

West Lothian Council

Job Evaluation – Managers Guide

Introduction

Job evaluation is the process through which jobs are systematically assessed. This information is then used to identify the appropriate grade for the job.

Requests for evaluation are made by managers and should be in accordance with the business and budgetary requirements of the service and agreed as part of the workforce planning process.

Job evaluation:

- evaluates the job and not the person doing it
- considers the demands of the job, it does not consider the total volume of work, the number of people required to do it, or the ability of the job holder
- assumes that the job is being performed to an acceptable standard
- evaluates the job as it is now, not how it was done previously or may be done in the future.

Process

The job evaluation process consists of the following stages:

- preparing and submitting the paperwork
- job evaluation panel
- formal approval

Preparing and Submitting the Paperwork

There are two forms which need to be completed:

- [Job Evaluation Request Form](#)
- [Job Evaluation Questionnaire](#)

Job Evaluation Request Form

This short form provides background information on the post: Is it a new post or a post that has changed significantly? What are the main responsibilities of the new post or what changes have there been to an existing post? What benefits will this post bring to the council? How will it be funded? Any other information that you feel would be relevant.

Where an existing post is being submitted for an evaluation it is important that the paperwork makes clear where there are differences to the existing responsibility levels of the post, an increase in the volume of work in and of itself is not a reason for a post to be evaluated.

Prior to the post being evaluated the request form must be signed off by the appropriate Depute Chief Executive and the Chief Executive. No post will be considered by the grading panel unless the form has been signed.

In the case of an existing post which has been evaluated, where the grade of the post is changed the new grade will only be applied from the date the request form was signed by the Chief Executive.

Structure Chart – detailing where this new post sits in the structure, with reporting lines clearly shown. If the post is part of a service restructure, the previous structure chart should also be provided.

Posts cannot be fully evaluated without clear and concise evidence of the responsibilities of the role. Where this is has not been provided the job evaluation panel may withhold the release of the grading assessment and request additional evidence or clarification of the responsibilities of the post.

Job Evaluation Questionnaire

The information contained in the grading questionnaire is used by the panel to determine the appropriate factor level which in turn provides a factor score, and it is this information which is used to determine the grade of the post.

Posts are assessed under 13 Factors. The 13 factors have been designed to cover the main elements or characteristics of a range of jobs. The factor levels assess different types of job demand from least to most demanding.

Within the scheme general guidance on each factor is provided at the start of each factor level. The guidance will also provide illustrative examples in relation to the job demand, “eliciting or explaining information” e.g. a Housing Officer explaining policy to tenants and will give more information on the meaning of key words used in the level definitions.

When analysing the job demands the following information is taken into account:

- The nature of the demand – is it mental, physical, knowledge etc
- To what degree is the demand required – basic level or highly skilled
- The frequency of the demand – is it regularly – rarely
- The duration of the demand – how long

When completing the paperwork it is not sufficient to simply lift phrases from the scheme, e.g. “the highest concentration required by the job, on a day to day basis, is, lengthy periods of focussed mental or sensory attention and a high degree of work related pressure”. Examples should be provided of the tasks, responsibilities associated with the particular factor, the examples should be typical for the post and not just the most extreme examples. It is the quality rather than the quantity of examples that is important.

Not all factors are relevant for all posts, if a factor is not relevant to the post write Not Applicable. Where this is the case the factor will be evaluated at level one.

To be assessed at a particular factor level it is assumed that the post incorporates all previous factor levels.

To ensure that the grading questionnaire includes all relevant information, it should be completed with reference to the [Scottish Councils Job Evaluation Scheme](#). The scheme provides detailed guidance in relation to each of the 13 Factors.

13 Factors

The bullet points with each factor are not an exhaustive list, but rather provide guidance as to the type of information that should be supplied.

1 Working Environment – This factor considers the physical environment in which the job is carried out.

- Where does the post holder work – mainly indoors/outdoors
- What is the environment like – clean, noisy, dirty, dangerous
- Does the post holder have to wear protective equipment to do their job

The factor ranges from unpleasant – very hazardous. The emphasis is on the level of “unpleasantness”, this is affected by the frequency, intensity and length of exposure to the unpleasant – very hazardous condition. It is important that consideration is given to whether or not the postholder will work predominantly indoors or outdoors and the % of working time that the post holder will be exposed to the condition.

2 Physical Co-ordination – This factor considers the physical skills and co-ordination required to do the job during a normal working day.

