



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## OFFICIAL REPORTER

**Reference:** 602404

**Salary range:** £32,709 to £40,560 per annum (pro rata, can be paid over 12 months)

**Location:** Holyrood, Edinburgh

**Working pattern:** These are permanent part-time, term-time positions. We are looking for people who can ideally work three days per week, between Tuesday and Friday, in all weeks that Parliament sits (usually 36 weeks per year with recesses in February, at Easter, in July and August, in October and at Christmas). There may be scope to consider other flexible working patterns.

**Please note that, for the 10-week training programme, you must be available for training from Tuesday to Thursday.**

**Closing date:** Sunday 18 March 2018

**Assessment and interviews:** Assessment w/c 9 April, interviews w/c 23 April, subject to candidate availability.

**Start date:** Tuesday 5 June. We may run another training programme starting in October. Please indicate your availability and preference on your application form.

### Overview

As an official reporter, you'll be working at the heart of the democratic process, as part of a team that produces the *Official Report*, which is the written record of all proceedings in the chamber and parliamentary committees. It provides an essential tool for parliamentarians and policy makers, among others, as well as an entry point to parliamentary business for stakeholders and the wider public and an important historical archive.

The *Official Report* is a substantially verbatim report, which means that it's edited, but reporting members' arguments faithfully and staying true to the character and flavour of speeches is key. We work to tight deadlines—*Official Reports* of meetings of the Parliament are available three hours after the meeting ends, and for committees the turnaround can be the same day—so the ability to work accurately at speed is a must.

### Working pattern

The office is very busy on days when the Parliament and its committees sit, usually from Tuesday to Thursday, so you will primarily work on those three days, although there may be scope to work on Fridays. We cover parliamentary business from when committees start, sometimes as early as 8.30 or 9.00 am, until business in the chamber ends, usually at around 6.00 or 6.30 pm, and reporters can expect to work until around an hour after that. The days can be long and you need to be flexible enough to accommodate last-minute extensions and changes to business. We operate a flexible working hours system, so in practice longer days should be compensated for with shorter days when parliamentary business allows. Leave cannot usually be taken when Parliament is sitting, and the stated salary includes paid holiday pay.

### Duties

Reporting to a sub-editor, and working as part of a team, you will report what members and witnesses say in the chamber or committees, generally working on five minutes of speech at a time. You'll need to follow our house style and check facts, figures and quotations, clarifying the arguments as you go, to tight deadlines. You'll attend meetings in the chamber and committees to produce a "log" of speakers and proceedings; proofread and archive *Official Reports*; and contribute to or lead projects that improve our product, service or working practices or that otherwise contribute to the office's or the Parliament's strategic aims. It's a demanding and varied role with lots of exposure to the daily work of parliamentary scrutiny and debate.

## Skills, knowledge, experience required and methods of assessment

Skill, knowledge, experience	Application form	Interview	Written assessment	Essential	Desirable
An excellent grasp of the English language and an eye for detail.	✓		✓	✓	
A keen interest in current affairs and the political landscape in Scotland and beyond, and the ability to work impartially within it.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ability to understand a complicated argument and report it clearly and accurately.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ability to undertake relevant research to establish facts.	✓	✓		✓	
Ability to work independently under pressure and to juggle competing demands.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ability to build effective working relationships and to work collaboratively in pursuit of team and organisational objectives	✓	✓		✓	
Ability to respond positively to changes to business and evolving circumstances and to support and champion change.	✓	✓			✓
Experience of working on a digital publication, information management, data structure, metadata, indexing	✓	✓			✓

Good working knowledge of Gaelic and/or Scots	✓	✓			✓
IT: Competent use of Word, Excel, Outlook	✓		✓	✓	

### **Application Process**

Please complete the Application Form and Editing Assessment and send it to [jobs@parliament.scot](mailto:jobs@parliament.scot) before the closing date on 18 March 2018.

### **Assessment**

If successful at the Application stage you will be asked to attend an Assessment Centre to complete a written exercise which is detailed below.

### **Interview**

If successful at the Assessment stage you will then be invited to a formal interview.

## **Written assessment**

If successful at the first stage, you will be invited to the next stage of the selection process, which comprises three parts, each of which will be timed. An outline of the assessment is provided below; full instructions will be provided on the day.

1. Summary (30 minutes)
2. Transcription (1 hour)
3. Language/general knowledge/current affairs paper (30 minutes)

Please note that the use of any reference material, including dictionaries and the internet, will not be permitted in any part of the assessment.

### **Part 1: Summary (30 minutes)**

For this element, you will summarise a passage from parliamentary proceedings.

You will be able to listen to the audio recording only once. You will be able to take whatever notes you find useful to construct a summary report.

