



TOURISM  
NORTHERN  
IRELAND



# Candidate Briefing Notes

# About Us

Tourism NI is responsible for the development of tourism product and experiences across Northern Ireland as well as marketing to visitors within Northern Ireland and from the Republic of Ireland. Tourism is an industry that makes a real difference to the economy and job creation, accounting for 70,000 jobs, 9% of all jobs in NI.

In 2023, overnight visitors to Northern Ireland spent £1.2 billion, demonstrating tourism's importance to the Northern Ireland economy.

Tourism NI's consumer brand "Embrace a Giant Spirit" has been widely adopted and is playing an important role in creating stand out for Northern Ireland as a destination. The brand encapsulates the spirit of the people, the warmth of the welcome, and the authenticity of the visitor experience in Northern Ireland.

Brand campaigns are encouraging more visitors from key markets to experience a trip to Northern Ireland with particular success in attracting more visitors across the border.

In 2023, there was an unprecedented number of visitors from the Republic to Northern Ireland, with over 1.3 million trips, accounting for almost one quarter of all trips made to Northern Ireland.

Overseas visitors accounted for over one third of all trips to Northern Ireland in 2023, while increasingly, more Northern Ireland product is being added to tour operators' itineraries from international markets.

Tourism NI works closely with Tourism Ireland to win a bigger share of visitors to the island of Ireland. In 2024, Tourism Ireland set the target to grow regional, off-peak overseas tourism revenue by an average of +6.5% year on year to 2030.





Current investment includes a multi-million-pound refurbishment programme at Titanic Belfast, new hotels in Belfast, Derry~Londonderry, and the North Coast, and an expanding screen tourism product. We are currently part of the bidding process to attract a number of major international events to Northern Ireland over the next five years, while planning is already underway to make the most of opportunities in 2025, when The Open will return to Royal Portrush.

Tourism NI is also closely involved in the tourism elements of the City and Growth Deal Programmes which will be crucial in helping to secure more spend from international visitors to the island.

The Belfast Stories attraction, a maritime visitor attraction for Derry~Londonderry, the extension to The Gobbins, the Mourne Gateway Project, and the regeneration of Royal Hillsborough will add to our portfolio and complement the better-known attractions.

With a significant investment by both Tourism NI and the Department for the Economy in supporting the industry through recent challenges, the focus is now firmly on full recovery and a return to growth.

## **We welcome your application...**

This is truly an exciting time to get involved in Northern Ireland tourism. If you believe you have the necessary credentials, passion, and enthusiasm for one of our vacancies, we would be delighted to explore the opportunity with you further.

# Equality of Opportunity

Tourism NI is committed to Equality of Opportunity in its employment practices and aims to ensure that no actual or potential job applicant or employee is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, race, community background or political persuasion, age, dependants, sexual orientation, or Trade Union membership.

Each person shall have equal opportunity for employment, training and advancement in Tourism NI on the basis of ability, qualifications, and performance.

This maximises the effective use of human resources in the best interests of both the organisation and the individual.

We welcome applications from suitably qualified people from all sections of the community.

At this time, we particularly welcome applications from males, from people with disabilities and from minority ethnic groups as these are currently underrepresented in our workforce.



To facilitate Equality of Opportunity we offer a range of family friendly policies which reduce barriers to combining work and family commitments.

To help ensure that we are meeting our Equality of Opportunity obligations, we also monitor the composition of the workforce and applicants.

This monitoring helps to assess whether any of our policies, procedures, or activities are operating to the detriment of any particular group within our diverse society.

The monitoring form included on the online recruitment platform is therefore regarded as part of your application.

The monitoring form will not be shown to the selection panel. It will be separated from the application form by the monitoring officer and transferred to a computer-based monitoring system.

There it will be protected; access restricted and used strictly in line with good practice procedures.





# Criteria-based Selection

## Background

Criteria-based selection was introduced to Tourism NI as a means of selecting the best candidates on the basis of their ability to do the job. This method of selection requires individuals to give evidence in an application form, and through attendance at a structured interview, to demonstrate their ability and competence in relation to the role being applied for.

Criteria-based interviewing tests candidates against a set of selection criteria which have been composed and agreed as being appropriate to a specific post and grade. The selection criteria detail what an individual will need to possess to be effective in the job.

Most interview questions will be about your experience, but if you have limited experience in a certain area, the Panel may ask you to describe how you *would* do something, to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your ability. You may also use examples of experience gained from your outside interests.

## The Selection Process

Tourism NI's selection process generally consists of three stages:

- ◆ Completion of an application form,
- ◆ Shortlisting, and
- ◆ A competency-based interview.

Some roles may also require a presentation or task to be completed as part of the interview process.

Tourism NI reserves the right to add additional stages to a selection process where, for example, a process is particularly competitive, or scores are tied.

To ensure consistency and equality of opportunity for all candidates, **we do not accept CVs** or any other supplementary material.

Only the completed application form, submitted by the closing date and time will be considered.

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



## Completing the Application Form

The purpose of the application form is for you to demonstrate your ability to meet the specific core selection criteria, as detailed on the job description, that are necessary for effective work at the level of the role advertised. This form, specifically the answers to the criteria-based questions, acts as the sole information source for the shortlisting panel.

### (a) Preparation

Your first step should be to familiarise yourself with applicant guide / job description for the role being applied for. You must consider the core selection criteria and their descriptions carefully, prior to answering the questions and providing the evidence requested in the application form. This will allow you to get a feel for what information is required from you.

