##### 

##### NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

#### Job Specification

# **Clerk Assistant**

**(Assembly Grade 3)**

## SALARY RANGE: £58,766 to £66,571

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   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 **23:59 on 13 November 2016**.
   2. **Applicants 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.**

### BACKGROUND

* 1. The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Commission) is a corporate body established by section 40 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It must 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 management structure of the Assembly Secretariat is illustrated in the attached chart.

2.2 Two Clerk Assistants manage and oversee the conduct of Assembly business, which is delivered through three procedural offices - the Bill Office, the Business Office and the Clerking and Member Support Office.

**The Bill Office** supports the work of the Assembly in the management of legislation through its plenary and committee stages and is responsible for ensuring that the Acts, which finally emerge, reflect fully the deliberations and decisions taken by Assembly Members. The Office is also responsible for providing advice to Members on the admissibility of proposed amendments to Bills and for supporting the development of Members Bills.

**The Business Office** supports the work of plenary sessions of the Assembly. The Office acts as the focus of procedural advice to the Speaker and Members on the conduct of Assembly business and is responsible for the production of Order Papers, proposed Amendments to motions, and the Minutes of Proceedings, which are the official legal record of the business of the Assembly. The Business Office supports the Business Committee and processes Assembly questions and the laying of documents in compliance with Standing Orders and Speaker’s rulings.

**The Clerking and Member Support Office** has responsibility for supporting statutory and other Committees established by the Assembly. The Office arranges and services committee meetings, events and visits, records committee proceedings, commissions research and advice, and drafts committee reports and speeches. The Office also provides advice and guidance to Committee Chairpersons and Membersthroughthe Chairpersons’ Liaison Group, and is responsible for the implementation of the Commission’s Member Development Strategy. In addition the office provides the Secretariat to the Independent Financial Review Panel.

Each of these procedural offices is staffed by a number of clerking teams.

The management structure of the Assembly Secretariat and

Parliamentary Services is illustrated in the attached chart**.**

1. **LOCATION**
   1. The successful applicant(s) will be based in Parliament Buildings, Belfast.
2. **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Responsibility and Reporting Arrangements**

* 1. The successful applicant will report to the Director of Parliamentary Services and will be responsible for the management of a team of Clerks.

4.2 **Main Duties and Responsibilities**

The main duties and responsibilities of the post are to:

* Establish and communicate service standards for Bill, Business and Committee offices.
* Ensure that accurate, timely, impartial and confidential procedural advice is delivered to the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Party Whips, Members and support staff.
* Ensure that proper procedures are in place to support the tabling of questions and motions, laying of papers, conduct of committee business and conduct of plenary business, and ensure that these procedures are communicated to Members and staff.
* Ensure that proper procedures are in place to support the passage of all legislation through the Assembly including drafting support for Bills and amendments, and advice on admissibility.
* Support to the Speaker and Deputy Speakers through the provision of procedural and administrative advice during plenary sittings of the Assembly (‘Clerk at Table’).
* Develop strategies and plans to support and improve the impact and effectiveness of the Assembly and its committees, including through programmes to support Member development.
* Quality assure the work of Clerking teams in the Directorate to ensure compliance with legislation, Standing Orders and other procedural guidance in order to meet agreed service standards.
* Manage the interface between Executive departments and the Assembly Secretariat in bringing forward Executive business.
* Develop programmes to support staff performance and motivation, including through investment in learning and development
* Assist in the preparation of the Directorate’s Business Plan and Risk Register and prepare directorate contributions to corporate policies and plans.
* Ensure that appropriate resources are in place to lead the delivery of the Directorate’s Business Plan and ensure that staff are adequately trained, developed and mentored.
* Establish systems and procedures for the management of staff and resources including preparation of annual budgets.
* Undertake such other duties appropriate to the level of the position, as the Director of Parliamentary Services may reasonably direct.

1. **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

Applicants for the post must, by the closing date for applications have:

1. at least a primary degree, minimum 2:1 classification, in any subject and at least 3 years’ experience in each of the areas detailed at (a) – (d). Applications will be considered from applicants with formal qualifications of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

Relevant or equivalent qualifications: give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

**OR**

1. at least 5 years’ experience in each of the areas detailed at (a) – (d).