Your summary should be as full as possible and grammatical, and it should cover all the main points of the debate and as much of the illustrative material as you can manage.

We will be looking for the ability to grasp an argument under time pressure and to convey it sensitively in good English.

### **Part 2: Transcription (1 hour)**

For this element, you will produce a substantially verbatim report of a passage from parliamentary proceedings.

You will be able to listen to the recording, in part or in full, as much as you like within the time limit. There will be a foot pedal to control the digital audio software.

We will be looking for a clear, grammatical, substantially verbatim report that preserves the meaning and content of what is said as well as a flavour of the debate. Redundancies may be omitted and obvious errors may be corrected.

Candidates are advised to take the opportunity of reading published *Official Reports* against the video to gain an understanding of our approach to producing substantially verbatim copy. The Parliament's website has links to all *Official Reports* and a full video archive of parliamentary business.

### **Part 3: Language/general knowledge/current affairs (30 minutes)**

For this element, you will complete a variety of written questions and exercises to test your knowledge of the English language, including spelling and grammar; general knowledge; and current affairs, including Scottish politics.

## **Further Information regarding working at the Parliament**

### **Pension**

Unless you choose otherwise we offer the opportunity to join the Civil Service pension arrangements, which include a valuable range of benefits. We will make substantial employer contributions towards your Civil Service pension. More information can be found on the Civil Service Pensions website at [www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions)

### **Age**

The SPCB does not operate a retirement age policy. This means that there is no upper age limit beyond which you would be automatically retired and you are free to continue in employment for as long as you wish subject to the normal rules concerning [Performance](#), [Attendance](#) and [Conduct](#).

### **Travelling and Other Expenses**

We pay travelling and other expenses if you incur them whilst on official duty. However, we will not reimburse the cost of normal daily travel between home and office.

Unless we have stated otherwise in the advert, we do not reimburse travel or other expenses you incur in attending an interview or assessment with us. We are happy to explore alternative arrangements if this causes you difficulty.

### **Probation**

You will be on probation for six months. Confirmation of your appointment is dependent on the satisfactory completion of this probation period, taking into account your job performance, conduct and attendance.

### **Outside and Political Activities**

As an employee of the SPCB, you may not take part in any activity that would in any way conflict with the interests of the Parliament or be inconsistent with your duties and responsibilities.

You may not take part in national political activities, although you may seek permission to take part in local political activities. If permission is granted, it will be subject to the observance of general rules relating to possible conflicts between your official responsibilities and your political activities.

### **Health and Safety**

The SPCB is committed to promoting health and safety as a priority issue. Its aim is to take appropriate and reasonable steps to ensure that it conducts its business in such a way that employees and other people who may be affected by its work are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

## **Data Protection**

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, information provided by you will be processed and stored to provide management information for recruitment and equal opportunities monitoring purposes. We will also use this information to form the basis of your personnel record if you are successful for the job. Otherwise we will not retain this information for any longer than it is needed and we would normally dispose of paper records after 6 months. You will have the right of access to any information held about you.

## **Suggestions**

We want all applicants to feel that they have been treated fairly, even if they are not appointed. If you have any comments or suggestions about the way in which this recruitment campaign has been handled, we would really like to hear from you.

## **Referees**

Please do not send references or testimonials with your form. If you are successful, we will approach previous and/or current employers for a reference. We can only make a formal offer of employment once we have received these references. If you have no employment history we may approach any school, college or university you have attended.

## **Health Assessment and Security Clearance**

If you are successful at interview you will be asked to complete a health assessment form. If necessary we may ask you to attend a medical assessment. Assessments are carried out by our occupational health supplier in the Parliament building. The reason why we carry out a health assessment is to make sure that the job you have applied for is suitable for you. It is also to find out if we need to carry out any adjustments to help you do the job.

Security clearance is required for this post. If you are successful we will ask you to complete a security questionnaire. This form will explain our security vetting policy. We can only make a formal offer of employment once the security clearance process is complete.

## **Visa and Work Permits**

There are no nationality restrictions on who the SPCB employs. You must however check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment in the United Kingdom before you apply for a post. If you are successful at interview we will make a complete enquiry into your eligibility to work in the United Kingdom.

**Please note that this document is provided for information only and does not form part of the SPCB's terms and conditions of employment.**

## **Equal Opportunities**

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and treatment and to eliminating unfair discrimination in its employment practices. It will seek to ensure that all job applicants and staff are treated fairly, with respect and without bias. No job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than others because of her or his: gender; gender identity; sexual orientation, marital or family status; racial group (includes colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origin), religion, religious belief, or a similar philosophical belief (or lack of any of these); disability (unless such treatment is objectively justified); part-time or fixed-term contract status (unless such treatment is objectively justified); and trade union membership status/activities.