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**Guide for Applicants**

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

Key Dates for Applicants

Closing Date Friday 21st April at 2pm

**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 time to read this Guide for Applicants.  I hope it gives you all the information you need to decide whether to apply for the position of **Student Placement** within Northern Ireland’s Utility Regulator.

Electricity, Gas, and Water are essential services that support all homes and business in Northern Ireland. As an economic regulator, our role is to enable, incentivise and hold energy and water companies to account for providing the very best for consumers and society both now and in the future.

We are ambitious about the future and we are looking for passionate people who can help us achieve our goals, and actively display our organisational values.

I want to make the Utility Regulator the best place to work. To be successful in this, we need to recruit the best candidates from a range of backgrounds. Recently, we have been successful in achieving IIP Silver, and we have gained accreditation with the Diversity Mark and the Disability Committed programmes. This highlights our ongoing commitment to staff wellbeing, inclusion and excellence.

This recruitment is focused on the appointment of a **fixed term, Student Placement** who will play a part in the economic regulation of a number of major utilities, gain an insight into the legislative framework and can expect to contribute to the effective development of regulation policies through involvement in the Regulator’s public consultations.

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



**John French**

**Chief Executive**

1. **About Us, Northern Ireland Utility Regulator**

**Who we are**

The Utility Regulator is the independent non-ministerial government department responsible for regulating Northern Ireland’s electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries, to promote 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:**

Be a best practice regulator: transparent, consistent, proportionate, accountable and targeted.

Be professional: listening, explaining and acting with integrity.

Be a collaborative, co-operative and learning team.

Be motivated and empowered to make a difference.

We are not a policy-making department of Government, but we make sure that the energy and water utility industries in Northern Ireland are regulated and developed within ministerial policy as set out in our statutory duties.

We are governed by a Board of Directors and are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through financial and annual reporting obligations.

We currently have the following key functional areas: Networks and Energy Futures, Price Controls, Markets and Consumer and Business Protection.

We want to develop a workforce that is motivated and empowered to make a difference.

**Our Diversity Statement**

**Be UR Self**

It takes all kinds of different minds, everyone is unique and we want you to use yours. We want to be a diverse and inclusive organisation putting the “you are” in UR. Our success is based on the diversity and uniqueness that each person brings to the organisation and on the willingness of staff to accept and value one another. This approach helps us protect consumers to make a positive difference to all households and businesses in Northern Ireland.

**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; and to protect vulnerable customers in particular;
* 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.

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:

* energy and water utility companies;
* the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (CCNI) - whose role as an advocate for consumers is complementary to our regulatory powers;
* Northern Ireland government departments, including the Department for the Economy and the Department for Infrastructure;
* government departments and bodies in Great Britain, including OFGEM , OFWAT and the Water Industry Commission for Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, including the Commission for Energy Regulation; and
* non-governmental organisations, such as the Energy Savings Trust.

1. **About the Role**

**Role:** Student Placement

**Group:** Networks and Energy Futures

**Reporting to:** 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:** £19,586 per annum

**Pension:** Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) pension arrangements

**Holidays:** 25 days, and an additional 12 public and privilege days

**Role Purpose:**

We are currently recruiting for one placement student to assist analysts in our Networks and Energy Futures directorate in their regulation of the major utility network companies in Northern Ireland, including 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, analyses 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.**

1. **Selection Criteria**

**Essential 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.

Please note you will be required to **demonstrate fully** the following essential criteria on the **application form to be shortlisted for interview. These essential criteria may also be tested at interview and assessment stages.**

1. Be students 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**

1. Be students currently studying for a degree\* in an IT or Mathematical related degree;

**OR**

1. Be students 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 2022/23 academic year\*\*;

\*\*Note, the Utility Regulator is unable to accept applications from students who will complete their degree in 2023/24.

**AND** have the opportunity to undertake a 51 week placement for the 2023/24 academic year.

**Core competences**

You may wish to consider the UR Competency Framework when completing your application. A copy can be downloaded in the 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:

**(i) Communication and interpersonal skills;**

**(ii) Sound IT skills;**

**(iii) Quantitative Analysis skills; and**

**(iv) Awareness of the Northern Ireland regulatory scene and the key features of UK utility regulation.**

1. **The Selection Process**

**How to Apply**

Completed application forms must be received by **Friday 21st April 2023 at 2pm.**

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 the candidate to ensure their application is received before the closing date and we will use the time it is received according to the UR computer systems, not the time sent from a candidate’s email account.

