

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Job Specification

Accountant
(Assembly Grade 6) (2 posts)

SALARY RANGE: £30,437 - £34,459

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 **Wednesday 15 February 2017**.

Applicants should note that the online application system will not be available from 3 – 6 February 2017 inclusive due to essential maintenance.

- 1.2 **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.**

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 Chief Executive's Office 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 provide progressive, effective and efficient parliamentary services.
- 2.3 The Commission wishes to appoint two Accountants to the role of Accountant (Assembly Grade 6). Post (1) is a Systems Accountant and Post (2) is a Secretariat Financial Services Accountant. These posts will be within the Finance Office, which is part of the Corporate Services Directorate. This Directorate brings together a number of administrative functions in support of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), MLA's support staff and Secretariat staff. The Finance Office is responsible for the provision of high-quality financial support services to both MLAs and the Directorates within the Secretariat. It is responsible for a wide range of services including

payroll, a travel desk, recording and reporting expenditure within the annual Assembly budget, as well as a full range of accounting and financial advice services to MLAs on all areas of financial support payable under the provisions of the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016.

- 2.4 The Finance Office also produces the Commission's Annual Report and Resource Accounts, which are produced under the International Financial Reporting Standards regime (IFRS), as adapted for the specific needs of the public sector.

3. LOCATION

- 3.1 Secretariat staff are accommodated in Parliament Buildings.

4. JOB DESCRIPTION

Responsibility and Reporting Arrangements

- 4.1 The post holders will have responsibility for a number of key functions within the Finance Office, including the supervision of small teams of book-keeping staff. The functions of each role will include assisting with the administration of the internal budgetary control and reporting systems; and supervising the delivery of a range of finance services to the Secretariat, including the reporting and recording of all of the Assembly Commission's expenditure. The post holders will assist the Senior Accountants with the preparation of the Interim and Annual Resource Accounts. Many of the duties and responsibilities are common to each role, however there are a number of duties that are currently specific to the post of Systems Accountant. The System Accountant post will specifically include the administration and maintenance of the computerised accounting systems. Both of the post holders will report directly to the Senior Accountant in charge of the Secretariat Financial Services team.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- 4.2 The main duties and responsibilities of the posts will include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Administration of the internal budgetary control processes;
 - Production of high quality, reliable, accurate and timely financial information for internal and external stakeholders. This includes the production of daily reports and monthly management accounts with detailed variance analysis;
 - Production of monthly Balance sheet reconciliations;
 - Assisting the production of the Northern Ireland Assembly's resource accounts (on an interim and year-end basis), including the production of monthly prepayments, accruals and general ledger journals;

- Maintenance of an up-to-date understanding of current public sector accounting requirements IFRS regime;
- Management of the Assembly's procurement card scheme;
- Maintenance of the Fixed Asset Register;
- Line management of a small team;
- Any other duties as may reasonably be required.

Additionally, the duties of the Systems Accountant's post will include:

- Administration of the computerised accounting systems (including the purchase to pay and general ledger accounting systems), which will include creditor and user set-ups, approval plans and chart of accounts maintenance;
- Development of IT systems to support financial management and reporting processes, including review and change to internal controls.

Additionally, the duties of the Secretariat Financial Services Accountant's post will include:

- Supervision of monthly accounting procedures – including VAT returns and bank reconciliations;
- Administration of the cash management scheme.

Applicants may apply for either post or both posts and will be asked to indicate which post(s) they are applying for on the application form. Applicants should complete the relevant essential criteria section(s) for each post as specified below.

5. **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

5.1 At the closing date for applications, applicants **must** have:

- (i) successfully completed the professional examinations and be a full, current member of one of the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies listed below:
 - a) the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants;
 - b) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland;
 - c) the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland;
 - d) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales;
 - e) the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants;
 - f) the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

Membership of alternative accounting bodies, recognised as equivalent by the selection panel, will be considered.

AND must have:

- (ii) At least one year's post qualification* experience of preparing financial and/or management accounts for a public, commercial or voluntary sector organisation on an accruals basis.

Depending on the post(s) applied for, applicants must also have:

For the Systems Accountant post:

- a) Experience of maintaining and developing core** IT financial and/or management accounting systems.

AND/OR

For the Secretariat Financial Services Accountant post:

- b) Experience in monitoring budgets and reporting on the allocation of resources for a public, commercial or voluntary sector organisation.

* "Post qualification" experience will be deemed to have commenced from the date on which applicants are admitted to full membership of one of the professional bodies referred to at 5.1(i) above, having fully satisfied all the criteria for membership.

** "Core" IT systems should be taken to refer to multi-ledger software packages (including a sales ledger, purchase ledger and general ledger) used to produce financial statements or management accounts. By way of example these may include but are not limited to Sun Systems, SAP; Exchequer; Pegasus Opera, or Sage.

7. CORE COMPETENCES

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

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.

Resources

The ability to contribute to the assessment of resource needs and to recommend, plan, monitor, evaluate and control the use of resources.

People

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

Information & Communication

The ability to identify, organise, evaluate and communicate information to meet customer needs; analyse information to solve problems and make decisions; identify and adopt communication style and methods to influence and gain commitment of others.

8. Further Information

- 8.1 If you require more information on the recruitment process please contact the Human Resources Office on (028) 90520325.
- 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

- 9.1 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 competences 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 **Only the information presented in the relevant box of the application form will be considered by the panel when assessing that criterion. Applicants should be aware that the panel will not have access to the employment history section of the application**

form when they are considering if an applicant meets the essential or shortlisting criteria for the role.

- 10.3 **It will be the responsibility of the applicant 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 Assembly Commission. The successful applicant will be an employee of the Commission. The appointment is 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 £30,437 to £34,459 and your starting salary will be £30,437 per annum.
- 11.4 In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing by 1 day after each year of service to a maximum of 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 voucher scheme is available.
- 11.6 Successful applicants will be given suitable training, including formal specialised courses as necessary.

12 PENSIONS

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

www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/working-northern-ireland-civil-service/civil-service-pensions-ni

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.

13.2 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".