



Northern Ireland
Assembly



Senior Accounting Technician (MLA Services) Assembly Grade 6

£39,442 - £40,625 (under review)

Candidate Information Booklet

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later
than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 05 May 2023

Please retain a copy of this booklet for your reference
throughout the selection process.

Foreword

Thank you for your interest in the position of Senior Accounting Technician (MLA Services) in the Northern Ireland Assembly (the Assembly).

The Assembly operates in a dynamic and fast moving political and legislative environment, and as a newly appointed Senior Accounting Technician, you will be provided with an excellent opportunity to make an important and valued contribution to supporting Assembly business at Parliament Buildings.

As the Senior Accounting Technician (MLA Services) you will play an important role in supporting Members of the Legislative Assembly ('MLAs' or 'Members') as they carry out their Assembly duties. This role involves working directly with MLAs, MLAs' and Party support staff, as well as a range of other internal and external stakeholders.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a high-profile organisation, and apply your skills, experience and knowledge in a challenging and rewarding position.

In turn, we offer a competitive salary, excellent pension provision and a range of other [employee benefits listed on the Recruitment website](#).

Please read the information provided in the candidate information booklet carefully and if you are interested in this exciting post, I would encourage you to submit your application.

If you would like to find out more about the post before making an application, please contact Billy Mahoney at billy.mahoney@niassembly.gov.uk or 028 9052 1811.

Paula McClintock
Head of Finance

About Us

The Assembly is at the heart of political and public life as the democratically elected parliament that represents the interests of Northern Ireland and its people.

Established as a key element of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the Assembly comprises 90 MLAs and has three main functions - making legislation, scrutinising the Executive and representing constituents.

In accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the staff, services and facilities which are needed to support the work of the Assembly are provided by the Assembly Commission, a corporate body comprising the Speaker and five Members of the Assembly. The day-to-day running of the Assembly is delegated to the Clerk/Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team.

The Assembly Commission therefore provides the infrastructure (including Parliament Buildings), facilities and staff to allow the Assembly and its Committees to meet and to encourage public awareness of, and engagement with, the parliamentary process. It also pays the salaries of MLAs and reimburses the expenses which enable them to undertake their duties both at the Assembly and in their constituency offices.

The Assembly Commission is a high-achieving and professional organisation providing impartial support to the Assembly and MLAs. The Assembly Commission is independent of the Executive and the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The Assembly Commission has approximately 370 staff and an annual revenue budget of £51m. [Our organisational structure is illustrated on the Northern Ireland Assembly Recruitment website.](#)

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The Person

As the new Senior Accounting Technician (MLA Services) you will manage a team of up to 6 staff. You will have the ability to communicate clearly and effectively as you carry out your new and important role, advising on financial matters in line with legislation, organisational policy and procedures.

You must also be willing and keen to adopt a customer facing focus, as you and your team provide important financial services to MLAs and engage with a wide range of people involved in parliamentary business.

Applicants should be Accounting Technicians with management experience.

About the Role

The Finance Office offers a range of financial services to the Assembly Commission, MLAs and Political Parties. In order to deliver these services, the Finance Office is comprised of a number of integrated teams, one of which is the Members' Services team, which provides support to MLAs and their staff.

This team is specifically responsible for the administration of all financial assistance, provided for by legislation¹, to support and assist MLAs as they carry out the functions of their elected office. The administration includes undertaking an accounts payable service for MLAs, making payments on their behalf, ensuring that the legislation is fully complied with and that expenditure is accurately recorded and reported.

The team is also responsible for the administration of The Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2016 (the 'FAPP Scheme'), which offers financial support to Parties as they seek to assist MLAs in undertaking their Assembly functions.

The Senior Accounting Technician is responsible for leading the Members' Services team, overseeing the day-to-day administrative processes, ensuring

¹ The Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016, as amended by the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020 (the 'Determination').

payments are made accurately and in a timely manner, ensuring adequate controls are in place to accurately record and report expenditure and providing advice and guidance directly to MLAs or Political Parties on compliance related matters. The role is pivotal in the overall administration of both the Determination and the FAPP Scheme.

