

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

STUDENT PLACEMENT 2026/2027

Contents page

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

1.	Message from John French, Chief Executive	3
2.	About the Utility Regulator	4
	Our diversity statement	5
3.	About the role	7
	Key dates for applicants.....	7
	Role purpose	7
4.	Selection criteria	9
	Essential criteria	9
	Interview criteria	10
5.	The recruitment and selection process.....	11
	How to apply	11
	Applications	12
	Eligibility sift.....	13
	Competence based interviews.....	13
	Further information.....	14
	Checklist for applicants	15
6.	Benefits of working for us	16
	Key employee benefits	16

1. Message from John French, Chief Executive

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for taking the time to read this Guide for Applicants. This is an exciting time to join us. We are expanding as an organisation to fully support Northern Ireland in meeting the challenges of climate change, the continued 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 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 them with the highest standards of professionalism. 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.

We are an employer of choice and are committed to staff wellbeing, inclusion and excellence. Recently, we were awarded Best Companies 'Very Good to Work For' status. We have also been successful in gaining the Investors in People Silver Award, the Diversity Mark and Disability Confident: 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.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. French'.

John French, Chief Executive

2. About the Utility Regulator

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.

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 are based at Millennium House, Great Victoria Street, in the centre of Belfast. The Chief Executive and two Executive Directors lead teams in each of the main functional areas in the organisation: Chief Executive Office; Price Controls, Networks and Energy Futures; and Markets, Consumer Protection and Enforcement. The staff team includes economists, engineers, accountants, utility specialists, legal advisors and administration professionals.



The infographic is a dark blue rectangle with a green L-shaped graphic in the top right corner. It contains text in green and white. The text is organized into two columns. The left column contains 'OUR MISSION' and 'OUR VISION'. The right column contains 'OUR VALUES' followed by five values: 'ACCOUNTABLE:', 'TRANSPARENT:', 'COLLABORATIVE:', 'DILIGENT:', and 'RESPECTFUL:'. Each value is followed by a brief description in white text.

Section	Text
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	
ACCOUNTABLE:	We take ownership of our actions.
TRANSPARENT:	Ensuring trust through openness and honesty.
COLLABORATIVE:	Connecting and working with others for a shared purpose.
DILIGENT:	Working with care and rigour.
RESPECTFUL:	Treating everyone with dignity and fairness.

Our diversity statement

Be UR Self

We recognise and value that everyone is unique and that we all have different minds. We want to celebrate 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 proud to support women in STEM. We are an equal opportunity and 'Disability Confident' employer. As people with a disability and people from ethnic minority communities 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 2026/2027

Directorate: Networks and Energy Futures

Line manager: Regulatory Analyst

Key dates for applicants:

Closing date: **12:00pm, Friday 9 January 2026**

Assessments and interviews are expected to take place late January 2026.

Terms and conditions

Contract	Fixed term (51 weeks).
Hours	37 hours per week.
Salary	£23,492 per annum.
Pension	Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) pension arrangements.
Holidays	25 days per annum 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

Please note that 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.

Essential criteria - application form	
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.)

AND, in addition to the essential criteria noted above, have successfully completed at least the second year examinations of their degree by end of the 2025/2026 academic year**;

AND,, in addition to the essential criteria noted above, have the opportunity to undertake a 51-week placement for the 2026/2027 academic year.

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

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

**Note, the Utility Regulator is unable to accept applications from students who will complete their degree in 2026/2027.

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:

- (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.

5. The recruitment and selection process

How to apply

Completed application forms must be received by **12:00pm, Friday 9 January 2026**.

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. We will use the time it is received according to our computer systems, not the time sent from your email account.

Applications and queries must be emailed to 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 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 systems, 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, where the criteria requires experience for a minimum length of time, the panel will not refer to the employment history section to demonstrate this. You must state the dates in your answer.

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

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. Panels may test any aspect of either the essential, desirable criteria or key skills.

Additional selection stages may be needed. We intend that the interview process will take place at our office in Millennium House, Belfast. You will be informed of the 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.
- 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.

Further information

Further information about the work of the Utility Regulator can be found at www.uregni.gov.uk.

Ref: UR/SP/FT/26/25

Should you have any further queries about the recruitment and selection process then please email 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

Key employee benefits

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

Your salary

This is a full-time student placement for 51 weeks. The salary is £23,492 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, 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 appointment, however, flexible working arrangements may 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 Millennium House, Great Victoria Street, Belfast. We operate 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 Millennium 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.

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.

Proof of right to work in the UK and visa conditions

As part of our pre-employment checks, we are required by law to verify your right to work in the United Kingdom. The following conditions related to any future offer or employment with the Utility Regulator are detailed below.

You must provide satisfactory evidence of your right to work in the United Kingdom prior to commencing employment. Acceptable documents include, but are not limited to:

- A valid passport.
- National identity card or Home Office registration certificate.

- United Kingdom Border Agency work document if you 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 United Kingdom illegally. However, to protect themselves against discrimination laws they should treat all job applicants equally. So don't be offended if you're asked to prove your nationality, as all those who are made an offer of employment will be asked to provide proof of right to work. Please refer to the Home Office guidelines for a complete list of acceptable documents.

If your right to work in the United Kingdom is based on a visa or work permit, any future offer of employment is conditional upon:

- You providing a copy of your valid visa or work permit.
- The duration of which your visa or work permit covers.
- You maintaining your right to work status throughout your employment.

For further support on working in Northern Ireland, please visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/working-northern-ireland or 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.