- Is the postholder required to use any tools or equipment
- Are they required to drive or use a keyboard
- Do they need to be manually dexterous
- Is there a need for speed and precision as part of the post – to what extent
- Does the job require hand eye co –ordination skills – to what extent

The factor considers the need for speed or accuracy to undertake the task this is related to the task and not how well the individual performs.

3 Physical Effort – This factor considers the type, amount, continuity and frequency of the physical effort required to do the job. Physical effort covers stamina as well as strength. It is the effort required for the task and not the physical strength of the individual that is being evaluated.

- Is the postholder required to lift, carry or move heavy objects as part of their normal working day

- Will they be working in awkward, cramped or confined positions

Physical effort is evaluated under two aspects, the demand on the postholder in terms of the nature and amount of physical effort and then the frequency and duration of that effort. The greatest demand is evaluated first and will usually be required less frequently and for a shorter duration. Whilst the main physical demands of the job will be more frequent. No job would involve heavy lifting for the entire duration of the working day. There is a balance between the amount of effort required and the duration of that effort.

For posts which are office based this would usually be assessed at Level 1.

- 4 Mental Skills** – This factor considers the thinking required in the post. It includes problem solving, options appraisal, strategic thinking. It does not consider concentration this is evaluated under a separate factor. Planning relates to the planning that is the personal responsibility of the job holder or their level of contribution to the planning activity and also the duration of the plan.

Mental skills are evaluated under three separate areas: problem solving, planning and then the planning timescale – short/medium/long term

- Does the postholder work to a set plan with routine tasks
- What, if anything, does the postholder plan and organise
- How complex is the planning – how many different considerations need to be taken into account, will this planning influence the direction of the organisation
- Will the postholder plan, prioritise and organise their own workload
- Are they required to provide input to longer term planning/strategic planning
- What sort of typical problems will the postholder have to resolve
- Will the postholder have to generate new or creative approaches, rather than relying on tried and tested approaches

- 5 Concentration** – This factor considers the highest or most demanding level of concentration typically required on a day to day basis, considers anything that may make concentration difficult e.g. repetitive work, the need to switch between tasks, or interruptions. Consideration is given to the need for uninterrupted concentration and the timescale involved – short/medium/long.

- Is the job subject to interruptions, do they have to be dealt with straight away
- Can the postholder determine their own priorities or are they predetermined
- What sort of pressure, if any, will the postholder be exposed to
- What aspect of the post will require the most concentration

- 6 Communication Skills** – This factor considers the requirement for spoken and written communication during the normal working day. The factor covers the purpose of the communication, the complexity of the information and the intended audience.

- What sort of information is exchanged and why

- What level of understanding does the audience have
- Does the information require careful explanation, clarification or interpretation to help others understand
- Will they need skills to persuade/influence others, rather than simply providing information
- Are they communicating in another language
- Will they have to deliver formal presentations

This factor only considers communication with others, not work colleagues.

Providing instruction, guidance or on the job training to employees is considered under Responsibility for Employees.

7 Dealing with Relationships – This factor considers the demands on the job holder that come from the circumstances and/or behaviour of those they come into contact with during their normal working day. It covers the interpersonal skills needed to deal with and/or care for other people who are upset, unwell, difficult, angry, frail or are at risk of abuse.

- Is the postholder approached by others for help
- What are the typical issues/problems
- Is the postholder able to refer the individual on

The % of time that the postholder would deal with demanding people is also considered when identifying the appropriate factor score.

This factor does not take into account dealings with immediate work contacts.

8 Responsibility for Employees – This factor considers the nature of the responsibility rather than the number of employees being supervised. The definition of supervision is extended to include; contractors, volunteers, work experience students etc. It includes responsibilities for work allocation, planning/checking the work of others, providing direction, motivation, leadership and involvement in implementing HR policies.

- Will the postholder achieve most of their accountabilities through others
- Will they be required to supervise/manage employees
- Is the postholder responsible for taking disciplinary action – up to what level

When considering the appropriate factor score the type, extent and scope of responsibility are taken into account. The frequency of the demand is also considered is it occasional – happens no more than twelve times a year or on a more regular basis.

9 Responsibility for Services to Others – This factor considers the postholder's responsibility to others in terms of the quality and delivery of service provision.

