on environmental issues/planning.

OR

- (ii) A post-graduate degree (Masters or higher gained via examination or research) in the field of environmental issues/planning;

and

- a) at least two years' post qualification work experience in conducting non-partisan, evidence-based research in the field of environmental issues/planning and compiling written briefings/reports based upon this research;

and

- b) at least two years' post qualification work experience of making oral presentations on environmental issues/planning.

6. Shortlisting Criterion

The Assembly Commission reserves the right to use shortlisting as part of the recruitment process for this post. Should shortlisting be required, the following shortlisting criterion will be applied:

- Routinely liaising with relevant organisations, academics and policy-makers to enhance expertise and knowledge of public policy in the field of environmental issues/planning.

7. Core Competences

In addition to the essential criteria outlined above, the following competences will be tested at interview:

People

The ability to develop teams and individuals to encourage innovation, improve performance and meet business objectives; plan, allocate, monitor and evaluate work carried out by teams, individuals and self; create, maintain and enhance effective working relationships; assess own development needs and develop self to improve job performance and fulfil future potential and to select personnel.

Information and Communication

The ability to seek, organise, evaluate and communicate information in order to meet customer needs; analyse information to solve problems and make decisions; communicate message/information to others in order to influence them and gain their commitment.

Services

The ability to maintain service delivery to champion customer requirements and monitor customer satisfaction; to initiate, plan and implement change and improvement in services and systems to meet customer needs.

8. Further Information

- 8.1 If you require more information on the recruitment process please contact the Human Resources Office on 028905 21923.
- 8.2 Further information about the NI Assembly can be obtained on the Internet at website: www.niassembly.gov.uk.

9. INTERVIEW

Criteria-based Interview

Final selection of candidates will be based on performance at criteria-based interview(s) structured around the qualities, skills and experience sought in the essential criteria section of the job specification as well as the core competencies listed above. All candidates will be expected to display an acceptable level of competence in each of these areas. Offers of appointment will be made in order of merit.

10. COMPLETION OF APPLICATION FORMS

- 10.1 **The selection panel may decide to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information available, to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability. It is therefore essential that applicants describe fully in the application form the extent to which they satisfy the above criteria. It is not appropriate simply to list the various posts that the applicants have held. The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicants' posts about the skills and experience gained.**
- 10.2 **It will be the responsibility of applicants to demonstrate clearly on their application forms how they satisfy the essential and shortlisting criteria. Applicants must use only the application forms provided and must not submit additional material in support of their application forms.**

11. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

- 11.1 This appointment is permanent and will be made by The Commission. The successful applicant will be an employee of the Commission. All appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.
- 11.2 The standard working week is 37 hours, excluding meal breaks (42 hours gross). Working hours will be dictated by the mode of operation of the NI Assembly and may involve work into late evenings, at weekends and on public holidays.
- 11.3 The salary scale for this post is £37,219-£42,161 and your starting salary will be £37,219 per annum.
- 11.4 In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing to 26 days after 4 years of service and to 30 days after 5 years of service. Applicants should be aware that a major influence in determining when leave can be taken will be the parliamentary timetable.
- 11.5 Subject to eligibility, a childcare allowance scheme is available.
- 11.6 Successful applicants will be given suitable training, including formal specialised courses as necessary.

12 PENSIONS

- 12.1 The NI Assembly offers all new employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at:

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni/index/new-members.htm>

If you are unable to access the website or require the information in another format please contact:

The Pensions Manager
Human Resources Office
Room 402
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BT4 3XX
Tel: 028 9052 1685

- 12.2 Please note that the NI Assembly does not use HR Connect.

13. APPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Under fair employment legislation, the Commission is required to monitor the community background of those applying to fill vacancies. Applicants must, therefore, complete the equal opportunities monitoring section of the application form.
- 13.3 The Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates irrespective of gender, marital or family status, religious belief/political opinion, disability, age, race, nationality or sexual orientation. **All applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit.**

This job specification should not be taken as constituting conditions of employment and should be read in conjunction with "Guidance for Applicants".

Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat Organisation Structure

