Operational Excellence Coach – Fixed Term for an initial period 3 years with the possibility of permanency (OEC/26)
Candidate Information Guide
(OEC/26)

Closing date for applications: 12 noon GMT on 14 December 2026

Invest NI is an Equal Opportunities Employer. At this time, we particularly welcome applications from people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups.

About Invest NI

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) is the economic development agency for Northern Ireland (NI) and is responsible for encouraging and supporting the establishment and growth of business enterprises and especially those with the potential to export. The agency is also responsible for promoting NI for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The organisation employs 650 staff, has an annual gross expenditure budget of approximately £150 million and manages a total client portfolio of more than 3000 companies. As a global organisation with a Head Office in Belfast and a regional presence across Northern Ireland, we also have offices in 29 locations outside Northern Ireland covering the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific.

Invest NI is moving into the final year of Our Future in Focus **Invest NI Business Strategy 2024-2027 (PDF)** which sets out ambitious targets structured around the following priorities: boosting business investment, accelerating innovation and skills, driving global ambition, developing and achieving sustainability, maximising City & Growth Deals and promoting places and partnerships.

Invest NI is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the **Department for the Economy (DfE).** A critical role for Invest NI is to deliver DfE's **Economic Vision**, the new **Business Strategy**, the **City & Growth Deals** and the recommendations of the **Independent Review of Invest NI.** For more information about Invest NI please visit our website, **www.investni.com.**

Our Vision

Our Vision to drive our long-term strategic response is:

"Invest NI is recognised as a leading economic development agency, instrumental in driving a globally competitive, regionally balanced, sustainable and prosperous Northern Ireland economy through unlocking the potential of businesses across the region".

Our Mission

Our Vision has been allied with our Mission Statement. Our mission statement defines the purpose and goals of the organisation. These are:

"To work with businesses to accelerate their growth by increasing external sales and innovation, creating good quality jobs, boosting productivity and skills, growing inward investment and reducing carbon emissions. "

Our Values

Our Values are at the heart of everything we do. They define how we operate, behave, and interact on a daily basis. Our core values are:



The Regional Business and Development Group

The Regional Business and Development Group comprises a number of individual Divisions with responsibility for delivering key activities for Invest NI, including our regional development agenda, regional property programme and working with businesses across Northern Ireland though our network of regional offices in Newry, Ballymena Omagh, Derry-Londonderry and Belfast.

The Group also has responsibility for promoting entrepreneurship, leading on the engagement with local councils on City & Growth Deals (C&GDs) to maximise the economic benefit of these investments, and establishing and leveraging strategic partnerships with key national and regional stakeholders to ensure that the overall operating environment (economic infrastructure, property, education and skills) is fit for purpose to support business growth across Northern Ireland.

In addition, the Group provide specialist services, programmes and advice to client companies in the following areas:

- Innovation Research and Development
- Skills, Leadership, Operational Excellence, Cluster Development and Supply Chain
- Sustainable Investment and Energy Efficiency

Overview of the Skills and Competitiveness Division

Invest NI's Skills & Competitiveness division provides support to companies to develop strategic leadership capability and access the skills and labour needed to enhance competitiveness and drive improved productivity in line with the region's economic ambitions.

We play an important role in Northern Ireland's skills and productivity ecosystem, collaborating with a range of stakeholders to drive forward the region's economic agenda, as well as working directly with Customers and Client Executives to determine company needs and develop tailored financial and non-financial solutions.

- Co-designing, delivering and promoting tailored and innovative leadership, skills, productivity and supply chain initiatives aligned to business need;
- Facilitating internal customer-facing teams to identify business skills and labour needs;
- Leveraging expertise to raise awareness of alternative pathways, including those offered by our partners across government;
- Collaborating with government partners on initiatives designed to deepen the local labour pool by mobilising the economically inactive and ensuring that those in the refugee community have access to appropriate employment opportunities.
- Capturing Future Skills and Labour Needs - informing and influencing Skills Barometer work; engagement with national/local Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs), and INI-facilitated skills networks;

Overview of the Operational Excellence Coach role

Reporting to the Operational Excellence Manager, the postholder will be a key member of the Operational Excellence team, supporting Invest NI client companies to improve productivity, competitiveness and operational performance through the practical application of Lean Thinking, Operational Excellence and Continuous Improvement approaches.

