

Forestry Commission Equality Impact Assessment Publishing Template

Name of policy, function or service

Forestry Commission Grading Guidance

Purpose and aim(s) of the policy, function or service

The main aim of the Grading Guidance is to maintain the integrity of the Forestry Commission's grading structure by providing detailed guidance to managers and staff to ensure that jobs are consistently graded across the organisation.

The Forestry Commission's Grading Guidance has been developed to determine the criteria for jobs at different Pay Band levels and applies to all job types below Senior Staff Group. The Forestry Commission has 7 Pay Band levels below the Senior Staff Group and there are approximately 770 job titles within the 7 Pay band levels. The Grading Guidance supports managers when they are assessing the grading of an existing job, redesigned job or a new job.

The Grading Guidance is a subjective assessment of the "value" of a job when compared against agreed criteria, known as factors in job evaluation terms. The Grading Guidance does not assess people. The "value" of a job is assessed by comparing the different aspects of a job against the job evaluation factors. Some examples of the factors are, decision making, autonomy, problem solving and professional skill or qualification demanded of the job. The job holder's level of performance in the job is not considered as part of the assessment of that job.

The Grading Guidance is not the only way that the Pay Band of a job can be changed. Senior Managers can request a formal job evaluation exercise to inform their decision.

Job holders of jobs that have been re-graded by a formal job evaluation exercise will automatically be promoted, as long as they are performing at Good Performer or higher in that job.

Who will benefit mainly from this policy, function or service?

The Grading Guidance is intended to support managers in the first instance but is available for all employees for reference.

The organisation and its staff benefit from the use of a fair and universal grading system which underpins the pay structure.

Information and Data (evidence) used

The current Forestry Commission Grading system has been in use since 1 July 2000 when the organisation amalgamated its industrial and non-industrial workforces. The grading system has been specifically designed for FC jobs in consultation with the Cabinet Office, Towers Perrin and the Trade Union. The job evaluation factors used for scoring jobs in the FC are : Knowledge and Skills; Contacts and Communications; Problem Solving; Decision Making; Autonomy; Management of Resources, Impact, Physical Demands and Working Environment.

The criteria for jobs in Pay Bands 1-7 have been reviewed in relation to 4 of the 6 strands of diversity. One of the criteria reviewed was the requirement for certain lengths of experience or a particular qualification required for specific jobs. In some instances there is a requirement to hold a specific professional qualification. Examples of jobs that require professional qualifications include internal audit jobs and management accountant jobs. In other instances the relevance was not found to be necessary to the job.

As the emphasis is on the Job and not on the individual occupying the job, data on the job occupants is not relevant.

The criteria for physical and mental demands have been reviewed in light of disability and exist only where there is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for that level of physical or mental capacity.

However, some grading exercises are called for as a result of restructuring or the creation of new posts in response to business needs. As the business is in constant development, there will be more emphasis on some Pay Bands than on others at certain times in response to business needs.

Summary of Impact

The Grading Guidance is intended to maintain consistency of approach in grading jobs across the organisation for jobs below the Senior Staff Group.

As a result of reviewing the knowledge and skills required for jobs in Pay Bands 1 – 7, the descriptions for Pay Bands 1 – 7 have been updated to ensure that the requirements for each pay band level are not discriminatory in terms of number of years experience required.

The FC is also satisfied that the support from line managers and JEGS practitioners to job holders during form completion and/or during the interview process is sufficient to enable job holders to overcome any learning, literacy or mental health difficulties.

Monitoring/Evaluation

The Grading Guidance is reviewed and updated annually. Monitoring of feedback will contribute to each review; next review is due April 2011.