



Northern Ireland
Assembly



Assembly Clerk Assembly Grade 4

£62,549 - £64,446

Candidate Information Booklet

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later
than 12 noon (UK time) on Friday 21 July 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 Assembly Clerk in the Northern Ireland Assembly (the Assembly).

The Assembly operates in a dynamic political and parliamentary environment, and as a newly appointed Assembly Clerk you will be provided with an excellent opportunity to make an important and valued contribution to Assembly business at Parliament Buildings.

Working at the Assembly offers a rewarding career. This is an exciting opportunity to join a high-profile organisation with a dedicated and inclusive team.

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 Stephanie Mallon at stephanie.mallon@niassembly.gov.uk or telephone 02890 521021.



Gareth McGrath

Director of Parliamentary Services

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 Members 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 Members 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 its Members. 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

This is an exciting opportunity to work at the Northern Ireland Assembly, the parliament for Northern Ireland.

We are seeking a highly motivated, talented and versatile individual who is dedicated to providing a quality service in an exciting and dynamic political environment. The successful candidate will provide robust and well-considered advice to a range of important officeholders at the Northern Ireland Assembly and must be passionate about delivering innovation and improvement in their work.

About the Role

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 (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.

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.

Clerks also provide advice to senior office holders of the Assembly including the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Committee Chairs, Members, the Clerk/Chief Executive, Clerk Assistants 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.

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

Core Responsibilities

The main duties and responsibilities of the post are:

- Providing comprehensive and authoritative high quality 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 Team.
- 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 sector and voluntary sector 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 parliaments, in order to share and apply best practice.
- Providing advice to senior officeholders including the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, Committees, Members, the Director of Parliamentary Services and

Clerk Assistants on the passage of primary legislation (including the drafting of amendments) through the Assembly. The provision of this advice will be in accordance with procedural requirements and established precedent and requires the exercise of sound judgement.

- Organising, commissioning and undertaking research to inform scrutiny and/or policy development.
- Preparing 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 oversight 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 must, by the closing date for applications, have:

1. 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

2. At least 5 years' experience in each of the areas detailed at (a) – (d).
 - (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 either public policy or legislation, or significant organisational policy at an organisational-wide level, including research or consultation and

preparing recommendations for change or improvement to a decision-maker who you are accountable to; and

- (d) providing authoritative** and high quality written and oral advice*** on complex or politically sensitive matters directly to elected representatives or to a Board (or equivalent senior management body).

* “contributing directly” means you are **directly** accountable for the quality of the research/consultation and your recommendations to the body which has official responsibility for the development or scrutiny in question.

** “authoritative” means that the written and oral advice must be coming from you in a role where you are accountable to the decision maker for the quality of your advice (i.e. you are the authority for advising the decision maker).

*** “advice” must be in respect of guidance or recommendations offered with regard to prudent future action by the decision maker who is receiving the advice. Advice is **not** providing information or briefing.

Shortlisting Criteria

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

At least 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.

Assembly 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.

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.

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.

The Assembly Commission operates a Hybrid Working Policy and the balance between working in Parliament Buildings and working at home will vary depending on the post, business need and the preference of the member of staff within the parameters of the Policy.

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 Friday 21 July 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.

All elements will be assessed for this role 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. Should shortlisting be required, the panel will apply it at this stage. Applicants who pass the eligibility sift (and any shortlisting, if required) will be invited to the assessment stage of the selection process.

Assessment Stage

As part of this stage of the selection process, applicants will be required to complete a written exercise. Applicants who pass the written exercise will be invited to attend an interview.

Written exercises are planned for week commencing: 28 August 2023

Interview Stage

The interview will address the information contained in the Job Specification and will assess elements of the Recruitment and Selection Framework; and will include the preparation and delivery of a presentation to the selection panel. The subject of the presentation will be advised to the applicant on the day of the interview.

Interviews are planned for week commencing: 11 September 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 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.

As an equal opportunities employer, we are happy to talk about the possibility of flexible working in this role with the successful applicant.

[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 Parliamentary 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 02890 521741.

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.