

**Guide for Applicants**

**Student Placement (Networks and Energy Futures)**

Key dates for applicants:

Closing date: 2:00pm, Monday 15 April 2024

Interviews are expected to take place in the week commencing 29 April 2024

## Contents

Prior to completing the application form we recommend that applicants familiarise themselves with the contents of this guide, which includes:

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## 1. A Message from John French, Chief Executive

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for taking the time to read this Guide for Applicants for the role of Student Placement at the Utility Regulator.

This is an exciting time to join us, as we are expanding as an organisation so we can fully support Northern Ireland in meeting the challenges of climate change, the cost-of-living crisis and ensuring the continuity of energy and water supplies. Electricity, gas and water are essential services that support all homes and businesses in Northern Ireland. As an economic regulator, it is our role to enable, incentivise and hold energy and water companies to account for providing the very best levels of service and price for consumers both now and in the future.

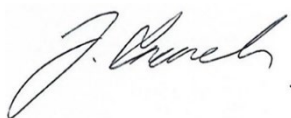
We are ambitious about the future of the Utility Regulator. It is essential that we can enthusiastically and professionally support Northern Ireland in its transition to a net-zero carbon economy, whilst ensuring affordable and good quality electricity, gas and water services for all.

We want the Utility Regulator to be the best possible organisation to work for. We need passionate people who have the skills, potential and motivation to make a difference to the lives of people in Northern Ireland and its economy. We are looking for people who share these goals and will pursue these with the highest standards of professionalism. For the Utility Regulator to be successful, we will recruit the best candidates from a range of diverse backgrounds. If you strive to provide the highest levels of service for the greater good and your professional values accord with our organisational values, working here will be exactly what you are looking for in the next step in your career path.

We are an employer of choice as we are committed to staff wellbeing, inclusion, and excellence. Over the last three years we have been awarded Best Companies 'Ones to Watch – Good to Work For' status. We have also been successful in gaining the Investors in People Silver award, together with the Diversity Mark and Disability Committed accreditations.

This fixed term, Student Placement position, will be part of our Network and Energy Futures team, supporting the economic regulation of a number of major utilities and gain an insight into the legislative framework. You can expect to contribute to the effective development of regulation policies through involvement in our public consultations.

Thank you for your interest in joining the Utility Regulator. We very much look forward to receiving your application.



**John French, Chief Executive**

## 2. About us, Northern Ireland's Utility Regulator

### Who we are

The Utility Regulator (UR/our/we) is an independent non-ministerial government department. This means that we are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly and not to another government department. This is an important distinction as it protects our independence in carrying out our regulatory duties. Our purpose is to regulate Northern Ireland's electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries to protect the short and long-term interests of consumers.

### Our mission:

To protect the short and long-term interests of consumers of electricity, gas and water.

### Our vision:

To ensure value and sustainability in energy and water.

### Our values:

1. Be a best practice regulator: transparent, consistent, proportionate, accountable, and targeted.
2. Be professional: listening, explaining, and acting with integrity.
3. Be a collaborative, co-operative and learning team.
4. Be motivated and empowered to make a difference.

We are governed by a Board and accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through financial and annual reporting obligations. We are organised into four directorates, under two Executive Directors:

1. Consumer and Business Protection;
2. Price Controls;
3. Markets; and
4. Networks and Energy Futures.

### Our diversity statement

#### Be UR Self

We recognise and value that everyone is unique and that we all have different minds. We want to use your difference so that we can harness your unique talent. To that end, we are a diverse and inclusive organisation as we put the 'you are' into 'UR'. Our success is based on the diversity and uniqueness that each of us brings and on the willingness of staff to accept and value one another. This approach helps us protect consumers by making a positive difference to all households and businesses in Northern Ireland.

#### Equality welcoming statement

Northern Ireland continues to have an under-representation of women across STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) industries. We are an equal

opportunities and 'Disability Confident' employer. As people with a disability, people from ethnic minority communities and women are currently under-represented in our workforce, we would welcome applications from these groups.

