



GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

To assist with your application please read the following guidance notes

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The purpose of these guidance notes is to assist you in completing your application form.

These guidance notes are structured for ease of reference as follows:

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1. RECRUITMENT DOCUMENTATION

Before completing your application form, please make sure that you have access to, and have read, the following recruitment documentation.

- **Job Description**
- **Person Specification**
- **Terms & Conditions of Appointment**
- **Application Form (to be completed)**
- **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire (to be completed)**

1.1 Job Description

The job description provides you with information on the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the post. It describes what the post holder will be required to do.

1.2 Personnel Specification

The personnel specification which forms part of the job documentation is also enclosed for your information. The personnel specification groups the criteria into those which are essential that you **must** hold in order to be eligible to apply for the job and desirable criteria which Libraries NI reserves the right to apply. It is recommended that you continually refer to the personnel specification when you are completing your application form. You will only be short listed to the next stage of the selection process if the information you have provided in your application form clearly demonstrates, by way of personal and specific examples, that you meet the criteria.

1.3 Terms & Conditions of Appointment

The Terms & Conditions of Appointment include information relating to the rate of pay, hours of work, etc. Further details on the Terms and Conditions of the post you are applying for are detailed in the Job Description and Personnel Specification.

It is also important to check that you are eligible to apply for the post, for example, some jobs are internal trawls open only to Libraries NI employees.

1.4 Application Form

It is essential that you complete the application form in full.

The essential and desirable criteria may be different for each recruitment campaign. Therefore please ensure that you complete the application form which has been specifically produced for the job which you are applying for. Each job will have a unique job reference number. You must ensure that the reference number on your

application matches what appears on the job advert, job description and equal opportunity monitoring form.

1.5 Equal Opportunities

Libraries NI is an Equal Opportunities Employer. It is the policy of Libraries NI to provide equality of opportunity to all persons regardless of their religious belief, political opinion, sex, pregnancy or maternity related issues, race, age sexual orientation, whether they are married or in a civil partnership, whether they are disabled, or whether they have undergone, are undergoing, or intend to undergo gender reassignment.

We do not discriminate against job applicants or employees on any of the grounds listed above. We aim to select the best person for the job and all recruitment decisions will be made objectively.

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire must be sent with your application form to the Equality Officer confidentially. The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire is detached from your application form and is not presented to the selection panel. The use and confidentiality of community background information is protected by the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and will, only be used for monitoring, investigations or proceedings under the requirements of the above legislation.

2. COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure you answer all of the questions. If you are completing your application form in hand-written format, you must ensure your writing is legible and should use block capitals and black ink. Alternatively you can request an electronic copy by email from the Human Resources Department and type the application form (using Arial, font size 12). You must limit your text to the space provided on the application form, do not extend the space and do not use continuation sheets. Applicants must not alter the application form and any alterations may deem the application invalid.

Please do not attach additional sheets or CV's rather than completing the appropriate boxes on the application form. Additional sheets and CV's will not be considered by the short-listing panel, unless specifically requested as part of the application.

Please note that the selection panel can only make a decision to invite you to the next stage of the selection process i.e. assessment centre, interviews etc., based on the information you provide in your application form and how this matches the criteria in the personnel specification.

You should take the following into consideration when completing your application:

- Never assume that because a shortlisting panel may know you, or your work, there is no need to provide detailed information in your application form.

- It is your responsibility to demonstrate sufficient evidence that you meet the criteria. Do not use acronyms or complex technical detail. Write for the reader who may not know your organisation or job.
- Write clearly about your personal involvement in any experience you quote, use I statements e.g. “I am responsible for.....”, “I made the decision to.....’ The panel is interested in how you carried out a piece of work.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. It is your unique role that the panel is interested in, not that of your team or division.
- In preparing your application form 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.

2.1 Personal Details

This part of the application form deals with general information about you.

2.2 Career History

When listing your current and previous employment, please ensure that dates are correct and in date order with the most recent first. You will also be required to provide salary earned and reason for leaving in each instance.

2.3 Essential and Desirable Criteria

Read the criteria carefully and provide personal and specific examples of how you meet the essential and desirable criteria specified. It is imperative that you demonstrate on your application form how and to what extent you meet the criteria.

2.4 Safeguarding

Posts involving work in locations across Libraries NI are subject to the provisions of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007. If a post is deemed to involve regulated activity under this legislation, Libraries NI will seek disclosure information for positions as it deems relevant. Libraries NI comply with the AccessNI Code of Practice regarding the handling, use, storage etc. of Disclosure of Information.

Applicants requiring further information on this should refer to AccessNI’s website

www.accessni.gov.uk

2.5 Gaps in Employment

You must provide an explanation for gaps in employment history.

