

Introduction

This Guide is intended to help you understand job evaluation and the reasons why the University of Southampton adopts the Hay Scheme of job evaluation. It is not intended as a comprehensive manual of the Hay system but instead, it explains what sort of factors are taken into account in arriving at an evaluated grade for a job. In all cases, any commentary provided in this guidance is superseded by the for Hay Scheme methodology.

What is job evaluation?

Job evaluation is a practical technique designed to enable trained and experienced evaluators to judge the size of one job relative to another. It is used by the University to deliver a systematic 'ranking' of its jobs by using a set of rules that determines the comparative complexity and the importance of contribution of a job to the University and its purpose.

Using the Hay system of job evaluation provides a framework which enables the University's Job Evaluation Panel to make a reasoned judgement about a job's contribution relative to other (different) jobs across the service/department/faculty and University.

Jobs are designed to enable them to be undertaken and delivered competently; the evaluation process therefore assumes that the job is being done to a competent level. Jobs are evaluated on what they are now, not what they were in the past or what they might become in the future.

Job evaluation is therefore, comparative, judgmental, logical and most importantly, job-centric. It is not, absolute, unstructured, scientific or person-centric. Job evaluation does not take account of the performance of the postholder; that is a separate matter.

Fundamentally, job evaluation is a means to;

- Establish the appropriate rank of jobs (or job families) within the University;
- Establish the relative distance between jobs within the ranking;
- Provide a systematic measurement of job size relative to other posts to enable salary comparisons to be made.

The University is then able to use the outcome of job evaluation to;

- assess comparability with market pay data;
- assess equity of pay (i.e. of 'like work' or for 'work of equal value');
- provide a foundation for performance and qualification expectations;
- develop an understanding of career development opportunities and expectations;
- define the job accountabilities of individual roles across the University's hierarchy; and
- understand the links between individual job accountabilities and University strategy.

Job Evaluation is not a remuneration package. Job evaluation measures the size of a job relative to others. The question of its value in monetary terms is determined by the University's salary structure (a decision for line management, not Hay or the Job Evaluation Panel).

The Hay system

The Hay system is a well tried and tested Job Evaluation schemes across the Higher Education Sector, including other Russell Group Universities. The Hay scheme measures the size of a job in 'job units' - i.e. the score for the job. This is matched against the University's pay spine to determine the job grade.

There are three basic factors of job content common to all jobs. These are;

- KNOW-HOW - Is the sum of every kind of knowledge, skill and experience (however acquired) which the jobholder requires for acceptable job performance.
- PROBLEM SOLVING - The level of complexity of thinking involved when the jobholder applies KNOW-HOW to get the job done.
- ACCOUNTABILITY - The impact of the job and the limitations placed upon the jobholder to take independent action.

The three factors are then broken down into the following sub-elements;

- KNOW-HOW
 - Depth and Breadth of Technical Know-How
 - Planning, Organising and Controlling
 - Communication / Influencing
- PROBLEM SOLVING
 - Thinking Environment
 - Thinking Challenge
- ACCOUNTABILITY
 - Freedom to Act
 - Area and Nature of impact.

A numerical score is determined for each of these sub-elements and added together to produce a total score for the job, which is then mapped to the appropriate range on the University's pay spine.

The total evaluation of a job answers the question "how big is this job?" The distribution of points between Know-How, Problem Solving and Accountability gives an idea of the shape or profile of the job. In other words, it answers the question, "what sort of job is this?" Is the job an essentially thinking job (i.e. emphasis on Problem-Solving), or is the emphasis on Action (i.e. Accountability), or is the balance about equal. If the shape of a job, expressed by its profile, appears odd, it will prompt a reconsideration of the evaluation. It is for this reason that the elements in a job of Planning, Organising and Controlling and Freedom to Act tend to increase with seniority.

Quality controls

There are a number of features and in-built checks in the Hay system job evaluation that are aimed at both maintaining the integrity of the scheme and achieving consistent evaluation results.

The Job Evaluation Panel will apply these validity checks to all jobs submitted for job evaluation. Where the checks indicate that some element may be questionable, the Panel will re-evaluate the job. If the panel cannot resolve the query themselves, the job description will be 'rejected' and returned to the submitting line manager and HR Business Partner to re-consider the job content alongside any feedback provided by the Panel.

Summary

Members of the University's Job Evaluation Panel have been drawn from across HR and with input invited from the trades unions. All members of the panel have been trained by Hay Consultants and have had practical experience of operating the scheme. The training and experience, together with quality assurance checks, enables Panel members to make sound and consistent judgements on the grading of individual jobs.

As mentioned earlier, job evaluation is concerned with ranking jobs in terms of their size. The level of salary paid for these same jobs is an entirely separate matter, determined by local line management teams.

The probability is that the Hay evaluation system will operate in the University for many years to come. Under this system, the grading of all jobs will be dealt with centrally through the University's Job Evaluation Panel. The expectation is that employees will see greater fairness, transparency, discipline and order in the system for evaluating jobs.

Disclaimer

While every effort is taken to ensure that the advice provided here and by HR colleagues (including the Job Evaluation Panel) is accurate and up to date, it does not guarantee that you could successfully defend an equal pay claim. Only the courts or tribunals can give authoritative interpretations of the law.