- What service does the postholder provide and to whom
- Is there a standard service that is the same for all customers
- Is the postholder responsible for assessing the needs of customers

- Are they responsible for ensuring contract compliance
- Are they required to enforce regulations
- What is their level of accountability

It covers responsibilities for the provision of physical, mental, social, economic, business and environmental services, including health and safety. It also takes into account the nature of the responsibility and the extent of their impact on individuals or group, e.g. providing personal assistance, applying/implementing or enforcing regulations or designing, developing, implementing and/or improving services/processes.

10 Responsibility for Financial Resources – This factor considers the range of both direct and indirect responsibilities, from handling cash/cheques to processing invoices to accounting – managing, setting, controlling budgets.

The factor considers the nature of the responsibility, e.g. accuracy, processing, checking, monitoring, accounting, auditing, budgeting, financial planning. The factor takes into account the extent to which the job holder contributes to the overall responsibility, rather than solely considering the monetary amount.

- Is the postholder responsible for handling cash – how much?
- Does the postholder manage or control a budget?
- Can they authorise PECOS orders, up to what value
- Are they involved in setting the budget?

It is also important that information is provided on the amount of financial resource that the postholder will be responsible for, in terms of the scheme this ranges from small to considerable. The scheme provides further information on the definition of the monetary amount. Staff costs should also be included as part of the total budgetary figures.

11 Responsibility for Physical and Information Resources – This factor considers responsibility on two levels, the primary and then the secondary responsibility. It does not take into account people as this is covered under either Responsibility for Employees or Services to Others.

- Is the postholder responsible for equipment – what is the nature of this responsibility
- Are they responsible for maintenance of equipment – to what level – daily check, routine or full maintenance
- Are they a nominated key holder
- What is the value of the equipment they are responsible for
- Do they have responsibility for managing information
- Do they have responsibility for filing systems - inputting, managing or developing the systems – is this at a team, service, function or corporate level
- Do they have authorisation to order stocks/supplies

The factor also considers the monetary value of any equipment the postholder is responsible for ranging from moderate – very expensive.

12 Initiative and Independence – This factor considers the problems that the postholder must deal with during a normal working day, the level of decision they are authorised to take and the extent to which advice and guidance is readily available.

- Will they deal with routine problems are there established work routines
- Are clear guidelines available, if x then y
- Are they able to exercise discretion, to what extent
- What sort of issue would they be expected to refer upwards
- How much autonomy will they have
- Are they subject to close supervision or general management direction
- Will they required to contribute to the development of policy/strategy

It does not consider the knowledge required, the complexity of the post, nor does it consider work related pressure these are all considered under other factors.

13 Knowledge – This factor considers what the postholder needs to know to do the job. Knowledge can be acquired through qualification, on the job training or experience. It also considers the knowledge of the external environment and involvement in working groups. If a qualification is specified it must be a fundamental aspect of the post and the job could not be done without the qualification, experience can be considered as an equivalency to qualifications.

- Is a qualification required for the post, if so at what level –VQ, HNC, Degree
- How long before someone would be considered to be fully competent
- Does the post require specialist knowledge, if so what and at what level

Knowledge is considered under three areas

1. Nature – is it practical (driving, swimming, cooking), technical (operation, maintenance design of plant/equipment), specialist (knowledge of a particular discipline), procedural (apply and interpret procedures), clerical, administrative
2. Extent – breadth and depth of knowledge required. Similar tasks (typing letters, inputting information into a database), different (driving, digging and cable laying, typing, filing and operating switchboard), range (drafting correspondence, checking work, attending meetings)
3. Acquisition – how the knowledge is acquired. Attending in house courses, on or off the job, vocational, professional qualification, post graduate qualification

Job Evaluation Panel

The purpose of the panel is to determine the appropriate grade for the post, the panel will consist of a minimum of 3 people, one of whom is the panel chair. When reaching their decision the panel will examine the information provided on the grading questionnaire, managers are often asked to attend the panel to answer any questions and provide more information on the post.

The decision of the panel in relation to the grade of the post is reached by consensus and is not a majority decision.

Formal Approval

After the panel the manager will be informed in writing of the assessed grade for the post, the panel chair will then arrange for the panel decision to be signed off by the HR Services Manager, relevant Head of Service, Depute Chief Executive and Chief Executive. Only after the decision has been signed off can the post be advertised or any contractual changes actioned.

Conclusion

It is important the grading questionnaire is completed fully and accurately and that practical work based examples are given to provide further evidence in relation to the duties and responsibilities of the post.

For further information please refer to MyToolkit, or contact a member of the workforce management team.