2.6 Equal Opportunities

Libraries NI is an Equal Opportunities Employer and welcomes applications from people with disabilities.

Although you do not need to declare the nature of your disability, if you have a disability and require specific arrangements to help you attend for interview, you should ensure that you provide details of your needs in this section of the application form.

Any applicants who are experiencing difficulties completing their form because of a disability or who have any queries regarding the recruitment process should contact the appropriate contact as indicated in the advertisement or trawl notice.

2.7 References

You are asked to provide details of two persons (referees) to who reference may be made regarding your suitability for appointment. At least one referee must be your present or previous employer, normally your line manager, who can comment on your suitability to work with children, vulnerable adults (if applicable) and/or your professional ability.

Your referees cannot be members of the Selection Panel for this post or family members. In the event of this occurring, you will be asked to supply another referee. Prior consent of the referees must be obtained.

Do not submit testimonials with your application form as this may constitute canvassing.

NB For all regulated positions Libraries NI will seek references from present/previous employers. By signing the declaration section of the application form you will be indicating agreement to this reference being sought.

2.8 Declaration

Once you have completed your application form in full please read, sign and date the declaration. By doing so you are certifying that the information you have provided is correct and that any false or misleading information, if proved, may result in your application not being progressed, or, if appointed, dismissal from the service of Libraries NI.

The information on your application form is required by Libraries NI for the purposes of processing your application. The information will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Signing this form indicates that you are giving your consent for Libraries NI to collect, retain and use the personal data you provide in accordance with this application process

3. RETURNING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application form is fully and correctly completed and that all relevant information in support of their application is included.

CV's, letters or any other supplementary material, unless specifically requested, will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms.

Additional information received after the closing date will not be considered. It is therefore essential that applicants indicate on their application form how and to what extent their qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills are relevant to the eligibility criteria outlined.

Three copies of the completed application form must be **posted or delivered in person to the address stated on the application form**. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is received by the closing date and time.

Faxed OR e-mailed OR late applications will not be accepted.

When posting applications, applicants must ensure the correct amount of postage for the size and weight (including thickness) the envelope is paid. Any shortfall in postage may lead to a delay in delivery and the closing date may be missed. Please also ensure that the envelope is correctly addressed.

Failure to provide sufficient information in support of an application prior to the closing date will not be considered as grounds for an appeal.

4. THE SELECTION PROCESS

Applicants are strongly advised to consider the job description and the criteria for the post carefully.

You must ensure you have provided sufficient details on the application form to demonstrate how and to what extent you meet the criteria. Applicants must not simply list duties and responsibilities. Libraries NI will not make assumptions from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.

You should note that shortlisting will be based solely upon the information provided by you on your application form. Members of the shortlisting panel are not permitted to take into consideration any information they already know about you or make assumptions based on the information you have provided.

4.1 Shortlisting

The essential criteria as set out in the person specification are the minimum requirements for the post. Often there are a large number of applications for a post and selection panels are unable to interview all candidates who may meet the minimum essential criteria. In these circumstances the panel may apply desirable criteria, inviting only those who meet both the essential and desirable criteria to interview. The selection panel may agree to enhance the minimum criteria and only those applicants who meet the enhanced criteria will be called to interview.

To ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and consistently, this use of desirable or enhanced criteria will be agreed at shortlisting prior to examination of the application forms. It is the responsibility of applicants to provide sufficient evidence possible on their application form to demonstrate how they meet each of the essential and desirable criteria.

Candidates who have not been shortlisted for interview will be notified in writing.

4.2 Selection arrangements

Shortlisted candidates will be notified in writing of the date and time they are invited to attend for interview or the first stage in the selection process. Where more than one stage of the selection process is required candidates will be notified accordingly.

External candidates will be required to bring current and valid photographic evidence of identity to assessment centres and or interview, which may include for example a passport, driving licence, or a national identity card. A photocopy is not acceptable. Failure to provide such evidence of identification may result in you being refused attendance at this stage.

NB External candidates will be required to provide evidence that they are Eligible to Work in the UK before a formal offer of employment is made. Please refer to point 5.5 for further information.

In the event that a Second stage of the selection process required only candidates shortlisted at stage one will be invited to stage two. Candidates will be notified in writing of the date and time for stage two arrangements.

Candidates must be available to attend each stage of the selection process. If you are unable to attend at the date and time specified, or wish to withdraw from the selection process at any stage, it is essential that you contact Human Resources at the earliest opportunity either by telephone 02839399466 or by email to: LNIHRQueries@librariesni.org.uk . A request for an alternative date will only be

considered in exceptional circumstances and will be at the absolute discretion of Libraries NI

4.3 Notification of the Successful Candidate

Candidates should note that selection panels only **recommend** candidates for appointment. Before Libraries NI can consider making a formal offer of employment the recommended candidate will be required to complete all pre-employment checks/procedures satisfactorily.