The experience specified above at (i) & (ii) must be in the following areas:

(a)effective leadership of a team to deliver high quality and effective procedural services in a parliamentary environment to tight deadlines and quality assured output;

(b) the provision of sound written and oral advice directly to elected-members and/or senior staff of national or devolved parliaments on its procedures;

(c) delivery of procedural services in a politically sensitive parliamentary environment in compliance with policies and procedures

(d) effective prioritisation of services or work plans to meet tight deadlines in a pressurised environment.

1. **SHORTLISTING CRITERIA**

6.1 The Commission may decide to shortlist for interview as part of the recruitment process for this post. The following Shortlisting Criteria reflects the experience and knowledge which have been agreed as being desirable for the successful applicant to possess:

* experience of, in a parliamentary setting, providing complex and multi-stranded high quality and effective procedural advice directly to the Office of the Speaker\*, the Clerk/Chief Executive\*, the Chair of a Committee\* and/or senior staff relating to a particularly sensitive political issue.

\* or equivalent titles.

1. **CORE COMPETENCES**

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

**Strategy/Policy**

The ability to develop and influence policy and policy changes taking into account all relevant (internal and external) factors and the effect of these changes on the work of the organisation and its customers. This will often involve analytical and judgemental skills in a complex, social, economic and political environment. the ability to formulate strategy, taking all relevant policy and environmental factors into account.

**Services**

The ability to maintain and improve service delivery and to contribute to the planning and implementation of changes in services and systems to meet customer needs.

**People**

The ability to create, maintain and enhance effective working relationships, assess your own developmental needs and develop yourself to improve job performance and fulfil future potential.

**Information and Communication**

The ability to analyse information, make critical decisions, influence and gain the commitment of others, identify customer/audience needs and communicate required information.

1. **STAGES OF SELECTION**
   1. The following information provides detail on each stage of the selection process for the post of Clerk Assistant.

Eligibility Sift

The Essential Criteria (listed above) reflects the experience and knowledge that an applicant must possess in order to be able to undertake the role. In the first instance an eligibility sift will be carried out on the basis of the information provided by applicants in their application form against each of the essential criteria. Applicants will therefore demonstrate clearly in their application form how and to what extent they meet with the essential criteria for the post.

Shortlisting

The selection panel reserve the right to use shortlisting as part of the selection process for this post. Should shortlisting be used, the shortlisting criterion listed above will be applied. The selection panel reserve the right to set a minimum standard for the shortlisting criterion which applicants must achieve in order to be invited to the interview stage of the selection process. If shortlisting is not necessary, all applicants who have demonstrated the essential criteria will proceed to the interview stage of the selection process.

Assessment Centre

As part of this stage of the selection process, applicants will be required to complete a written exercise, after which they will have to prepare and deliver a presentation to the selection panel in advance of the formal interview questions. Applicants will be given a set period of time to prepare their response to the briefing exercise immediately in advance of their interview.

Interview

The selection panel will carry out interviews for applicants who have proceeded to the next stage of the selection process following the eligibility sift. The Essential Criteria and the Competencies (listed above) will be assessed at interview stage.

Further Interview Stage

The selection panel reserves the right to hold a further interview stage if deemed necessary.

1. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

9.1 Offers of appointment will be made in order of merit and the merit list, which may be used to fill further vacancies if they arise, will be live for 12 months.

9.2 If you require more information on the recruitment process, please contact the Human Resources Office on 90520325.

9.3 Further information about the NI Assembly can be obtained on the Internet at website: [www.niassembly.gov.uk](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk)

1. **COMPLETION OF APPLICATION FORMS**
   1. The selection panel may decide to interview only those candidates 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 candidates have held. The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the candidates’ posts about the skills and experience gained.
   2. It will be the responsibility of candidates to demonstrate clearly on their application form how they satisfy the essential and shortlisting criteria. **Candidates must use only the application form provided and must not submit additional material in support of their application.**
2. **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**
   1. These appointments are permanent and will be made by The Commission. The successful candidate will be an employee of the Commission. All appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.
   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 Assembly and is likely to involve work into late evenings, at weekends and on public holidays.
   3. The salary scale for this post is £58,766 to £66,571 and your starting salary will be £58,766 per annum.
   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.
   5. Subject to eligibility, a childcare voucher scheme is available.
   6. The successful applicant will be given suitable training, including formal specialised courses as necessary.
3. **PENSIONS** 
   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

* 1. Please note that the NI Assembly does not use HR Connect.

1. **APPLICATIONS**
   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.
   2. The Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants 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 does not constitute any term or condition of employment.**