

# Armagh Observatory and Planetarium

## Candidate Information Booklet

### Communications & Marketing Manager



## 1. BACKGROUND OVERVIEW

The Armagh Observatory was established in 1790 by Archbishop Richard Robinson as part of his vision 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 is embarking on a redevelopment project to rejuvenate the organisation to secure its future for the 21st century, investing in its world-renowned research, education and outreach capabilities as a centre for the public communication of science, creating a dynamic and inspiring visitor experience, and preserving & conserving its outstanding scientific heritage and collections for future generations to see and enjoy. Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. This position, has been made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to fund this post to continue supporting the conservation, exhibition and access to the Grade A heritage-listed Armagh Observatory building.

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 under-represented 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

- Job Title:** Communications & Marketing Manager  
This post will lead and deliver effective and efficient communications and marketing for Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (AOP).
- Pay Band:** £47,304 - £49,515  
(NICS DP scale - starting pay is normally at the pay band minima).
- Duration:** This is a 2 year fixed term post. The post is fulltime.
- Location:** Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, which is located at College Hill, Armagh, Northern Ireland, BT61 9DB.
- Reports to:** Head of Education & Outreach.
- Hours of work:** The normal hours of work are 37 hours per week. There may be requirements for the postholder to work outside of normal hours which can be taken as Time Off In Lieu (TOIL).
- Holidays:** 30 days plus 12 public and privilege holidays.  
The holiday year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> January.
- Pensions:** The postholder 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)).
- Probation:** Confirmation of your appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 9 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.

### **3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES**

The postholder will lead and deliver effective and efficient communications and marketing for Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (AOP). They will have a key role in the AOP team and will represent AOP's interests with a wide range of stakeholders with a particular focus on the redevelopment of AOP. The postholder will be part of the Project Team, led by the Project Director. They will work closely with the AOP Board, Management Committee, Senior Leadership Team and wider staff. They will be responsible for the development and successful delivery of a wide range of communications activities for AOP.

#### **Key duties:**

1. Support the AOP Director, Board and Management Committee by providing corporate communications for AOP's vibrant range of programmes in science and education.
2. Support the Chief Operating Officer to provide effective communications for the major infrastructure redevelopment of AOP.
3. Seek meaningful opportunities to engage with a wide range of AOP stakeholders and build social licence for the redevelopment of AOP.
4. Develop and implement successful integrated communication and marketing strategies using a range of communications channels.
5. Work with the AOP Director, Board and Management Committee to identify and engage with potential sources of new funding for the redevelopment project.
6. Commission agencies, organise events and seek opportunities for collaboration.
7. Deliver effective Stakeholder Engagement Strategies that align with the project outcomes.
8. Lead and deliver on internal communications.
9. Manage digital platforms and analyse data from a range of sources to create content.
10. Monitor, evaluate and report on the delivery and impact of strategic communications.
11. Respond to media enquiries.
12. Undertake any other tasks and duties as may be reasonably required.

**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. PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria	How will these be assessed	
	Application Form	Interview
<b>The candidate must possess:</b>		
1. (a) At least an undergraduate degree or higher qualification (i.e., a level 6 qualification or higher)* plus (b) a minimum of 5 years relevant post qualification experience in a Communication and marketing environment.  *Please specify all relevant information, including dates of award of qualifications and awarding bodies.	✓	✓
2. Demonstrable experience of successful engagement with a range of stakeholders across a range of public, private and voluntary sectors including with political representatives.	✓	✓
3. Demonstrable experience of delivering integrated campaigns on time and on budget, meeting agreed outcomes.	✓	✓
4. Excellent verbal and written communication skills in an environment in which complex, confidential and sensitive issues are being addressed, demonstrating excellent interpersonal and negotiating skills.	✓	✓
5. Demonstrable experience of effective use and management of social media platforms, websites and intranet.	✓	✓
6. A thorough knowledge and understanding of the role and purpose of marketing communications, public relations, social media and internal communications, demonstrated through practical experience. This must include budget management and the briefing and managing of agencies.		✓
7. A strong understanding of public sector, political context and climate.		✓
8. Ability to plan and organise workloads to meet competing and challenging priorities, including planning and delivering events.		✓
9. Being able to work within a small team and on own initiative.		✓
10. Proficiency in MS Office suite.	✓	✓

#### 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. A professional marketing or communication qualification.
2. Experience in supporting a capital infrastructure project.

**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. COMPETENCIES

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview and will be expected to demonstrate at interview that they meet the requirements of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework <sup>1</sup>. In particular the following four competences will be assessed at interview:

- Seeing the Big Picture
- Leading & Communicating
- Building Capability for All
- Collaborating and Partnering
- Delivering at Pace

## 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. APPLICATION PROCESS GUIDANCE

- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/resources/documents/n/i/c/nics-cf.pdf>

- 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.

**All applications will be considered strictly on the basis of merit.**

### **Application Form Submission**

You can apply via the application form 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 **5pm on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026**.

### **Selection Process**

Shortlisting will be carried out on the basis of the information provided against each specific criterion as presented on the application form. Applications will first be considered against the essential criteria. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview.

### **Interviews**

Candidates invited to attend for interview should bring photographic documentation to satisfy the vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for interview.

**It is intended that interviews for this post will take place w/c 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026 in Armagh.**

### **Vetting Procedures**

For the Communication & Marketing Manager post in AOP the level of vetting is a Basic 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.

## **9. 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.