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

Applications will be acknowledged by email within seven days from close of competition. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact the Utility Regulator at [recruitment@uregni.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@uregni.gov.uk).

Candidates with a disability who require assistance will be facilitated upon request. Candidates who wish to receive the information pack in accessible formats are requested to advise of their requirements as promptly as possible allowing for the fact that the closing date for receipt remains the same for all applicants as noted above.

**Monitoring Form**

The Utility Regulator monitors 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 this part of your application 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.

The Utility Regulator is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes 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**

The Utility Regulator is the data controller of the personal information you provide to us as an individual seeking employment. This means the Utility Regulator determines the purposes for which and the manner in which any personal information relating to a candidate’s 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 the Utility Regulator Job Applicant’s privacy notice. This privacy notice describes how we collect and use personal information during the recruitment process and afterwards in accordance with the 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 e.g. 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 the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel are interested in, not that of your team.

An application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the eligibility/short listing criteria required for this post. The panel may decide to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information they have provided on their 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.

Applicants must complete the application form in either font size 10 to 12, or legible hand writing using black ink. The same limitations on space apply.

Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. Application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted application forms will not be accepted.

**Please note that the time of receipt of emailed applications will be defined by the Utility Regulator server, not the time and date sent.**

Only the details provided by you on your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining eligibility and shortlisting for the post.

**Eligibility Sift**

Following shortlisting, it is intended that the selection process will involve an interview against the criteria, key skills and competencies for the role. Additional stages to the selection process may be required. **It is intended that the interview process will take place in Queens House, Belfast week commencing 1st May 2023. However, this will be subject to Executive guidance on COVID-19 restrictions and candidates will be informed of interview arrangements closer to the time.**

You will be notified of the outcome (successful/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 on your application 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 necessary in order for you 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)

**Checklist for Applicants**

* Application form Emailed by closing date
* Equality Monitoring Form Emailed in a separate email

1. **Working for the Utility Regulator**

The following headline terms will subsequently be included (amongst other terms and conditions) in a written contract of employment between you and the Utility Regulator.

**Key employee benefits**

**Your Salary**

This is a full time student placement for 51 weeks. The salary is £19,586 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.**

**Hours of Work**

**This is a fixed term, full-time appointment,** **however flexible working arrangements will also be actively be considered.** Our offices are open for business between the hours of 7am and 7pm Monday – Friday. **Staff may avail of “flexi-time”** provided it meets with the business need**, with flexible start and finish times outside the 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 may be necessary for the proper fulfilment of your duties for which no additional payment will be made. **All staff are currently in a hybrid capacity and this is subject to Executive guidance on COVID-19 restrictions.**

**Place of Work**

If appointed, you will be an employee of the Utility Regulator and will be based at Queens House, Queen Street, Belfast. ***The Utility Regulator******is currently working in a hybrid capacity with 2 days in the office, and while you may opt to be office based, we welcome applicants whose circumstances lend themselves to some degree of remote working*.**

**Mobility**

Excluding secondment opportunities, employment with the Utility Regulator does not confer any right of mobility or transfer to a position in any other part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (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 6 months and continued employment will be dependent on the outcome of this probationary review. During the probationary period your performance will be regularly monitored and the Utility Regulator reserves the right to extend your probationary period for such further period or periods as it considers reasonably necessary to assess your performance further.

**Additional Information**

Applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by the Utility Regulator and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form for a **Basic Disclosure Certificate**. Full details will be provided with an offer of employment.

Instructions on the process can be accessed from [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni).

You should not 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. The Utility Regulator must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. Offers of employment will be made on condition of proof of right to work and pre-employment right to work checks will be conducted.

You will need to show a prospective employer one of the following documents:

* Passport
* National identity card or Home Office registration certificate
* UK Border Agency work document if need permission to work.

Employers can face unlimited fines if they employ illegal workers and need to make sure that no one they employ is working in the UK illegally. However, to protect themselves against discrimination laws they 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 NI, 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.***

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

The Utility Regulator is an Equal Opportunities and Disability Confident Employer. As people with a disability, people from ethnic minority communities and women are currently under represented in UR we would particularly welcome applications from these groups

**Other non-salary benefits**

We also offer a range of non-salary benefits include a supportive family friendly environment; flexi-time; flexible working in a hybrid environment; Childcare Voucher Scheme; generous leave including special leave, maternity/paternity entitlement, annual leave and public holidays; 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.