Job Description (Roles and Responsibilities)

Job title
Operational Excellence Coach

Team
Operational Excellence

Application deadline
12 noon GMT on 14 December 2026

Grade
Grade DP

Salary
The salary range for this position is **£47,304 - £49,515 (1st August 2025 pay scale)**. The entry point for the successful candidate will be at the minimum of the range.

Contract Type
Full-time, for an initial period of 3 years with the possibility of permanency. The successful appointee will be subject to a 9-month probationary period. At the end of this period, subject to satisfactory performance and attendance they will be confirmed in post. If their performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory the appointment may be terminated.

This competition will also be used to create a reserve list to fill any permanent and temporary vacancies requiring the same skill set which may arise in the 12 months following the competition.

Start Date
As soon as possible (depending on notice period).

Location
The post will be based at Invest NI's Headquarter in Bedford Square, Belfast.

Main purpose of the job
The postholder will provide coaching, facilitation, training and on-site support to help businesses address operational issues, apply improvement tools and deliver measurable business benefits. The role will also contribute to the development of team tools, materials and delivery approaches and to Invest NI's wider productivity and economic development objectives. Working with business leaders, managers, improvement champions and operational teams, the postholder will help identify opportunities, implement practical improvements and build sustainable capability.

Key Responsibilities include:
Working with staff at all levels in client companies, the postholder will support the development of practical improvement capability and help embed sustainable productivity improvements.

This will include:

- Supporting client companies to identify and understand operational constraints, productivity challenges and improvement opportunities through structured discussion, observation, diagnostics, analysis of relevant business information and practical advice.

- Facilitating the development and implementation of practical Operational Excellence, Lean and Continuous Improvement activities aligned to the client company's business objectives, performance priorities and available resources.

- Coaching and mentoring business leaders, managers, improvement champions and operational teams in the real-world application of Lean Thinking, Operational Excellence principles, tools and techniques.

- Facilitating end-to-end process thinking and helping client companies improve flow, quality, efficiency, customer value and ways of working.

- Supporting the design and delivery of training, workshops and practical learning activities to build in-company improvement capability and confidence.

- Helping client companies monitor progress and evidence quantifiable business benefits, including productivity, financial and wider operational impacts where appropriate.

- Building effective working relationships with client companies, Invest NI colleagues and relevant stakeholders to support productive engagement and joined-up delivery of services.

- Contributing to the ongoing improvement of Operational Excellence team tools, training materials, delivery methods, case examples and good practice.

This list is not exhaustive, and the successful applicant will be required to perform additional duties as allocated by management.

Selection Process

i) Selection Criteria

To be considered for the role, applicants must be able to demonstrate, by the closing date for applications, how they meet the following essential criteria, **using specific examples.**

Essential Criteria The following are **ESSENTIAL** criteria which will initially be measured at shortlisting stage although may also be further explored during the interview/selection stage. You should therefore make it clear on your application whether or not you meet these criteria. Failure to do so may result in you not being shortlisted. The stage in the process when the criteria will be measured is stated below		
Criterion		**Method of Assessment**
Experience & Knowledge	Recent experience of identifying operational constraints, productivity issues or improvement opportunities within a business and supporting practical actions to address them using Lean, Operational Excellence, Continuous Improvement or related improvement techniques that achieved significant quantifiable business results;	Application Form /Interview/Assessment
	Recent experience of supporting or facilitating improvement or change activity within an organisation including agreeing and planning actions, maintaining engagement, monitoring progress, managing expectations and supporting the successful delivery against timescales;	Interview/Assessment
	Recent experience of coaching, mentoring, facilitating or delivering training in Lean, Operational Excellence, Continuous Improvement or productivity improvement principles, tools and techniques within a business environment;	Application Form/Interview/Assessment
	Experience of gathering and analysing business or operational information to establish performance levels, support problem-solving and provide evidence of improvement outcomes:	Application Form /Interview/Assessment
Skills	Effective relationship management, communication and presentation skills, with proven ability to engage, influence and work constructively with customers, clients or stakeholders at different levels to achieve successful outcomes.	Interview/Assessment
General	A full driving licence and have use of a vehicle for business purposes **OR** have access to a form of transport which will permit travel throughout	Application Form

	Northern Ireland to meet the requirements of the post in full in a timely and effective manner.	

