



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly Clerk – Job Specification

Job Title:	Assembly Clerk
Salary:	£66,376 - £68,349
Grade:	Assembly Grade 4
Directorate:	Parliamentary Services
Business Area/Office:	Clerking
Accountable to:	Clerk Assistant
Accountable for:	Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk

Job Purpose:

The Clerking business area in the 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 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, Clerk/Chief Executive, the Director of Parliamentary Services and Clerk Assistants. Consequently, excellent political understanding as well as outstanding judgement are essential requirements 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.

Job Description:

The main duties and responsibilities are:

Clerks lead and manage small teams of staff (typically three to four staff) in order to discharge their duties and responsibilities. The main duties and responsibilities of the post of clerk, working with their teams, 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.
- Developing, managing and maintaining effective relationships with a diverse range of key stakeholders with competing views and priorities including Members, senior officials from Executive departments, public bodies, 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.
- 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 other clerks 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.