



SOLICITOR TRAINEE SCHEME (1 PLACE)

1. BACKGROUND

The Justice (NI) Act 2002 provides for the appointment of an independent, non-political Attorney General for Northern Ireland. The Attorney General has a range of statutory and non-statutory responsibilities including as chief legal adviser to the Executive.

The Attorney General deals with the most important and complex legal matters facing the Executive and Departments, providing advice and where necessary conducting litigation.

The Attorney may ask the UK Supreme Court to determine whether a provision of legislation is within the NI Assembly's legislative competence and is a notice party in devolution litigation.

Other responsibilities of the Attorney include considering referrals under the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016; representing the public interest in charity matters; ordering fresh inquests; and issuing human rights guidance to criminal justice organisations.

To guarantee the independence of the Attorney, her Office has an arm's length relationship with the Executive Office.

2. JOB DESCRIPTION

The Attorney General for Northern Ireland is offering a solicitor traineeship. The successful candidate will be contracted to undertake a 2 year traineeship* within the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

[* Note – the formal 2 year trainee solicitor programme starts on the 4th September 2023]

After the traineeship recruitment has finished, it may be possible to offer those on a reserve list a short term role within the Office of the Attorney General, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Remuneration

The total remuneration for the trainee will be £20,048 per annum (pensionable).

Institute Fees

The Office of the Attorney General will pay 50% of the tuition fees for the successful candidate. The successful candidate must sign a Certificate of Understanding requiring them to repay the tuition fees in the event that they fail to complete the training programme.

Location

The successful candidate's base location is at the Belfast City Centre offices of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland however it is likely that working from home will also be possible.

Availability

Due to the nature of the post the successful candidate will be required to be available to start on 4 September 2023.

Training

The Attorney General will appoint a Master from within her office on behalf of the successful candidate, and as part of the training contract the trainee will be required to comply with the agreed Training Schedule at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.

3. OFFER OF TRAINING CONTRACT

On completion of the selection process an offer of a traineeship will be issued in merit order to successful applicants who have received an offer of a place on the solicitors' course at the Institute for the year beginning September 2023.

Continuation of the traineeship will be dependent on satisfactory completion of all aspects of the training programme.

The traineeship is strictly for a 2 year period only from the 4 September 2023. **A permanent position will not be offered to the solicitor trainee after this period.**

If you have any questions about the competition process, please contact Maurice Dowling by email at:

contact@attorneygeneralni.gov.uk

4. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will involve 3 stages:

(i) Eligibility

In order to be considered for this training opportunity, applicants must, by noon of Thursday 8th June 2023 (the closing date for e-mail applications) hold an offer (including the wait list) from the Institute and be provisionally accepted for a place within the solicitors' course.

Applicants should note that a scanned /photographed copy of their result letter from the Institute **must** be enclosed with their e-mailed application form. Application forms received without a copy of the letter enclosed will not be considered.

(ii) Sift

The second selection stage will be a case analysis.

Please attach to your e-mail application form your analysis.

Please read the decision of Rooney J in [Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and KL \(The patient\) and ML.pdf \(judiciaryni.uk\)](#) and then answer concisely the following questions:

- 1) Please summarise the key points arising from [16] – [49] in no more than 5 bullet points.
- 2) Please identify the statutory provisions relevant to Rooney, J's decision and state how he addresses each of them.
- 3) Was the judge under any legal obligation as regards his decision in this case? If yes, specify the obligation(s) on him.

The analysis will be used to identify those candidates who will be invited for interview. The analysis must be your original work. Plagiarism will result in removal from the appointment process.

(iii) Final Selection

The final selection stage will be in 2 parts: (i) a short exercise; and (ii) an interview.

Short Exercise

Candidates will be advised of the exercise topic when they report for interview. Candidates will be given a maximum of 30 minutes to consider the information provided and to prepare answers to the questions to be asked.

No personal documentation may be brought in to the pre-interview room. Candidates will be allowed to bring some short speaking notes into the interview room for assistance during the interview. No other materials or visual aids will be permitted.

Interview

Once candidates complete the exercise they will be invited to the interview. The interview panel will ask candidates to present their answers to the exercise and may ask further questions on the topic under discussion.

Marks available for the Exercise: 30

The following areas will also be assessed at interview with questions designed to test your knowledge and experience in each area and award marks accordingly.

1. Making Effective Decisions.

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. It means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

Marks available: 30

2. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way.

Marks available: 20

3. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the NICS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks available: 20

Total marks available: 100

Please note the guidance on interview preparation detailed below.

Interviews

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in person in Belfast on Wednesday 21st June 2023. Candidates must make themselves available on this date.

5. GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Applications forms

Only e-mailed applications will be accepted. The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria. All parts of the application form must be completed by the applicant and a scanned copy /photograph of the result letter from the Institute enclosed before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

Please note:

- Except for the shortlisting analysis and a copy of the Institute result letter, we will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.
- All applications must be submitted by the advertised closing date and time.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- Applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline.
- Once your application has been submitted the opportunity to edit will no longer be available.
- You will receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact the Office of the Attorney at contact@attorneygeneralni.gov.uk if you do not receive an acknowledgment email within two working days of the closing date of this competition.

Interview Preparation

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 to demonstrate the range of behaviours with the associated areas assessed. 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 area. You may draw examples from any area of your study / work / life experiences.

General Information

The Merit Principle

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments are made under the 'merit principle,' where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at www.nicscommissioners.org

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

As part of the NICS commitment to the employment of disabled people, we operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS does not guarantee an appointment. However, its objective is to ensure a guaranteed number of disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview.

Click on the links below to read the NICS policy and FAQs on the Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

[Guaranteed Interview Scheme Policy](#)

[Guaranteed Interview Scheme FAQs](#)

Offer of Appointment

A successful candidate will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

Changes in personal circumstances and contact details

Please ensure the Office of the Attorney General is informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that contact details are up to date.

Transgender Requirements

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration, in confidence, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact the Office of the Attorney General. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the process.

Disability Requirements

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. 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 are 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 contact the Office of the Attorney General.

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

There are no nationality restrictions on this post: however, before an offer of appointment can be made to an overseas candidate, The Office of the Attorney General will need to ensure that all UK visa and immigration requirements are met.

Counter Terrorist Check

For this post the level of vetting is a Counter Terrorist Check. For this check you will be required to complete an on-line process.

Further information regarding the Counter Terrorist Check is available via www.gov.uk

Equal Opportunity

All applications for this appointment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

Pensions

Successful candidates will be offered an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni