



Northern Ireland Assembly

Job Title:	Assembly Clerk
Salary range:	£58,963-£60,751
Grade:	Assembly Grade 4
Directorate:	Parliamentary Services
Business Area/Office:	Clerking
Accountable to:	Clerk Assistant
Accountable for:	Senior Assistant Clerk / Assistant Assembly Clerk

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.

Assembly Clerks are responsible for providing advice, guidance and support for key functions of the Northern Ireland Assembly, including the conduct of Assembly business, the development and passage of legislation and the work of the Assembly's Committees.

Assembly Clerks lead the delivery 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.

Assembly Clerks 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.

Clerks are operationally responsible for the management and performance of their team, and are required to take key operational decisions in respect of same.

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

Assembly Clerks may be rotated between any of the Assembly Clerk positions in the Bill, Business and Committee Offices.

Job Description:

The main duties and responsibilities of the post are:

- Providing comprehensive and authoritative written and oral advice and guidance on a range of procedural, policy and legislative matters to inform key decision makers. This may include the provision of timely and accurate briefings to the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Committee Chairpersons, Committees, Members, the Assembly Commission, Clerk Assistants and Senior Management Group.
- Developing, managing and maintaining effective relationships with a diverse range of key stakeholders with competing views and priorities including Members, officials from Executive departments and agencies, media and private and voluntary organisations.
- Providing advice and guidance to other Clerks and Committees regarding scrutiny of cross-cutting issues, including budgets, Executive strategies, the Programme for Government and significant political issues, such as EU exit.
- Developing, managing and maintaining effective relationships with colleagues in other Assembly Commission services, including researchers, parliamentary reporters, lawyers, and communication specialists to ensure that the necessary expertise is utilised effectively to support procedural, policy and legislative decisions; and developing and maintaining effective relationships with colleagues in other legislatures, in order to share and apply best practice.
- Organising, commissioning and undertaking research to inform scrutiny and/or policy development.
- Preparing and making requests for legal advice.
- Supporting Members to develop legislative proposals or amendments to legislation by providing procedural, policy development and/or drafting advice, and drafting instructions for legislative provisions.
- Supporting the Speaker and Deputy Speakers through the provision of immediate and authoritative procedural advice and guidance during plenary sittings of the Assembly (Clerk at Table).
- Developing and applying expertise across a range of clerking business areas, keeping up to date on new and emerging policies, legislation and relevant legal developments, and developing an understanding of their impact on the Assembly.
- Managing a very demanding and wide-ranging workload of complex tasks, often to be completed within tight deadlines and in accordance with service standards. The nature of issues may be uncertain or have to be dealt with in rapidly changing situations where accurate interpretation, judgement and political awareness is required.
- Preparation of briefing documents on complex issues for the Speaker, Committee Chairpersons and Clerks at Table to support plenary, committee and legislative business.
- Managing and delivering complex, diverse and time-sensitive plenary tabling and laying services, in line with standing orders and relevant legislative provisions, to support and facilitate the Assembly's scrutiny role and plenary sessions.

- Clerking Committee meetings or sub-Committee meetings and providing support (including through the provision of impartial advice, guidance and written briefing) for Chairpersons and deputy Chairpersons at external meetings and events.
- Preparation of briefing papers, draft speeches, speaking notes, and press releases for Committee Chairpersons and others, and management of online and social media content.
- Planning and managing the committee stage of Bills, including providing advice and guidance to the Committee on key issues (e.g. amendments and procedure), analysing evidence received and drafting an evidence-based report.
- Managing the scrutiny of secondary legislation by Committees, with the provision of advice and guidance to Members.
- Planning and managing committee inquiries, including drafting scoping paper, terms of reference and inquiry/scrutiny plans, identifying key stakeholders, organising evidence sessions, analysing evidence and preparing detailed draft committee reports outlining the committee's key findings and recommendations.
- Delivering presentations to external stakeholders on the work of the Assembly.
- Contributing to the planning and delivery of corporate and directorate projects, including where relevant leading or managing these projects in line with Prince 2 methodology.
- Project management of contracts, working closely with the Procurement Office and the IS Office.
- Leading, managing and developing a team, setting goals and performance targets, evaluating staff performance, and ensuring staff are developed to meet the needs of the Assembly.
- Quality assuring the work of staff to ensure compliance with legislation, Standing Orders and other procedural guidance in order to meet agreed service standards.
- Ensuring the best use of resources, including budgets and staffing, by setting, and monitoring the successful delivery of projects.
- Identifying opportunities to improve business processes and working with the IS Office to test and iterate software applications to support the management of Assembly business.
- Effectively using Microsoft Office and bespoke internal Assembly software systems and databases to carry out work.
- Managing information and records in accordance with established policies and statutory requirements.
- Complying with all of the Assembly Commission's staff policies and procedures including Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures and all mandatory training requirements.
- Carrying 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' 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' 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) prioritising, planning and organising a very demanding and diverse workload of complex tasks and managing the resources available to ensure compliance with tight deadlines;
- (b) leading, managing and motivating a team of staff to ensure effective service delivery; taking personal responsibility for the delivery of high quality results and for the improvement and development of both processes and people;
- (c) contributing directly to the development or scrutiny of policy or legislation, including research or consultation and preparing recommendations for change or improvement;
- (d) providing authoritative written and oral advice on complex or politically sensitive matters directly to elected representatives or senior managers.

Shortlisting Criteria:

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

- Applicants must demonstrate 3 years' experience of applying strong analytical and interpretative skills in order to produce well-judged decisions/solutions within deadlines in a complex or politically sensitive environment.

Skills & Behaviours:

The following Assembly Skills and Behaviours will be assessed during the selection process:

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.

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.

Building relationships and effective communication

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

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.

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.