Many people are not used to writing about themselves or thinking about what they have done as opposed to what 'my team' has done or 'we' have done. Before starting to complete the application, it is important that you think about your individual role and contribution, i.e. what **you** have done, either on your own or as a team member.





## (b) Structure

Tourism NI uses the **STAR** technique in assessing both written and verbal answers and application forms.

### Situation

Briefly outline the background and context of your example.

### Task

What was your objective / what were you trying to achieve and why?

### Action

What did you actually do / what was **your** unique contribution?

### Result

What was the outcome? What did you learn?

Using this model to structure your answers will allow you to express your thoughts in a logical manner, and allow for ease of analysis by the panel.



## (c) Examples

To write an effective application you need to understand the relationship between the examples you will use and the relevant selection criteria.

You should use simple and easy to understand language in your examples to describe what you have done. You should take care to avoid simply repeating the examples shown under the selection criteria.

It is preferable that you use examples from your work, as this is most relevant to consideration for appointment to the post for which you are applying.

It is also preferable to use recent examples rather than something that happened a long time ago. However, the emphasis is on examples that demonstrate the behaviours being sought.

In some instances it may be appropriate to use examples of experiences from outside work, for example, from other professional or voluntary work.



## (d) Content & Style

- ◆ Avoid statements that describe your personal beliefs, philosophies, or opinion – focus on specific challenges and results.
- ◆ If possible, quantify / qualify your accomplishments.
- ◆ Avoid statements that simply repeat the criterion.
- ◆ Show measurable results, especially in terms of improved customer service or increased efficiency.
- ◆ Avoid jargon, acronyms, or terminology that may not be easily understood outside of your current workplace.
- ◆ Avoid vague statements
- ◆ Describe what you did and how you behaved – if your examples include activities undertaken by a team, focus on your role and individual contribution and that of the team as a whole.
- ◆ Do not assume that the reader has specialist knowledge of the area / topic that you are writing about.
- ◆ Use clear, concise statements and write in the first person.
- ◆ Use paragraphs or bullet points to separate items.





## Remember

Applications must be submitted **before** the closing date and time.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your application is received in a timely manner. Late applications cannot be made and there will be no exceptions.



# Shortlisting

A shortlist of candidates for interview will be prepared solely on the basis of the information contained in the “**Criteria Questions**” section of the application form. It is therefore essential that all applicants demonstrate in this section how, and to what extent, they satisfy each of the criteria specified.

Applicants should ensure they provide evidence of their experience giving length and depth of experience, and providing relevant dates and examples as required.

It is not sufficient to simply list posts held and duties. You will have the opportunity to provide your career history and personal information elsewhere in the application form for completeness, however, these sections **will not** be presented to the shortlisting panel.

Tourism NI will not make assumptions from the title of an applicant’s current or previous post, or the nature of the organisation, as to the skills and experience gained.

It is vital that candidates highlight their specific role and contribution by using actual examples to illustrate their experience against the criteria. Application forms that do not provide the necessary level of detailed information required will be rejected.

# Interview

Tourism NI will invite to interview only those applicants who appear, from the information presented, to be the most suitable for the role being advertised.

We endeavour, where possible, to publish interview dates in advance with the advertisement and candidates should prepare accordingly.

Published dates and times may still be subject to change.

If the interview date or time provided is not suitable, we will endeavour to accommodate individual requests. However, candidates should be aware that such requests will only be accommodated subject to business needs and interview panel availability.

Candidates who are unable to agree an interview date / time may withdraw from the recruitment and selection process.

During the interview you will be asked a series of competency-based questions. The number, length, and complexity of the questions will vary based on the seniority of the role being applied for. On occasion, depending on the nature or seniority of a role, you may also be asked to complete a presentation or task as part of the interview process.

Following the interview, you will have the opportunity to ask the panel any questions that you might have about the role being applied for, or Tourism NI in general. We aim to communicate interview outcomes as soon as possible.





# Frequently Asked Questions

## Application Forms

### **Is there a word limit?**

You are free to write as much as you like on your application form, however we would encourage you to consider the guidance in this information booklet.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are providing the level of detail required to meet the criteria.

## Shortlisting

### **How will I receive an outcome?**

You will be contacted by email with an outcome either inviting you to the next stage in the process or advising that we won't be moving forward with your application. Please ensure that the email address submitted is correct and remember to check your junk / spam folder.

### **Will I receive feedback?**

Feedback on application forms can be requested.

## Interview

### **Can interviews be held online?**

All interviews will be held in-person in Tourism NI offices in the first instance.

A remote interview may be considered, for example, as a reasonable adjustment due to disability.

### **Can I be reimbursed for travel to interview?**

Tourism NI does not pay travel expenses for any candidates.

### **Can I ask for feedback?**

We encourage all candidates, whether successful or not, to ask for feedback for your development. Feedback will be provided in line with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code.

### **Canvassing**

Canvassing in any form is not permitted



## Further Information

For more information on Tourism NI and the recruitment process, please visit [www.tourismni.com/about/careers](http://www.tourismni.com/about/careers)

If you have any queries about this specific role, please contact:  
[recruitment@tourismni.com](mailto:recruitment@tourismni.com)

For questions around the online application portal, including technical queries or troubleshooting, please visit:

<https://tourismni.getgotjobs.co.uk/contact>







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Embrace  
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