Core Responsibilities

The main duties and responsibilities are:

Financial Management Duties:

- Oversee the weekly payment of claims for financial assistance to MLAs or Political Parties;
- Authorise all claims for payment, ensuring accuracy and consistency of first and second stage validation checks which are carried out by the team;
- Oversee the payment of monthly rents in line with approved leases, ensuring leases are approved in accordance with the requirements of the Determination;
- Ensure adherence to the provisions of the Determination or FAPP Scheme in terms of funding allowances by monitoring spend against budgets and reporting to MLAs or Political Parties if expenditure is forecasted to exceed legislative allowances;
- Ensure appropriate internal controls are in place to verify compliance with the Determination or the rules of the FAPP Scheme;
- Ensure expenditure is recorded accurately and that all agreed and statutory reporting requirements are met;
- Prepare monthly journals for recharges and recodes to record and report expenditure;

- Assist the Accountant with monthly reconciliations of expenditure for audit purposes; and
- Assist the Deputy Head of Finance with monthly budgeting and forecasting by maintaining management information on committed expenditure and maximum allowances payable.

Managing information:

- Provide guidance and assistance to MLAs, their staff or Party staff on the administration of and compliance with the Determination or FAPP Scheme and the payment processes to be followed. This will be undertaken through providing advice surgeries and by developing and issuing written guidance in a corporate format;
- Undertake research and investigatory work, in order to provide timely and accurate analysis of financial information or policy issues in relation to MLAs' expenditure;
- Assist the Finance Office's Information Asset, ensuring compliance with internal policies on information management and ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);
- Collate, analyse and prepare information both for audit purposes and to respond to press queries or Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs), accurately and in a timely manner;
- Prepare quarterly information on all financial assistance claimed by MLAs and Political Parties for publication by the Assembly Commission, and the Electoral Commission on websites or social media platforms;
- Prepare the annual P11D supplementary pages for MLAs in the agreed format and in accordance with HMRC's timetable;
- Attend Internal Communications Group as the Finance Office representative;

- Manage the Assembly Commission's participation in the statutory, biennial, National Fraud Initiative.

Contract Management:

- Procure and manage a contract for external audit services for the annual audit of the FAPP Scheme;
- Manage the Assembly Commission's central travel desk provisions, by undertaking all bookings in line with agreed policies.

Using Technology:

- Use computerised financial systems to make payments, and to record and report expenditure for MLAs and Political Parties, which will assist with statutory reporting, budgeting and for accounting purposes;
- Effectively use Microsoft Office and bespoke internal Assembly Commission software systems to make and record payments and to prepare, produce and present documentation including letters, reports or memos etc.;

Working Relationships:

- Manage and develop staff members in a small team by reviewing procedures and completed work, to ensure efficiency is achieved, information is accurately recorded within agreed timeframes and front line financial services are delivered to MLAs and Parties. Provide appropriate induction and training and development for staff members as required;
- Develop and maintain effective working relations with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including Assembly Commission staff, MLAs, MLAs' staff and Party support staff;
- Attend meetings with MLAs, take minutes and capture actions/notes, proactively following up on actions to ensure timely delivery;

General:

- Contribute to the delivery of appropriate projects through participation in working groups and providing advice as requested;
- Comply 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; and
- Carry out any other duties which may be required by the Assembly Commission.

Essential Criteria

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1. Hold a current, full membership of the Association of Accounting Technicians (MAAT);

AND

2. Demonstrate at least three years' experience of each of the following:
 - a) Undertaking a range of book-keeping or accounting duties. These may include but are not limited to: accounts payable or receivable duties, reconciling expenditure and trial balance accounts, cash management, creating and posting journals, VAT or HMRC returns and assisting with audit preparation;
 - b) Analysing and communicating detailed financial information and providing advice or support on procedures and policies; to a range of stakeholders, some of whom have a non-financial background.
 - c) Effectively using a computerised finance system and Microsoft Office packages, to include MS Word, Outlook and Excel to design and develop accurate and timely reports for key stakeholders;

AND

3. Have at least two years' experience leading and managing a finance team to ensure the delivery of financial services and the quality, accuracy and timeliness of work.

Skills & Behaviours

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

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 and 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.

Equal Opportunities Statement

The Assembly Commission is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or people with dependents or without. **All applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit.**

Location

The successful applicant will be based in Parliament Buildings, Belfast. Access to a form of transport is necessary as travel to Constituency Offices located throughout Northern Ireland will be required from time to time.

Completing the form

Only the information presented in the application form will be considered by the selection panel. CVs or other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms. Completed online forms must be submitted by **12 noon (UK time) on 05 May 2023**.

[Launch the application portal and complete the application form.](#)

Application forms submitted after the closing time and date will not be accepted.

