

Armagh Observatory and Planetarium

Corporate Services Officer

Candidate Information 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 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

2. JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Corporate Support Officer The postholder will provide admin support to the AOP redevelopment project and to the project Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Senior Management Team.
Pay Band:	£30,458 - £31,097 (under review) (NICS EO2 - starting salary will be at the scale minimum).
Duration:	This is a full time post funded to 31 st March 2028 with potential for extension subject to funding.
Location:	Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, which is located at College Hill, Armagh, Northern Ireland, BT61 9DB.
Reports to:	Chief Operating Officer.
Hours of work:	The hours of work are negotiable either 4 or 5 days 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 1st February to 31st January.
Pension:	The postholder will be enrolled in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Scheme (full details available at www.nilgosc.org.uk).
Probation:	Confirmation of your appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 3 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.
Vetting:	The level of vetting required for this post is a Basic Check.
Further Information:	Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply can email hr@armagh.ac.uk .

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Overall Job Purpose

This role will support AOP by providing an admin and secretariat support service for the AOP redevelopment project, SRO and Senior Management Team as required. The postholder will maintain confidentiality at all times in accordance with AOP's Code of Conduct and other related policies and will maintain positive and constructive relationships with Board and Management Committee members and AOP staff.

Key duties:

1. Provide admin support for the AOP redevelopment project delivery committees including meeting coordination, agenda preparation and minute-taking.
2. Support the delivery of business projects by monitoring actions, timelines and key milestones.
3. Support the collection, validation, and analysis of grant monitoring information to assist with grant reporting.
4. Provide administrative support to the SRO and Senior Management Team as required, including diary and inbox management.
5. Maintain accurate records and ensure important documentation is managed appropriately.
6. Handle confidential information with professionalism and appropriate discretion.
7. Support day-to-day business activity by managing requests, priorities and follow-up actions.

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 over time according to business needs.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Applicants must have, by the closing date for applications:

1. A third level qualification in Business, Public Administration, Law, Governance, or a related discipline*.
2. At least 1 year's experience that demonstrates having applied sound principles of corporate governance, report writing or minute taking.
3. Proficiency in Microsoft 365 applications Word, Outlook and Teams.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1 year's experience in providing a secretariat service to a Board or committee.

*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.

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 2 for the purpose of personal and professional development. To view the NICS Competency Framework, please [click here](#).

1. Making Effective Decisions

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

2. Changing and Improving

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

3. Delivering at Pace

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

4. Managing a Quality Service

Marks available: 20

Minimum Standard: 12

Total Marks Available: 80

Overall Pass Mark: 48

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in **Armagh in October 2026**.

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 fulfill 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

- 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 by the closing date of **Monday 12th October 2026**.

8.0 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.

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.