



## Northern Ireland Assembly

<b>Job Title:</b>	Clerk Assistant
<b>Salary range:</b>	£70,422 - £72,548
<b>Grade:</b>	Assembly Grade 3
<b>Directorate:</b>	Parliamentary Services
<b>Business Area/Office:</b>	Clerking
<b>Accountable to:</b>	Director of Parliamentary Services
<b>Accountable for:</b>	Assembly Clerks

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### **Job Purpose**

The Clerking business area in the Northern Ireland Assembly directly supports Assembly business in the Chamber and in committees, including scrutiny and legislation.

The Clerk Assistants manage and oversee the conduct of Assembly business, providing clear, accurate and concise written and oral parliamentary advice; often working in real time in a politicised and pressurised environment; and in the public eye. Clerk Assistants have a senior and high profile role in the Assembly, and the Clerk Assistant regularly sits at the 'Table' in the Assembly Chamber.

Clerk Assistants provide advice to senior office holders of the Assembly including the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Committee Chairs, Members, the Clerk/Chief Executive and the Director of Parliamentary Services. Consequently, excellent political understanding is an essential requirement of the role, together with the ability to develop and maintain highly effective working relationships, particularly with party business managers ('whips') and Members.

The Clerk Assistants are operationally accountable for performance and delivery across a number of procedural offices including the Bill Office, the Business Office, Assembly committee teams and the Clerking and Member Support Office. As a senior leader responsible for business areas which are core to the operation of the Assembly, Clerk Assistants are required to set a strategic direction and take key decisions.

Experience of leading and managing the delivery of services centred around the application of rules and procedures, such as Standing Orders, is required for this role. Clerk Assistants are required to have, or to develop, an expert knowledge of parliamentary procedure, the Assembly's Standing Orders, Speaker's Rulings and Assembly conventions – including interpretation and application.

The role of Clerk Assistant is both demanding and challenging, operating as it does in a highly pressurised and scrutinised environment, and frequently outside of normal business hours.

### **Job Description:**

The main duties and responsibilities of the post are:

#### **Providing advice**

- Ensure that accurate, timely, impartial and confidential procedural advice is provided to the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Committee Chairs, Party Whips, Members, party support staff, the Clerk/Chief Executive and the Director of Parliamentary Services.
- Support the Speaker and Deputy Speakers through the provision of procedural and administrative advice during plenary sittings of the Assembly ('Clerk at Table').
- Ensure that best practice parliamentary procedures are in place to support the tabling of questions and motions, laying of papers, conduct of plenary business and conduct of committee business, and ensure that these procedures are communicated to Members and staff.
- Ensure that best practice parliamentary 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.
- Champion strategies and plans to support and improve the impact and effectiveness of the Assembly and its committees, including through programmes to support Member development.

#### **Managing relationships**

- Develop an effective network with Members to ensure that working relationships are maintained and issues dealt with promptly.
- Manage the interface between Executive departments and the Assembly Secretariat in bringing forward Executive business.
- Develop and maintain relevant external relationships to the Assembly to ensure that the work of the Clerking teams is informed by best practice and to collaborate, where necessary, on delivery.

#### **Managing services**

- Quality assure the work of Clerking teams to ensure compliance with legislation, Standing Orders and other procedural guidance in order to meet agreed service standards.
- Lead and manage individuals and teams to ensure delivery of business objectives.
- Build high performing teams and deliver through others using a coaching style of leadership.

- Establish and communicate service standards for the Bill, Business and Committee offices.
- Manage resources effectively and ensure that appropriate resources are in place to deliver in their areas of responsibility within Corporate Plan. This includes preparation of annual budgets.
- Assist in the preparation of the Corporate Plan and Risk Register and prepare directorate contributions to corporate policies and plans.
- Undertake such other duties appropriate to the level of the position, as the Director of Parliamentary Services may reasonably direct.
- Comply with the Assembly Commission's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures; and
- Carry out other duties that the Assembly Commission reasonably requires of you.

**Essential Criteria:**

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

1. A thorough understanding of the role and functions of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the political environment in which it operates including the current challenges facing the Assembly.

**AND**

2. at least a primary degree, minimum 2:1 classification, in any subject and at least 3 years' senior management 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.

**OR**

3. at least 5 years' senior management experience\* in each of the areas detailed at (a) – (d).

The experience specified above at 2. and 3. must be in the following areas:

- (a) effective direct leadership of a team to deliver high quality and effective advice in a legislature, statutory body\*\* or company board\*\*\* on the rules and/or procedures governing and regulating its operation, to tight deadlines and quality assured output in a pressurised environment;
- (b) preparation, collation and delivery of sound and elucidate written and oral advice directly to members of a legislature, a statutory body or a company board on its rules and/or procedures in a sensitive political or operational environment in compliance with policies;
- (c) experience of working in an environment where differing views have to be managed, with the ability both to anticipate and negotiate such differing views; and
- (d) experience of promoting and delivering a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, efficiency and value for money

\*Senior management experience is defined as reporting directly to the top management levels of the organisation. For example, reporting directly to a Chief Executive, Director, Head of Business/Function or to a company board.

\*\*Statutory bodies are defined as Government departments, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, public corporations or other public bodies which have a non-executive board of directors.

\*\*\*Company board – defined as organisation of 100 employees or more.

### **Shortlisting Criteria:**

Should shortlisting be required, the following shortlisting criteria will be applied:

- Experience of thinking laterally and analysing complex and possibly incomplete information in order to take and justify decisions under pressure.

### **Assembly Skills & Behaviours:**

The interview questions will be based on the essential criteria and the following Assembly Skills and Behaviours:

#### **Delivering a quality service**

...is about providing a high-quality and efficient service to our customers. It is thinking ahead, managing resources effectively and delivering work on time and to a high standard. It is also using professional or technical expertise to enhance service delivery.

#### **Building relationships and effective communication**

...is creating and maintaining positive, professional and respectful internal and external working relationships through effective and appropriate communications.

#### **Initiating improvement and delivering change**

...is looking for and being open to new and innovative ideas and improvements to the service provided. It is being flexible and adapting positively and professionally to sustain performance when the situation changes, workloads increase or priorities change. It is about forming sound, evidence-based decisions and being accountable for results.

#### **Managing & Leading Self and Others**

... is setting high standards for ourselves. It is about guiding, motivating and developing others to achieve high performance. It is about engaging others in delivering a corporate vision of excellence, expertise and innovation in support of the Assembly as a legislature.

#### **Parliamentary & Political Understanding**

...is displaying an appropriate understanding of the wider political environment; what the Assembly does and how our role fits in; and the level of public scrutiny to which the actions and decisions of Assembly staff are exposed. It requires impartiality, integrity and political sensitivity.