## What we do

Our statutory objectives are to:

- Protect the short and long-term interests of electricity, gas, water and sewerage consumers with regard to price and quality of service;
- Promote a robust and efficient water and sewerage industry, where appropriate, to deliver high quality services;
- Promote competition, where appropriate, in the generation, transmission and supply of electricity; and
- Promote the development and maintenance of an economic and coordinated natural gas industry.

Our work involves:

- Issuing and maintaining licences for gas, electricity and water companies to operate in Northern Ireland;
- Making sure that these companies meet relevant legislation and licence obligations;
- Challenging these companies to keep the prices they charge as low as they can be;
- Encouraging regulated companies to be more efficient and responsive to customers;
- Working to encourage competition in the gas, electricity, water and sewerage services markets;
- Setting the standards of service which regulated companies provide to customers in Northern Ireland; and
- Acting as an adjudicator on certain customer complaints, disputes, and appeals.

We hold concurrent competition law powers and are Northern Ireland's competition authority for its electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries. We have quasi-judicial powers to determine certain complaints, disputes and appeals.

In order to help us protect the interests of electricity, gas and water consumers in Northern Ireland, we work with a range of partner organisations. These include:

- Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly;
- Northern Ireland Government departments;
- Energy and water utility companies;
- The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland;
- Government departments and bodies in Great Britain and Ireland, including Ofgem, Ofwat, the Water Industry Commission for Scotland and the Commission for Regulation of Utilities; and
- Non-governmental organisations.

### 3. About the role

**Role:** Student Placement  
**Directorate:** Networks and Energy Futures  
**Line Manager:** Regulatory Analyst

#### Terms and conditions:

**Contract:** Fixed-term (51 weeks)  
**Hours:** 37 hours per week (alongside which the Utility Regulator operates a flexi-time system)  
**Salary:** £22,011 per annum  
**Pension:** Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) pension arrangements  
**Holidays:** 25 annual leave days and an additional 12 public and privilege days

#### Role purpose:

We are currently recruiting for one placement student to assist regulatory analysts in our Networks and Energy Futures directorate, in their regulation of the major utility network companies in Northern Ireland within the electricity, gas and water industries.

The role will involve assisting the team in ensuring network companies deliver for consumers in line with government energy policy including net zero.

Tasks may include:

- Contributing to briefings for senior management.
- Compilation, quality assurance, analysis and the reporting of data.
- Presentation of results.
- Report writing.
- Updating and analysis of relevant economic and data trends.
- Contributing to internal/external reports and presentations.
- Desk research (including the sourcing and analysis of information and data from a range of sources including public departments, libraries, internet, annual reports etc.).
- General administration.
- Using Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Using video conferencing such as Zoom, Webex, MS Teams and Jabber.
- Using various statistical analysis packages such as PSPP, STATA and/or other econometric packages.
- Develop economic knowledge and skills through reading relevant economic publications and attending seminars and conferences.
- Assist in the review and quality assurance of business cases and post project evaluations.
- Any other related duties.

**This list is not exhaustive and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.**

## 4. Selection criteria

We are seeking applications from dynamic and highly motivated persons of exceptional ability and intellect that are able to work well in a team and under their own supervision.

You should be able to work well under pressures of time and workload, have excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills, and excellent quantitative analysis skills.

### Essential criteria (for all candidates)

Please note you will be required to demonstrate fully the following essential criteria on the application form to be shortlisted for the next stage of the process:

1. A student currently studying for a degree\* which includes economics for at least 40% of course content; and have already studied modules in either microeconomics, quantitative analysis, macroeconomics, monetary economics or similar;

**OR**

2. A student currently studying for a degree\* in an IT, finance, business or mathematical related degree;

**OR**

3. A student currently studying for a BA/BSc Honours Degree\* in economics, or in a subject where the study of economics is a major component. ('Major component' is defined as: at least 50% of the course covers micro, macro and quantitative economics. Candidates must list all modules and briefly describe their relevant economic modules to allow the panel to determine that their qualification contains 50% of micro, macro and quantitative economics).

The onus is on candidates to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

\*Note, the Utility Regulator holds the right to determine the relevance of a degree.

**AND** have successfully completed at least the second year examinations of their degree by end of the 2023/2024 academic year\*\*;

\*\*Note, the Utility Regulator is unable to accept applications from students who will complete their degree in 2024/2025.

