**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

***Job Specification***

**Research Officer - Justice**

**(Assembly Grade 5)**

**SALARY RANGE: £37,219 - £42,161**

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 20 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.**
2. **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 Research Officers work within the Research and Information Service (RaISe) which is part of the Assembly's Parliamentary Services Directorate.

* 1. The key business priority for RaISe is the provision of a professional research service that delivers:
* high quality research on all subject areas within the Assembly’s legislative competence and business interest;
* written and oral briefings based on this research for Members, their staff and Assembly Committees;
* research support, briefing and advice to the Assembly’s Secretariat.

2.4 Research staff work directly with Assembly Members and Committees in the production of non-partisan, objective and evidence based research. RaISe aims to cover, in depth, the major subject areas that are within the Assembly’s legislative competence and to provide reasonable coverage of all other policy related subjects.

2.5 The management structure of the Assembly Secretariat and

Parliamentary Services is illustrated in the attached chart.

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

**Main duties and responsibilities**

4.1 The main duties and responsibilities of the post are:

* producing research papers and other explanatory material covering the area of justice as well as a range of subject areas falling within the remit of the Research Service;
* providing timely, accurate and non-partisan answers to enquiries from Members and their staff. This will include oral and written briefings which will often 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 contributing to development of RaISe;
* carrying out such other duties as may be required which fall within the research business of the RaISe; and
* complying with the Assembly’s Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures.

### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

5.1 Applicants must meet the qualification and experience requirements set out below:

(i) At least a Second-class honours, lower division (2:2) degree (or equivalent) through which candidates have gained an understanding of the development and analysis of public policy or law making;

**and**

at least three years’ post degree (or equivalent) work experience of;

1. conducting objective, justice related, evidence based research;
2. producing and delivering justice related research findings to decision makers.

**OR**

(ii) At least a post-graduate degree (or equivalent) (Masters or higher gained via examination or research) through which candidates have gained an understanding of the development and analysis of public policy or law making.

**and**

at least two years’ post Masters (or equivalent) work experience of;

1. conducting objective, justice related, evidence based research;
2. producing and delivering justice related research findings to decision makers.

Relevant or equivalent qualifications: applicants must state the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date which the applicant was notified of their result by the official awarding body). Should applicants believe their qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on that applicant to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

5.2 Applicants must demonstrate, in their application form and at interview how, through the qualifications relied on to meet the criteria at 5.1. (i) or 5.1. (ii), they have gained an understanding of the development and analysis of public policy or law making. They must also demonstrate, in their application form and at interview, how they meet the requirements at either 5.1. (i) or 5.1. (ii) of conducting objective, justice related evidence based research and producing and delivering justice related research findings to decision makers.

### Shortlisting Criteria

5.3 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:

* 1. At least four years’ experience if applying under criteria (i) or three years’ experience if applying under criteria (ii).
  2. At least a degree (or equivalent) minimum 2:1 classification through which candidates have gained an understanding of the development and analysis of public policy or law making.

### CORE COMPETENCES

6.1 In addition to the experience and knowledge detailed, applicants will also be expected to demonstrate, at interview, the extent to which they meet the competences listed below.

**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.

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.

1. **STAGES OF SELECTION**
   1. The following information provides detail on each stage of the selection process for the post of Research Officer - Justice.

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 criteria listed above will be applied. If shortlisting is not necessary, all applicants who have demonstrated the essential criteria will proceed to the interview stage of the selection process.

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.

Part of the interview process will be the delivery of a presentation. The subject of the presentation will be advised to the applicant on the day of the interview and the applicant will be expected to present information to the selection panel.

1. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

8.1 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.

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

8.3 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**

9.1 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.

9.2 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.**

1. **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

10.1 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.

10.2 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 may occasionally involve work into late evenings.

10.3 The salary scale for this post is £37,219 - £42,161 and your starting salary will be £37,219 per annum.

10.4 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.

10.5 Subject to eligibility, a childcare voucher scheme is available.

10.6 The successful applicant will be given suitable training, including formal specialised courses as necessary.

1. **PENSIONS**

11.1 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

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

1. **APPLICATIONS**

12.1 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.

12.2 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.**