



Northern Ireland
Assembly



Editor of Debates

£65,051 - £67,024

Candidate Information Booklet

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later
than **12 noon (UK time) on 26 February 2024**

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

Foreword

Thank you for your interest in the position of Editor of Debates (Assembly Grade 4) in the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Assembly Commission).

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

This is a challenging and rewarding position and you will make a significant contribution to the life and work of the Assembly.

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. We also offer an excellent pension provision where you 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 offer an annual leave allocation 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. We also offer 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 Frank Geddis or telephone 02890 521233.



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 (SMT).

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.](#)

Contents

About the Role	2
The Person	2
Core Responsibilities	3
Essential Criteria.....	4
Shortlisting Criteria	5
Assembly Skills and Behaviours.....	5
Equal Opportunities Statement.....	6
Location	6
Completing the form	7
Recruitment and Selection Framework	7
Stages of the Selection Process.....	8
Disability Confident.....	9
Key Employee Benefits.....	10
Terms and Conditions of Appointment	11
Equality Monitoring	11
Merit List	11
Communication during the recruitment process	11
Further Information	12

About the Role

The role of the Editor of Debates is to lead and manage the work of the Office of the Official Report (Hansard) and to contribute to the corporate management of the Assembly. The Official Report is the authoritative record of the proceedings of the Assembly. It is a substantially verbatim transcript of the proceedings; it reports what was said as well as what was decided.

On days when the Assembly sits, the report is published on the Assembly website on a rolling basis during the day. Generally, the complete report of each day's sitting will be available around two hours after the business is finished. The scheduling and timing of Assembly business can mean working, without notice, unsocial hours and being unable to take leave other than during recess periods, which are themselves subject to change.

The Office of the Official Report – which includes a team of parliamentary reporters, assistant editors and deputy editors - is responsible for preparing the Official Report. Under the Standing Orders of the Assembly (the rules which regulate its proceedings), the Editor of Debates exercises editorial control of the Official Report on behalf of the Speaker. In addition, the Office is responsible for the delivery of simultaneous interpretation and translation services in respect of Irish and Ulster Scots.

The Person

We are seeking a highly motivated, talented and versatile person who is dedicated to providing a quality service in an exciting and dynamic political environment. The successful candidate will be responsible for the delivery of a key service for both the Assembly and the wider public and must be passionate about delivering innovation and improvement in their work and the work of the Office of the Official Report.

The successful candidate will also be a strong leader who has the ability to communicate clearly and effectively as they carry out this important role.

Core Responsibilities

As Editor of Debates, your duties will include:

- Exercising editorial control of the Official Report (Hansard) on behalf of the Speaker, and with operational accountability to the Clerk Assistant.
- Ensuring the timely production and publication of the Official Report as an accessible, accurate and authoritative record of Assembly proceedings.
- Setting and monitoring editorial standards and keeping abreast of editorial and administration practice in other Parliaments and Assemblies.
- Undertaking overall supervision of the production of the Official Report in all its guises, including the preparation of material for bound volumes.
- Developing and operating simultaneous interpretation and translation services of Assembly business in respect of Irish and Ulster Scots.
- Leading and managing the Office of the Official Report team.
- Exploring and identifying how automation and artificial intelligence tools can support staff in the production of the Official Report.
- Managing the work of the Office to comply with all relevant policies, procedures and processes of the Assembly Commission and all statutory obligations.
- Initiating, authoring, editing, screening, and approving as necessary operational plans, associated strategies, management returns etc.
- Ensuring the best use of resources, including budgets and staffing, by setting, monitoring and ensuring achievement of strategic performance objectives in a high profile and dynamic environment.
- Estimating, managing, profiling and monitoring expenditure.
- Preparation and drafting of responses to miscellaneous enquires, for example Assembly Questions (written and oral), FoI requests etc.

- Performing the duties in line with the scheduling and timing of Assembly business, which can mean working, without notice, unsocial hours and being unable to take leave other than during recess periods, which are themselves subject to change.
- 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.
- Managing information and records in accordance with established policies and statutory requirements.
- Carrying out any other duties that the Assembly Commission reasonably requires.

Essential Criteria

Applicants for the post 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) editing parliamentary, or similar, substantially verbatim reports to the highest standards of accuracy and to extremely tight deadlines while demonstrating impartiality, integrity and political sensitivity;
 - b) prioritising, planning and organising a very demanding and diverse workload of complex tasks and managing the resources available to ensure compliance with tight deadlines;
 - c) leading, managing and motivating a team of staff to ensure effective

service delivery; and

- d) taking personal responsibility for the delivery of high quality results, initiating improvement and delivering change.

Shortlisting Criteria

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

2 years' experience of developing and maintaining effective and impartial working relationships with elected representatives which support the delivery of objectives.

Assembly Skills and 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 and 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 26 February 2024**.

[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, Technical, and 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.

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 criterion listed will be applied. The Selection Panel reserve the right to set a minimum standard for the shortlisting criterion and/or to only invite those who score highest in the shortlisting criterion to the next stage of the selection process. If shortlisting is not necessary, all applicants who have demonstrated the essential criteria will proceed to the next 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.

Interview Stage

As part of this stage of the selection process, applicants will be required to complete:

- a) an interview, which will address the information contained in this booklet and will assess elements of the Recruitment and Selection Framework;
and
- b) 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 and the applicant will be expected to present information to the selection panel.

Written exercises are planned for week commencing: 11 March 2024

Interviews are planned for week commencing: 11 and 12 April 2024

Further Interview Stage

The Selection Panel reserves the right to hold a further interview stage if deemed necessary.

Disability Confident

The Assembly Commission is a Disability Confident Committed Employer and for our recruitment, we have committed to:

- ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible;
- communicating and promoting vacancies;
- offering an interview to disabled people who meet the essential criteria for the job (the Guaranteed Interview Scheme); and
- anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required.

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 by offering an interview to disabled people who meet the essential criteria for the job. 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.

If an assessment or test is used as a shortlisting tool, then applicants applying under GIS will not be required to complete the assessment or test and will be offered a guaranteed interview, provided that they demonstrate in their application form that they meet the essential criteria for the role.

If you wish to submit your application under the GIS, or if you require

adjustments to enable you to participate in any part of the selection process, please indicate this on the application form or contact us at recruitment@niassembly.gov.uk. **Please note that you will be required to provide written confirmation of your disability or long-term health condition from a general practitioner or an appropriate specialist, by the closing date for applications.**

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 a competitive salary, excellent pension provision and generous annual leave allowance.

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 will involve work into late evenings and on occasions, at weekends and on public holidays.

The taking of annual leave may 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 521689.

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.