**AND** have the opportunity to undertake a 51 week placement for the 2024/2025 academic year.

### Core competencies

You may wish to consider the Utility Regulator's Competency Framework when completing your application. A copy can be downloaded alongside this recruitment pack.

### **Interview criteria**

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility criteria, applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills (competencies) at interview:

- (1) Communication and interpersonal skills;
- (2) Sound IT skills;
- (3) Quantitative analysis skills; and
- (4) Awareness of the Northern Ireland regulatory scene and the key features of UK utility regulation.



## 5. Selection process

### How to apply

Completed application forms must be received by **2:00pm on Monday 15 April 2024**.

Please submit your application by email, in MS Word format. A typed or scanned signature will be accepted. Please submit your completed equal opportunities monitoring form in a separate email labelled clearly 'Monitoring Form' in the subject line.

The onus is on you to ensure your application is received before the closing date and we will use the time it is received according to our computer systems, and not the time sent from your email account.

Applications and queries must be emailed to [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk)

If you have a disability and require assistance, we will facilitate this on request. If you wish to receive this information pack in an accessible format, please advise of your requirements as soon as possible as the closing date is the same for all applicants.

### Monitoring form

We monitor applications for employment in terms of community background, sex, disability and race. You should note that this information is regarded as part of your application and failure fully to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

The use and confidentiality of community background information is protected by the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. It will be used only for monitoring, investigations or proceedings under the requirements of the above legislation.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and welcome applications from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of age, sexual orientation, marital status/civil partnership, dependants, religious belief, political opinion, gender reassignment, race, sex or disability.

### Job applicant's privacy notice

We are the data controller for the personal information you provide as an individual seeking employment. This means we determine the purposes for which, and the manner in which, any personal information relating to your application and the recruitment procedure generally is processed. We are required under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to notify you of the information contained in our Job Applicant's Privacy Notice. This notice describes how we collect and use personal information during the recruitment process and afterwards in accordance with GDPR and can be downloaded, in full, from <https://www.uregni.gov.uk/publications/gdpr-privacy-notices>

### Applications

In order to help you make this application and ensure that each applicant is provided with the same opportunity, the following advice is offered:

- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail, etc. Write for the reader who will probably not know your employer or your job. Include concise examples and be sure you can expand on these at interview.

- Listing the titles of the various jobs which you have held will not show how you meet the criteria. The panel will not make assumptions about skills and experience gained from these or the nature/name of the organisation.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write 'I' statements, for example, I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out the piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- Identify relevant examples – this is very important as examples you provide may be checked out at interview and you need to be prepared to talk about them in detail if invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel is interested in, not your team's.

An application form is designed to ensure you provide the necessary information to determine how you meet the eligibility/short listing criteria required for this post. The panel may decide to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information provided on your application, to be most suitable in terms of relevant experience and ability.

Please note to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:

- On the application form you have been advised of the maximum space available for each question. This is the same for all applicants and must not be altered (except to delete spaces created when you type in your answer);
- CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted;
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing deadline. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. Application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted will not be accepted;
- Please note that the time of receipt of emailed applications will be defined by our computer system, not the time and date sent; and
- Only details provided by you on your application form (employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining eligibility and shortlisting for the post.

### Assessing your application

After the closing date, the first stage in the selection process will be a sift of completed application forms against the essential criteria. You must demonstrate on the relevant page of the application form how you meet each criteria stated. If you do not fully demonstrate by example how you meet each of the criteria, you will not progress to the next stage. Please note, the panel will not refer to the employment history section to demonstrate a requirement for a number of years' experience.

You will be notified of the outcome (successful/unsuccessful) by email.

### Assessment and interview

Following shortlisting, the selection process will involve an interview against **criteria, key skills and competencies**. The panel may test any aspect of essential, desirable criteria or key skills.

Additional selection stages may be needed. We intend that the interview process will take place at Queens House in Belfast. You will be informed of assessment and interview

arrangements closer to the time and notified of the outcome (successful or unsuccessful) by email.

