

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

GUIDANCE NOTES

For Completion of an Application Form for a Public Appointment to Non Executive Member to the Board of Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company

The following notes give guidance to help you provide the relevant information when completing the application form. Read these notes and the information pack carefully before completing the application form. These notes may be made available in other formats by contacting the address on the application form.

1. PART A - PERSONAL DETAILS

Please give full details of your permanent address and/or your preferred correspondence address if different from your permanent address.

2. CONTACT TELEPHONE / EMAIL

Please provide details of your email address & preferred telephone contact number or numbers.

3. PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

Please list all current appointments giving the name of the public body, the position held, the length of the appointment and any remuneration paid. Also confirm if you have previously been a member of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company Board.

4. REFERENCES

You should record the name of two referees who should have experience of you in a professional capacity. If a reference is requested it is not an indication of appointment.

5. OTHER INFORMATION

Please provide full details if you answer yes to any of the questions asked.

6. GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME (GIS)

The Department will operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for this appointment. The GIS has been developed for applicants with disabilities or those with long term impairment or health condition that is expected to last for at least 12 months. In these instances, provided that the applicant has demonstrated in his/her application form that he/she has met the criteria for the post, the applicant will be offered a guaranteed interview.

If you wish to apply under this scheme, please indicate this and sign the declaration. You do not have to have a registered disability to apply and have your application considered under GIS.

7. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments, or arrangements to enable you to attend for interview or take up an offer of appointment.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA PART B– SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Background on Criteria Based Selection

Criteria-based selection is currently the most common method of making public appointments in Northern Ireland. Applicants are asked to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or competence through completion of an application form and, if shortlisted, by attendance at a structured interview. Competence is the ability to perform a particular role or task and is most easily demonstrated by reference to your personal experience.

This part of the application form is an essential part of the process and allows you to use specific examples of past behaviour to demonstrate how you meet the eligibility criteria. Please note that CVs will not be accepted.

The selection panel will reach a decision on whether or not you meet each of the essential criteria on the basis of the evidence you supply. The onus is on you to provide sufficiently detailed examples to demonstrate that you have the experience of putting into use the competences that are needed for the post. **It is strongly recommended that you read the accompanying booklet 'make your mark' before completing your application form. This will give you some useful background and examples.**

Many people are not used to writing about themselves or thinking about what they have done as opposed to what a team has done. Before starting to complete the form, it is important you think about your role and what you have done, either on your own or your contribution as a team member. **It is your unique role the selection panel will be interested in.**

The *Person Specification* details the criteria required for the post. These are essential competences and knowledge an applicant must possess in order to apply for the appointment. Applicants must demonstrate that they satisfy these criteria fully in order to be successful.

If the Department receives a high number of applications which meet the essential criteria, the Panel reserves the right to apply a scoring system to further shortlist applicants for interview, based on the quality of evidence provided.

Guidance

The aim of the application form is for you to demonstrate your ability to meet each of the essential criteria. Think about your knowledge, skills and attributes and choose examples which best demonstrate these criteria. Give examples about your personal experience where evidence of competence or ability is sought. Below are some points to bear in mind: -

- take time to read the 'Person Specification' and understand the relationship between the examples you will use and the relevant selection criteria. At this stage, don't consider any one of the criteria to be less significant than another – they are all requirements of the job. (If certain criteria are considered to be more important than others, they will be 'weighted' at interview. Where this is the case you will normally be advised of the weighting applied when notified of your interview date);
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- don't write a long narrative – focus your mind and note important points before putting pen to paper. You must keep within number of words allowed.
- use actual examples, rather than 'how you would do something';
- avoid statements that describe your personal beliefs or philosophies – focus on specific challenges and results;
- if possible, quantify/qualify your accomplishments;
- use simple and easy to understand language in your examples to describe what you have done;
- avoid jargon – if it is necessary to use jargon or technical terms, explain them;
- typed or word processed applications are preferable. If completing in manuscript, please ensure your copy is legible;
- once you have completed your application, read and re-read it for any spelling errors and grammatical mistakes;
- remember to keep a copy for yourself;
- submit your application through the channels requested, by the closing date and time. As late applications will not be accepted, it is essential to allow plenty of time for this process to take place.

Previous Employment and/or Voluntary/Community Experience

The Department wishes to recognise less traditional career patterns and experiences such as community involvement or voluntary work, as well as those experiences found within the employment field. Therefore, in your application form, you may use examples from your working or personal life, e.g. part-time or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in.

Structuring Your Responses

The key to a well-written application form is to give the selection panel specific information about your achievements. Therefore it is recommended that you use the following model to describe your accomplishments: -

Challenge: Describe a specific problem or goal

Context: Write about the individuals and groups you worked with and/or the environment in which you worked, to tackle a particular challenge (eg colleagues, clients, shrinking budget, low morale).

Action: Discuss the specific actions **you** took to address the challenge.

Result: Give specific examples of the results of **your** actions. These accomplishments demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of what **you** did in relation to the selection criteria.

Please note that in following this model, most of your effort should be focused on recording Actions and Results.

Using this model to structure your examples will also benefit you greatly if you are selected for interview, as it will allow you to analyse and express your examples in a logical form.

When you have finished, ask someone (preferably an impartial and knowledgeable individual) to review your application form and give you feedback.

Completion of the form can be a time-consuming process, but it is a useful opportunity for you to review your ability to meet the selection criteria, which will be assessed, if you are selected, at interview. The criteria based approach means that all questions asked by the panel at interview will be linked to the criteria.

9. PROBITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Before you complete this section, it is important that you read the document entitled 'Probity and Conflict of Interest – Guidance for Candidates'; and also the information leaflet from John Keanie, Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI) which provides guidance on 'Conflicts of Interest and Integrity and Making a Complaint.' These are included in your information pack.

It is important that you record any business or other interests or personal connections that might be construed as being conflict with the appointment for which you have applied. Any matters will be explored further at interview.

10. DECLARATION

Ensure that you read the declaration statement and sign your application form. If you send your form electronically, you may be required to sign it on the day of interview if you are shortlisted for interview.

11. PART C - MONITORING INFORMATION

The Department monitors the gender, ethnic origin, community background and disability of candidates to ensure that equal opportunity measures are effective. You are asked to complete a monitoring form at the end of the application form. It is not made available to the selection panel. This information is gathered, maintained and processed, strictly in accordance with our Data Protection registration.

The Commissioner requires that announcements about successful candidates should contain details of their recent political activity. You will be required to complete a political activity questionnaire if you are appointed.