Any recommendation for appointment will be subject to the following:-

1. Completion of a Health Declaration Form. Upon receipt of such; Libraries NI may, at its discretion, require a candidate to attend a medical examination;
2. Issue of a satisfactory AccessNI certificate
3. Documentary evidence of eligibility to work in the UK;
4. Receipt of **original** Birth Certificate
5. Receipt of **original** documentary evidence of qualifications;
6. Receipt of two satisfactory references. For posts involving regulated activity at least one reference should be a previous or current employer able to comment on the candidate's suitability to work with children/young people in an education setting and their professional ability
7. Any other documentation necessary to meet the essential requirements of the post

The information provided must be official original proof that you possess, at the closing date for receipt of application forms for the post, all qualifications and any other required documentary evidence which you relied on to support your application form.

A candidate is deemed to have been offered the post **only** on receipt of a formal written offer of employment from Human Resources. **Recommended candidates should not take any action to terminate their current employment until they are in receipt of a further letter from Libraries NI confirming the formal offer of appointment.**

Reserve Lists

All candidates who have achieved the pass mark for the suitability for appointment but have not been recommended for appointment will be placed on a reserve list. In the event that the successful candidate fails to take up the post or if a similar vacancy becomes available, as determined by business need, Libraries NI will contact

candidates in order of suitability for appointment until the position has been filled or the reserve list has been exhausted. Reserve lists will usually be held for 12 months.

5 GENERAL INFORMATION

5.1 Canvassing

Canvassing means contact or communication at any time in any manner (direct, indirect, oral or written, specific or general) with a member or Officer of Libraries NI involved in the recruitment of the post for which you are applying which could be deemed, or perceived to be, for the purpose of advancing your application. Any applicant who is found to have knowingly approached a selection panel member for a post with a view to seeking favourable treatment will be disqualified.

5.2 AccessNI (Access Northern Ireland)

If you have applied for a 'regulated position' which involves work with children and vulnerable adults, or have access to files held on children or vulnerable adults you will be requested to complete an application form for a criminal background check to be carried out. If you are recommended for appointment you will be asked to go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni to apply online. Further details will be provided at that time. Enhanced checks are normally required where the applicant will work or volunteer in a role providing services to or having close and regular supervision of children and / or vulnerable adults.

From 1 March 2016 AccessNI applicants can access a Criminal Record Review Scheme. This will mean that an applicant can request an Independent Reviewer (IR) to review any conviction or non-court disposal information on Standard/Enhanced certificates, where they believe that disclosure was disproportionate Information about the Independent Reviewer can be found on the back of each certificate issued and on the NI Direct web-site.

5.3 Rehabilitation of Offenders

The majority of Libraries NI posts are exempt from the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order 1978. Appointments to such posts will be subject to a satisfactory criminal record check. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, Libraries NI will only ask about convictions which are defined as "unspent" within the terms of that Order, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record.

Libraries NI Policy on the recruitment of Ex-offenders is available on Libraries NI website page under 'vacancies'.

5.4 Data Protection

Please ensure that the details given on your application are correct. The data provided by you will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information is being used to:

- process your application for appointment;
- form the basis of a computerised record of the recruitment process and monitoring purposes;
- form the basis of a manual job file with other application forms used for the Recruitment and Selection process; and
- form the basis of a manual and computerised employment record if appointed;

All application forms and associated documentation will be treated in the strictest of confidence. However, in the case of an applicant taking a legal case against Libraries NI, it may be necessary to disclose information to the parties involved. The documents may also be disclosed to the Equality Commission as part of their investigations resulting from a claim of discrimination.

To view Libraries NI's privacy statement please visit www.librariesni.org.uk or ask Human Resources staff for a copy.

5.5 Eligibility to Work in the UK

Evidence of eligibility to work in the UK must be obtained for ALL external candidates before a formal offer of employment is made, before the contract of employment is issued and before the start date is agreed.

Libraries NI are required to obtain and take verified copies of original documentation. ALL external candidates will be asked to bring evidence of entitlement to work in the UK to interview and checks on eligibility to work in the UK are carried out at the interview stage. A list of acceptable documents to demonstrate your right to work in the UK are available on www.gov.uk

In the event that an external candidate does not provide acceptable documentation at the interview stage Libraries NI will require them to present acceptable documentation to a designated local library where an authorised manager will conduct the relevant checks. Human Resources should be contacted to make these arrangements in advance