NB Recent has been defined as being within the last 8 years.

ii) Shortlisting

A shortlist of candidates for assessment and interview will be prepared on the basis of the information contained in the application form.

Responses in your application form should refer to specific examples that demonstrate how and to what extent you satisfy the essential criteria outlined. Only those applicants who, from the information supplied on the application form, most closely match the selection criteria for the post will be shortlisted.

Application forms which do not provide the necessary detailed information in relation to the knowledge, skills and criterion required will be rejected.

iii) Interview and Assessment

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the next stage of the selection process which will include an interview and assessment, scheduled to be held on 26 and 27 January 2027

The selection panel will assess applicants against the interview and assessment criteria as appropriate. The panel's decision at every stage of the selection process is final.

iv) Application Forms

Completed applications, demonstrating the experience and skills sought, must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer by the specified closing date.

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:

- Only completed applications on the application form will be accepted. CVs or any other supplementary material in addition to completed application forms will not be accepted.

- Applicants must complete the application form in Arial size 10 font, or block capitals using black ink.

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered or re-formatted and applicants must not exceed the space provided.

- Applicants submitting their completed application form electronically must ensure that it is sent via email as an attachment (either as a PDF or Microsoft Word document only). Forms sent via any other online method or converted into any other digital format, or which Invest NI deems unsafe to open, will not be accepted.

- Applications which are received after the closing date and time will not be accepted.

- Applicants should ensure they provide evidence of their experience on their application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.

- It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities. Invest NI will not make assumptions from the title of your post as to the skills and experience gained. It is vital that you highlight your specific role and contribution by using actual examples to illustrate your experience against the selection criteria.

- Artificial Intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn. Please see our candidate guidance, via the link below for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.

  Guidance on Artificial Intelligence and Recruitment.pdf

v) Appointment

If successful, you will be expected to take up the position as soon as possible. Should you decline an offer of appointment, you may not be offered any future posts to be filled from this competition.

- **References**

Your appointment is subject to receipt of two satisfactory references.

- **Before Starting**

Prior to taking up your duties, you will be asked to accept the main terms of your appointment in writing.

- **Eligibility to Work in the UK**

All applicants must be legally able to work and reside in the country of the vacancy with the correct visa/work permit status or demonstrate eligibility to obtain the relevant permit. Any costs related to obtaining or renewing permits and visas are the responsibility of the successful applicant.

- **Vetting Requirements**

Your appointment is also subject to a background check. Invest NI will organise a Criminal Record Check on successful candidates to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is Basic Disclosure Certificate. You should not put off applying for a post because you have a conviction, and any disclosure will be seen in the context of the job role, the nature of the offence and the responsibility for the care of existing clients and employees. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner and in accordance with our Privacy Standard. Information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

More information can be found on http://www.accessni.gov.uk/. If you are being considered for appointment, you will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form for a Basic Disclosure Certificate. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment. Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978. A copy of Invest NI's Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders is available upon request.

Canvassing
Canvassing in any form is not allowed at any stage of the process.

Benefits of employment

Invest NI is committed to creating a better workplace for its staff. Working for Invest NI brings a range of benefits that you can take advantage of.

Pension
We offer all employees access to an attractive pension scheme. Full details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/civil-service-pensions-ni.

Holidays
25 days per annum, increasing to 30 days after 5 years [], with an additional 12 Public and Privilege holidays. The leave year runs from 1st February to 31st January. Leave entitlement in the period prior to the start of the new leave year is calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Flexible Working Hours
The standard working hours are 37 per week, Monday to Friday. Employees will be required from time to time to work outside normal working hours to fulfil the demands of the role. Invest NI operates a flexible working scheme. Staff may work flexibly from 7.30am to 7.00pm with a minimum of half an hour for lunch. At management discretion and without adversely affecting the overall efficiency of Invest NI, staff who have built up enough hours each month can take up to a maximum of 3 flexible working days.