### Competence based interviews

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

**If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:**

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

**A competence-based interview does however require you to:**

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfil the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

Appreciating as a student, you may not have significant work experience, you should concentrate on drawing examples and experience from your academic life, personal life or clubs/societies you may belong/have belonged to.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve;
- Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution; and,
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work or life experiences.

### Disability requirements at interview

We ask on this application form if you require any reasonable adjustments (special requirements), due to disability, to enable you to attend interview. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

If you have indicated that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider needed to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please email [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk).

### Further information

Further information about our work can be found at [www.uregni.gov.uk](http://www.uregni.gov.uk).

Should you have any further queries about the recruitment and selection process then please email [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk).

**Checklist for applicants**

- Application form (emailed by closing date)
- Equality monitoring form (emailed in a separate email)

## 6. Benefits of working for us

These headline terms will be included (amongst others) in a written contract of employment.

### Key employee benefits

#### Your salary

This is a full time student placement for 51 weeks. The salary is £22,011 per annum. You will be paid monthly in arrears via Bankers Automated Clearing Service (BACS).

#### Your holiday entitlement

Holiday entitlement will be pro-rated based on **25 days per annum and 12 public and privilege holidays.**

#### Non-salary benefits

We offer a range of non-salary benefits including a supportive family friendly environment, flexible working in a hybrid setting, Childcare Voucher Scheme, generous leave including special leave, maternity/paternity entitlement, wellbeing and employee programme (Inspire), supported learning and development, Cycle to Work Scheme, season ticket loan, payroll giving, volunteering opportunities and a culture that supports diversity and inclusion.

#### Hours of work

**This is a fixed term, full-time placement, however, flexible working arrangements will be considered.** Our offices are open for business between 7am and 7pm (Monday to Friday). You may avail of 'flexitime', provided it meets business needs, with flexible start and finish times outside core hours of 10am to 4pm. Due to the nature of your position, you may be required to work such additional hours, over and above your standard hours, (37 hours excluding meal breaks) as necessary for the proper fulfilment of your duties for which no additional payment will be made.

#### Place of work

If appointed, you will be our employee and based at Queens House, Queen Street, Belfast. From 1 March 2024, we are operating a hybrid working pattern, which is an average of 40% of all staff working hours to be in person with colleagues, either on-site at Queens House or on official business. This hybrid working pattern is subject to business need. The home working element of hybrid working is voluntary and while you may opt to be office based, we welcome applicants whose circumstances lend themselves to a degree of remote working.

#### Mobility

Excluding secondment opportunities, employment does not confer any right of mobility or transfer to a position in any other part of NICS (including any government department or agency) or to any non-departmental public body or other public body.

#### Probationary period

There will be a probationary period of six months and continued employment is dependent on the outcome of this. During the probationary period, your performance will be regularly monitored and we reserve the right to extend it for such further period or periods as considered reasonably necessary to assess your performance further.

### Additional information

If you are being considered for appointment, we will ask you to complete the AccessNI application form for a **basic disclosure certificate**. Full details will be provided with an offer of employment. Instructions can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni).

You should not be put off applying because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made. Criminal record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

As a Utility Regulator employee, you will be subject to various office policies, for example, rules on shareholdings, conflicts of interest and future appointments.

### Right to work and nationality requirements

Offers of employment will be made on merit but we must ensure you are legally entitled to work in the UK. Offers will be made on condition of proof of right to work and pre-employment checks will be conducted. You will need to show one of the following:

- Passport;
- National Identity Card or Home Office registration certificate; and
- UK Border Agency work document if you need permission to work.

As an employer, we can face unlimited fines if we employ illegal workers and so must make sure no one we employ is working illegally. However, to protect against discrimination laws, we should treat all job applicants equally. So do not be offended if you are asked to prove your nationality as even UK nationals will be asked to provide proof. For further support on working in Northern Ireland, please visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/working-northern-ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/working-northern-ireland) or [www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/what-you-need-to-do](http://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/what-you-need-to-do)

Please note that, if your application is shortlisted for interview, you will be asked to provide one of the above documents. Should you fail to do so, you may not be eligible to proceed. The successful candidate will be required to produce the same document in its original format before commencing employment.