

NISRA JOB PROFILES

Name: Paul Flynn

Primary degree: Economics and Politics (BA)

Year obtained: 2008

Post graduate degree (if applicable): Legislative Studies and Practice (MA)

Year obtained (if applicable): 2010

Previous post-university employment: I worked in the Student's Union at Queen's from 2008 until I began my postgrad in 2009. As part of my Masters I worked four days a week at the Assembly as part of the Research and Library branch. After that I worked in economic research, looking specifically at issues surrounding foreign direct investment, for the Financial Times.

Year of joining NISRA: 2013

Current grade: Assistant Statistician

Current branch: Research and Statistics

Current department: The Executive Office

What are you responsible for? Primarily I am responsible for providing statistical support to colleagues across the gender, older people, poverty and child poverty policy areas. This involves providing general advice and guidance and responding to ad hoc requests. I have also been involved in the designing, management and analysis of online consultation questionnaires for two different strategies. In addition, I am responsible for the production of a number of publications; annual statistical updates in both the gender and older people policy areas and the Labour Force Survey Religion Report – an annual National Statistics publication which provides information regarding the different labour market characteristics of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. Beyond that I have been involved in different ad hoc work, including work on performance metrics for the head of my directorate and providing feedback on the different external research projects our branch has commissioned.

What is a typical day's work like for you? My job varies quite a lot on a day to day basis, given the wide range of areas for which I am responsible. I could be, for example, working on one of my publications, gathering and collating data relating to one of my policy areas, designing consultation questionnaires or analysing the results, meeting with and providing advice to policy colleagues, or reading and providing comments and general feedback on a piece of commissioned research.

Which aspect of your job do you enjoy the most? I enjoy the variety and feel I have gained exposure to many different aspects of a statistician's work. I also enjoy the working atmosphere within my branch and have been extremely fortunate to have such friendly and helpful colleagues.

What do you see as your accomplishments since joining NISRA? I am pleased that the publications I have been responsible for, particularly the LFS Religion Report, were published without any major hiccups and have been well-received.

How would you like to see your career progressing? I still feel like I am finding my feet to an extent and learning every day. I am also really enjoying my role, so in the short to medium term I am very happy with where I am and want to continue to develop in this role, availing of any training and development opportunities that arise. Looking further ahead, obviously I would like to progress at some stage and I am confident that ample opportunity will arise to do so, whether that be through promotion or transfer to another role.

Would you recommend NISRA as a good place to work? Please provide a reason for the response given. Absolutely, I have thoroughly enjoyed my first nine months here and would recommend it to anyone. Although I enjoy working with data and producing statistics, I have also thoroughly enjoyed the more research aspects of my work. I think my post and associated responsibilities highlight just how varied and interesting a NISRA statistician's role can be, and this is something further reinforced by talking to other statisticians. I also feel appreciated and respected in the role, both by my fellow statisticians and among policy staff from within the wider Department, and this is something which adds to my job satisfaction. Beyond the work itself, I feel that the overall working conditions are great and this includes the flexible work arrangements and the different events and seminars that are available.