Family
Family-friendly policies are essential for supporting employees with caregiving responsibilities and promoting work-life balance.

Remote Working
We offer hybrid working for most roles with a combination of in-office and remote work, offering greater flexibility.

Wellness and Inclusion
We have a variety of vibrant Employee Connection Groups as part of our commitment to Diversity & Inclusion including The Professional Women's Network and LGBTQ+.

Invest NI promotes positive health and wellbeing through regular events and initiatives throughout the year with access to wellness programs that support mental and physical well-being.

Counselling and support for employees via an **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** and access to a Welfare Support Service providing an individual and confidential service to staff and managers at all levels.

Community
A Sports and Social Committee organise events for Invest NI staff and their guests.

Last year we surpassed our charity target of £30k! Our new Corporate charity partner is Cancer Fund for Children and you can get involved in events and Invest NI initiatives to help raise money to support their work.

Learning and Development
Invest NI is committed to supporting staff to reach their full potential. We actively develop staff and invest significantly in training and development for business success and personal growth. This includes on-the-job training, external training and, where appropriate, further education.

Additional Information

Travel
It is not Invest NI's policy to pay travel expenses to any candidate attending interview unless their journey is from outside Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. For these candidates, expenses will be payable only for flight or ferry crossings to a maximum of £100, on presentation of valid receipts, and only for attendance at final interviews.

No accommodation or relocation expenses are payable in connection with this position.

Conflicts of Interest
Applicants must note the requirement to declare areas of actual, potential or perceived conflict with the interests of Invest NI. You will be required to make such declarations upon offer of employment and annually thereafter for Invest NI's consideration. You will be required to abide by the rules adopted by Invest NI in relation to private interest and possible conflict with public duty; the disclosure of official information; and political activities.

No Smoking Policy
Invest NI operates a no smoking policy in all its offices.

Interview Guidance
Interview guidance is available by clicking the link below:
invest-northern-ireland-Interview-guidance.pdf (investni.com)

Data Protection
The Invest NI Privacy Notice is available at:
Invest Northern Ireland - Privacy Notice for Job Applicants (PDF) (investni.com)

Equality of Opportunity
We are an Equal Opportunities Employer. We do not discriminate against our job applicants or employees, and we aim to select the best person for the job. To help ensure that we are meeting our Equality of Opportunity obligations, we monitor the **community background and sex of our job applicants and employees** in order to demonstrate our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity in employment and to comply with our duties under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

Regardless of whether they actually practice religion, most people in Northern Ireland are perceived to be members of either the Protestant or Roman Catholic communities. On the form you will be asked to indicate the community to which you belong to. If you do not answer the question about Community Background, or if you tick the "not a member of either" box, we are required by the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998 to use the residuary method of making a determination which means that we can make a determination as to your community background on the basis of the personal information supplied by you in your application form/personnel file.

Your answers will be used by us to prepare and submit a monitoring return to the Equality Commission, but your identity will be kept anonymous. In all other regards your answers will be treated with the strictest confidence. We assure you that your answers will not be used by us to make any decisions affecting you, whether in a recruitment exercise or during the course of any employment with us.

We also ask you to provide additional data about yourself which we use to help us assess whether any of our policies, procedures or activities are operating to the detriment of any particular grouping within our diverse society.

Whilst you are not obliged to answer the questions on the Monitoring Form and you will not suffer any penalty if you choose not to do so, we encourage you to answer the questions. **Whether or not you choose to complete it, the Monitoring Form included with your application form is regarded as part of your application and should be returned**. If you answer the questionnaire you are obliged to do so truthfully as it is a criminal offence under the Fair Employment (Monitoring) Regulations (NI) 1999 to knowingly give false answers to these questions.

The monitoring form will not be available to the selection panel. It will be separated from the application form by the monitoring officer and transferred to a computer-based monitoring system. There it will be protected, access restricted and used strictly in line with our Privacy Notice.

You can read our Equal Opportunity Statement by clicking on the link below:
Equality of Opportunity.pdf (investni.com)