Recruitment and Selection Framework

There are five elements within the Recruitment and Selection Framework:

Experience – the knowledge or mastery of an activity or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it.

Ability – the aptitude or potential to perform to the required standard.

Technical – the demonstration of specific professional skills, knowledge or qualifications.

Assembly Skills and Behaviours – the actions and activities that people do which result in effective performance in a job.

Strengths – the things we do regularly, do well and that motivate us.

The elements that will be assessed for this role are Experience, Ability, Technical, Assembly Skills and Behaviours and the selection method(s) that will be used are detailed below. Further information on the [Recruitment and Selection Framework](#) are included in the [Guidance on Recruitment and Selection for Applicants](#).

Stages of the Selection Process

Eligibility Sift

The essential criteria reflect the experience and knowledge that an applicant must possess in order to be able to undertake the role. An eligibility sift will be carried out on the basis of the information contained in the essential criteria section of the application form. You must therefore demonstrate clearly in your form how, and to what extent, you meet with the essential criteria for the post.

Interview Stage

Applicants who pass the eligibility sift will be invited to an interview which will assess the information contained in this booklet as detailed in the Recruitment and Selection Framework.

Part of the interview will be a job-related skills exercise. A scenario will be presented to the applicant on the day of the interview and, based on the information they are provided with, the applicant will have 45 minutes to prepare a response for the selection panel.

Full details will be provided in the invite to interview letter.

Interviews are planned for week commencing: 29 May 2023.

Further Interview Stage

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

Further information on the Recruitment and Selection process is available in the [Recruitment and Selection Framework](#) and [Guidance on the Recruitment and Selection for Applicants](#).

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) supports applicants with disabilities or those with a long-term impairment or health condition, that is expected to last for at least 12 months and which means that they cannot meet the shortlisting criteria. In these instances, provided that they have demonstrated in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the role, the applicant will be invited to interview. If you are applying under GIS it is therefore important that you include all relevant information in your application form. You should refer to the Guidance on Recruitment and Selection for Applicants for more information.

In instances where an assessment or test forms part of the selection process and is not a shortlisting tool, then all applicants must meet the minimum standard required for that assessment or test, including those applying under GIS.

When considering applications made under GIS, the Human Resources Office reserves the right to request medical information from the applicant's general practitioner (through the applicant and with their consent).

If you are disabled and consider that you require reasonable adjustments to enable you to participate in any part of the selection process, please indicate this on the application or contact us at recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk.

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local Jobs and Benefits Office – contact details are available on NIDirect:

[Find contact details for your local Jobs and Benefits Office.](#)

Key Employee Benefits

We offer an annual leave allowance of 25 days, increasing by one day per year up to a maximum of 30 days. In addition, we offer 12 days of public and privilege holidays.

The Assembly Commission will enrol you into the Civil Service Pension Scheme from the first day of employment. Staff contribute between 4 and 9% of salary and the Assembly Commission contributes a further 28 to 35% of salary, depending on your rate of pay.

We also offer a range of non-salary benefits which include hybrid working; supportive family friendly policies; flexi-time; health and wellbeing initiatives including an Employee Assistance Programme; supported learning and development; Cycle to Work Scheme; Payroll Giving; and volunteering opportunities.

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

[View further details of our employee benefits.](#)

Terms and Conditions of Appointment

This is a permanent appointment. The successful candidate will be an employee of the Assembly Commission. All appointments are subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.

The standard working week is 37 hours, excluding meal breaks. Working hours will be dictated by the mode of operation of the Assembly and may involve work into late evenings and on occasions, at weekends and on public holidays.

The taking of annual leave will be influenced by the Finance Office reporting timetable.

Equality Monitoring

Under Fair Employment legislation, we are required to monitor the community background and gender of those applying for jobs. You must therefore complete the equal opportunities monitoring section of the application form when applying for the post.

Merit List

The merit list of applicants deemed to be appointable will remain “live” for 18 months from the date it is signed and may be used to fill any further permanent or fixed term opportunities for the same post.

Communication during the recruitment process

The Assembly Recruitment Team will issue most communication electronically. You should therefore regularly check your email account to make sure you do not miss any important communication. Please note, sometimes the Recruitment Team emails are automatically filtered as spam by email providers.

Further Information

If you require more information on the recruitment process, please contact the Assembly Recruitment Team on 028 9052 1741 or recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk

Further information about the Assembly can be obtained on the [Northern Ireland Assembly website](#).

The Candidate Information Booklet does not constitute any term or condition of employment.