

**Armagh Observatory and Planetarium  
Education Assistant with Reception  
Duties  
Candidate Booklet**



**Bronze  
Diversity Mark**

**IOP** | Institute of Physics  
**Juno Practitioner**

## 1. OVERVIEW

The Armagh Observatory was established in 1790 by Archbishop Richard Robinson as part of his dream to see a university in the City of Armagh. It is the oldest scientific institution in Northern Ireland and the longest continuously operating astronomical research institute in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The Armagh Planetarium was founded in 1968 by Dr Eric Lindsay, the seventh Director of the Armagh Observatory. It was the first Planetarium in Ireland and has been the public face of astronomy in Northern Ireland for over 50 years.

The Observatory and Planetarium are located within approx. 21 acres of landscaped grounds known as the Armagh Astropark, in close proximity to Armagh City centre. Together the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (AOP) deliver internationally recognised research in astronomy and related sciences and vibrant educational and outreach programmes for all ages.

AOP is grant funded by the Northern Ireland Executive with the Department for Communities (DfC) acting as sponsor department. It is classified as an executive Non-Departmental Public Body and has charitable status.

AOP holds Juno Practitioner status and the Diversity Mark NI Bronze award and we actively support equality, diversity and inclusion and encourage applications from all sections of society. Applications from underrepresented groups are particularly welcome. AOP has a responsibility to ensure that all employees are eligible to live and work in the UK.

### **Further information**

Further information on the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium can be found on our website, [www.armagh.space](http://www.armagh.space)

## **2. JOB DESCRIPTION**

AOP are recruiting an Education Assistant who will have reception duties to be part of the education and outreach team delivering a range of education, training and skills development services to schools, community groups and the wider public within Armagh Observatory, Planetarium and Astropark.

This post is a part-time permanent post. Further appointments may be made from this competition should AOP positions become vacant which require the same eligibility criteria and have similar duties and responsibilities.

### **Location**

The Post Holder will be based at Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, which is located at College Hill, Armagh, Northern Ireland, BT61 9DB.

### **Reporting**

The Post Holder will report to the Operations Manager.

### **Salary**

Salary will be within the NICS AO scale £24,225 - £25,732 (under review) per annum. Pay progression will be performance related. Applicants can expect to be placed at the minimum of the scale.

### **Hours of Work**

The normal hours of work are 30 hours per week including weekends. There may be requirements for the postholder to work outside of normal hours which can be taken as Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)

### **Holidays**

Annual leave allowance is 30 days pro rata, plus 12 public and privilege holidays. The holiday year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> January.

### **Pensions**

The post holder will be enrolled in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Scheme (full details available at [www.nilgosc.org.uk](http://www.nilgosc.org.uk)).

### **Vetting Requirements**

The level of vetting required for this post is an Enhanced Check.

### **Probation**

Confirmation of your appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 12 months. If your performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory your appointment may be terminated. All appointees will be expected to demonstrate a track record of effective service within this period.

### **Further Information**

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply can email [hr@armagh.ac.uk](mailto:hr@armagh.ac.uk).

### 3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The Post Holder will be part of the education and outreach team delivering a range of education, training and skills development services to schools, community groups and the wider public within Armagh Observatory, Planetarium and Astropark.

#### **Key duties:**

1. Engage with schools, groups and general visitors, adapting style and content to suit the needs, requests and/or learning objectives of a diverse range of audiences.
2. Deliver astronomy based interactive workshops in a fun and interactive way that is appropriate to the age and ability of the group.
3. Reception duties including telephone and email enquiries, organising and recording bookings and operating tills, stocking the shop, assisting in the café, reconciling takings at the end of the day and maintaining a clean and customer friendly environment.
4. Present tours of the exhibition area, showcasing and informing visitors about the various exhibits and relevant topical information.
5. Research and write articles for 'Astronotes' for publication on the Planetarium blog.
6. Operate the digital theatre equipment for live presentations in the Planetarium dome.
7. Deliver outreach events including operation of the inflatable Star Dome.
8. Assisting and being supervised by the receptionist with admin duties relating to visitor bookings and sending out school booking forms.
9. Ensure that all operating guidance, health safety rules and procedures are complied with.
10. Any other duties commensurate with the nature and level of the post.

**The above list is not exhaustive but gives a good indication of the main duties of the post. The emphasis on particular duties will vary according to business needs.**

### 4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

#### **Essential Criteria**

Applicants must have, by the closing date for applications:

- At least 5 GCSEs or equivalent including English Language and Maths.
- One year's full time equivalent and demonstrable experience in a similar or comparable role within a visitor centre, education setting or public facing setting.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

**Relevant or equivalent qualifications:** give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body) . If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to

provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

**Relevant experience:** You must provide evidence of your relevant experience, giving duration (start and end dates) and examples. It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities. Failure to provide relevant examples and duration will result in your application form being rejected.

### **Desirable Criteria**

In addition, applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to the next stage of selection, the following shortlisting criteria will be applied:

1. Demonstrate experience of having developed and delivered presentations to groups.
2. One year's full time equivalent demonstrable experience in at least 3 of the following:
  - Leading and supervising workshops
  - Leading and supervising groups
  - Customer service experience
  - Researching and writing articles (e.g. blogs, magazines, websites)
  - Cash handling
  - Experience of building and maintaining key working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders both internally and externally
3. Experience in the use of Microsoft Office (or similar) packages to include Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint.

### **Please note:**

- **Ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required. It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.**
- **The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.**
- **If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.**
- **ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post.**

## 5. INTERVIEW CRITERIA

Postholders will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 1 for the purposes of personal and professional development. The following competences will be assessed at interview:

- Leading & Communicating
- Building Capability for all
- Making Effective Decisions
- Collaborating and Partnering

### **Presentation**

As part of the selection process candidates will be required to deliver an education & outreach presentation (using Powerpoint or other similar platform) lasting no longer than 10 minutes, the subject of which will be provided to candidates in the interview invite.

Candidates should fully prepare their presentation in advance of the interview and no preparation time will be provided on the day of interview.

Further details regarding the presentation will be provided to candidates in the invitation to interview letter.

## INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place mid-February 2025 in Armagh.

## 6. INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

**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.

**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 competencies. 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 / life experiences.

## 7. SELECTION PROCESS

### The Merit Principle

Appointments to AOP are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

### Guidance for Applicants

- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- AOP will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- State clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. State "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.

### Application Form Submission

You can apply online at [www.armagh.space/opportunities](http://www.armagh.space/opportunities)

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.
- Completed applications are to be emailed to [hr@armagh.ac.uk](mailto:hr@armagh.ac.uk) by the closing date of **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025**.

### Vetting Procedures

For the Education Assistant/Receptionist post in AOP the level of vetting is an Enhanced Check. This check will only be progressed if you have been selected for appointment.

## 8. DISABILITY REQUIREMENTS

If you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process, please contact [hr@armagh.ac.uk](mailto:hr@armagh.ac.uk).

If you have indicated 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.

## **8.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MONITORING FORM**

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 public bodies are required to report on equal opportunity monitoring.

It is the policy of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium to ensure that all eligible persons have equal opportunities for employment and advancement in the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude. AOP select those suitable for appointment solely on the basis of merit without regard to an individual's religious belief, political opinion, trade union membership, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, colour or ethnic origin.

In order to ensure that the equal opportunity policy is effectively implemented, the equal opportunity information provided with application forms will be monitored.