



Northern Ireland  
Assembly



## Research Officer – various posts

£50,684 - £52,213

### Candidate Information Booklet

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later  
noon (UK time) on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> 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 Research Officer (AG5) in the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Assembly Commission).

The Assembly operates in a dynamic political and parliamentary environment, and as a newly appointed Research Officer 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. We 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 Dr. Dan Hull or telephone 02890 520470.

**John Power**  
**Head of Research and Information 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.](#)

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## **About the Role**

Research Officers work directly with Assembly Members and Committees in the production of non-partisan, objective and evidence-based research.

### ***Research Teams***

Research and Information Service (RaISe), Research Teams comprise researchers with a range of research backgrounds, who work within specialist portfolios located in five research teams:

Education, Statistics and Mapping

EU Affairs and Governance

Criminal Justice, Equality, Human Rights and Health

Communities, Infrastructure and Environment

Finance and Economics

Together, supported by the Library within RaISe, the Research Teams provide the following services:

- In-depth, analytical briefings regarding policy, legislation and public finance
- Bill papers addressing Executive and non-Executive legislative proposals
- Research to assist Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) develop proposals for private member's legislation
- Research to support Committees in their scrutiny, policy development and consultation roles
- Research to help MLAs respond to matters of concern to their constituents
- Statistical services addressing all aspects relating to the collection and use of data

- Mapping services and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- Workshops and seminars, including the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series' (KESS) which is delivered in partnership with local universities

## **The Person**

You may previously have worked effectively within a team in the past, or be able and willing to do so as a new Research Officer, and you should have the ability to communicate clearly and effectively as you carry out your new and important role.

You should be flexible and willing to adapt, positively contributing to the implementation of change. You should be resourceful and creative, generating original approaches when solving problems and making decisions, assuming personal responsibility for and delivering on agreed objectives/ goals. You should consistently strive to perform at a high level, upholding the highest standards of honesty, ethics and integrity. You will also require significant expertise in your field, and be proactive in keeping up to date on issues and key developments that may impact on your area.

You must also be willing and keen to adopt a customer facing focus, as you engage with a wide range of people involved within business at Parliament Buildings.

## **Core Responsibilities**

As a Research Officer, and member of the Research and Information Service (RaISe) team, you will primarily work in (RaISe). Your duties will include:

- Engage with individual MLAs, Assembly Committees and senior managers within the Assembly Secretariat, in order to understand their research requirements;
- Retrieve and synthesise information from a wide range of sources, including online databases;
- Provide timely, accurate, high quality and impartial research and analysis on subjects related to the post and other issues, to individual MLA, Assembly Committees and senior managers within the Assembly Secretariat;
- Produce a range of research outputs, including customised research papers, legislative analysis briefings and blog posts, which are well written, concise and accessible;
- Present research briefings to Assembly Committees and respond to Committee members' questions in public session;
- Facilitate public events, such as those which form part of the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS) annually delivered at Parliament Buildings;
- Proactively forge and develop links with government officials, external research bodies/communities, and other parliamentary library and research services;
- Work collaboratively and collegially, as an effective team member;
- Contribute to the development of RaISe, including identifying potential new outputs and improved service delivery;
- Carry out such other duties, as may be required, which fall within the

research business of the RaISe;

- Comply with the Assembly's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures; and
- Carry out other duties that the Assembly Commission reasonably requires of you.



## **Research Posts**

There are six Research Officer posts being recruited for in the following subject areas:

Research Officer – European Affairs and Governance

Research Officer – Health (x2)

Research Officer – Human Rights

Research Officer – Criminal Justice

Research Officer – Statistics

Applicants will be asked to indicate which post/posts they wish to apply for.

## **Essential Criteria**

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

1. At least a primary degree, minimum 2:1 classification, in any subject.  
Applications will be considered from applicants with formal qualifications of an equivalent or higher standard.

### **AND**

2. Following completion of the above qualification, have at least three years of work experience\* in both a) and b) below, on each subject area\*\* applied for
  - a) undertaking objective, non-partisan, evidence-based research drawing on a wide variety of sources (e.g. databases, organisational contacts, journals, official sources, survey/census data, the media);

### **AND**

- b) writing and presenting objective, non-partisan, evidence-based research reports/papers to inform discussion and decision making relating to policy development.

\* Research carried out as part of academic study does not qualify as work experience.

\*\* Subject area means the subject must relate to the post applied for, as noted on the above list.

**Please see further guidance on “Completing the Form” on page 7.**

## **Shortlisting Criteria**

Should shortlisting be required, the following shortlisting criteria will be applied in the order stated i) followed by ii):

- i) Possession of a post-graduate degree (Masters or equivalent or higher level gained via examination or research) relevant to the post applied for.
- ii) **For the Statistics post** - Experience in using multivariate data analysis techniques and producing data visualisations, using tools such as SPSS, Power BI, 'R' and/or Python.

**For the Health posts** - Experience of producing comparative research analysis of different health care systems.

**For the Criminal Justice post** - Experience of producing comparative research analysis of different criminal justice systems.

**For the Human Rights post** - Experience in undertaking human rights or equality impact assessments requiring the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

**For the EU Affairs post** - Experience in producing research briefings which demonstrate an understanding of EU decision making processes\*\*\* and a working knowledge of official EU databases.

\*\*\* EU decision-making covers the ways in which the EU institutions adopt policy and legal acts.

## **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.

## **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 Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024**.

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

**Please Note:** Under essential criteria applicants will need to complete section 2a and 2b for each subject area they are applying for on the application form.

Furthermore, under the shortlisting criteria all applicants will need to complete section i), please complete section ii) for each subject area post you are applying for.

**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, 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 at page 5 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.

### **Interview Stage**

Applicants invited to interview will be assessed using the Essential Criteria and Assembly Skills and Behaviours as outlined above. This 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

Part of the interview process will be the delivery of a presentation. 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.

**Interviews are planned for the following dates: 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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.

[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 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.**