

## NAEO December article

### **Eight factors to highlight when negotiating a salary review**

As part of our aim of raising the profile and status of the exams officer role, the NAEO encourages all exams officers to ensure that there is a regular review and negotiation of their salary. All exams officers should regularly review and negotiate their salary to ensure that it reflects their skills and experience, and the significance of the role which they perform within their centre.

In this article we consider the factors which an exams officer should emphasise during any discussion relating to their salary. These include:

- Comparison to other roles within your centre
- Significance of the exams officer role
- Exams Officer Professional Standards
- National exams officer pay levels
- Additional roles and responsibilities
- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Areas of responsibility

This article is also available in PDF format with the inclusion of the NAEO logo to allow exams officers to share this with their senior leader/line manager as part of a salary review meeting.

### **Role comparison**

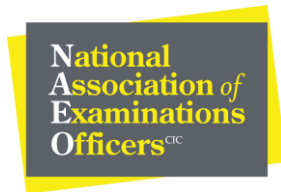
A key element of any salary review/negotiation is to provide evidence that the exams officer role is not purely an administrative role and that it is on a par with other significant roles such as Business Manager, Data Protection Officer, Finance Manager, Safeguarding Lead and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The average annual salaries for these roles as stated by [Indeed](#) are:

- Data Protection Officer: £50,862
- Business Manager: £39,662
- Finance Officer: £28,967
- Safeguarding Officer: £27,962 (see [Talent.com](#))

### **Significance of the exams officer role**

During a salary review/negotiation an exams officer must prove that they possess a deep technical knowledge and understanding of how examinations are managed, administered and conducted, and the range of skills which they must possess to perform the role effectively. The individual(s) who will decide upon your salary must be made aware of the significance of your role and that you are the individual who ensures that integrity and security of the examination system is maintained within your centre which includes the completion of key tasks to JQC and awarding body deadlines. It must also be emphasised that it is the exams officer who protects the centre – and the head of centre - against instances of malpractice and maladministration.

### **Exams Officer Professional Standards**



Evidence of achievement of the Exams Officer Professional Standards should be used during a salary review/negotiation as evidence of professional development to acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding to undertake the exams officer role.

The Standards also prove a commitment to display the values and attributes which are required to maintain the integrity and security of the examination system within your centre. This is a key area of responsibility for all exams officers.

### National pay levels

Below are the national pay levels as identified in [NAEO's annual exams officer surveys](#) since 2020.

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
£14,999 or less	2.3%	2.6%	3.0%	2.8%	1.6%
£15,000 - £19,999	2.2%	3.7%	6.3%	7.4%	10.6%
£20,000 - £24,999	14.8%	21.8%	32.8%	37.6%	37.5%
£25,000 - £29,999	32.0%	35.3%	33.9%	32.8%	30.1%
£30,000 - £34,999	30.4%	24.3%	17.1%	14.1%	14.7%
£35,000+	18.2%	12.3%	6.9%	5.2%	5.5%

The figures reveal several interesting trends/statistics which exams officers should take into account when negotiating a pay review:

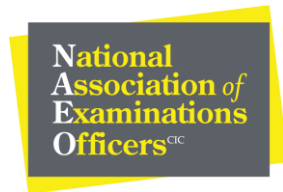
- Exams officer salaries have increased since 2020. This should be highlighted to senior leadership teams to support any case for an increase in pay
- 8 in 10 exams officers earn over £25,000
- Half of all exams officers earn over £30,000

Exams officers should note that the most common salary range is between £25,000 and £29,999, and if an exams officer is receiving less than this amount, this should be the starting point during any discussion over remuneration. Exams officers who are employed in larger schools/colleges where a wide range of qualifications are delivered to a significant number of students, and those who undertake an additional role within their centre, should expect salary negotiations to begin at a level in excess of £30,000.

### Additional roles and responsibilities

If you are one of the 51.3% of exams officers who undertakes another role in addition to serving as exams officer at your centre, this should be taken into account during a pay review.

The section on *National pay levels* above should be used as an indicator when considering salary levels with the higher levels more appropriate for those undertaking an additional role. Ahead of any review meeting, exams officers should research the salary associated with the additional role. The



following websites provide average salary checker tools which reveal the payments received for some of the most common additional roles undertaken by exams officers:

- [Glassdoor](#) – Data Manager average base salary is £40,000 pa
- [Reed](#) – General Administrator average salary is £31,841, [Indeed](#) state the average salary as £23,786 pa
- [Reed](#) – Cover supervisor average salary is £30,424 pa
- [Indeed](#) – PA to the CEO/Headteacher average salary is £29,909 pa

## **Knowledge and understanding**

### Key stakeholder information

Exams officers are required to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Department for Education's policy decisions in relation to examinations/assessments, Ofqual requirements, JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) regulations and awarding body processes.

Exams officers must have an awareness of JCQ regulations in the following documents:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres
- Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE)
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (where the exam officer is involved in the rooming, seating, timetabling and invigilation of candidates requiring access arrangements)
- Suspected Malpractice: Procedures and Policies
- A guide to the special consideration process
- Post-Results Services
- Appeals (A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes)

The contents of the documents listed above are reviewed on an annual basis, and may be updated, which requires exams officers to update their knowledge and understanding of these regulations on an annual basis.

### Qualifications

Exams officers must have a thorough knowledge of the structure of all qualifications delivered within their centre. They must be aware of the type of assessment associated with each qualification which may include:

- Timetabled written exams
- Exams/assessments held in a 'window' of dates
- On-demand exams
- On-screen tests
- Listening exams
- Speaking tests
- Practicals and performances
- Non-exam assessment (NEA)/Coursework

### Management Information System (MIS)

Exams officers must have a deep technical knowledge of their centre's management information system. However, over the last decade, this has become an additional task/challenge for many exams officers as centres are increasingly changing their MIS provider. Whereas a decade or so ago, one MIS provider supported the majority of centres, there are now four major MIS providers:

- ESS (SIMS, Unit-e): 42.2% market share
- Arbor: 18.2%
- Bromcom: 16.8%
- iSAMS: 9.4%

### **Skills**

To perform as an effective exams officer and to perform specific tasks and/or meet key deadlines, you must possess a range of skills, these include:

- Time management
- People management
- Contingency planning/risk management
- Prioritising tasks/workload/multitasking
- Problem solving
- Communication skills
- Handling difficult conversations
- Presentation skills
- Managing deadlines
- Working collaboratively

Evidence of the skills which you have acquired/developed further over the current appraisal/performance management year should be presented during a salary review/negotiation.

### **Areas of responsibility**

#### People/Line management

Exams officers should emphasise the role they play in managing the recruitment, training, deployment and evaluation of invigilators and ensuring that a process is in place to rigorously test their invigilators' competence and understanding of JCQ regulations.

#### Workload management

In some centres, there is still a misunderstanding of the scale of the exams officer role. We are still receiving reports of exams officers being asked 'what do you do when exams are not taking place?' and 'You can put your feet up now that there are no exams taking place'.

This lack of understanding not only has a negative impact upon the raising of the profile and status of the role but could also adversely affect any discussions and negotiations over pay.

Therefore, exams officers should stress the significance and scale of the role. This includes highlighting the:

- Number of qualifications taken within their centre

- Number of candidates managed each academic year
- Number of exam series each academic year
- Mock exams/Resilience measures
- Completion of key tasks and deadlines for each exam series
- Creation and annual review/update of exam-related policies

The financial penalty, impact upon candidates, and malpractice implications of not meeting deadlines should also be emphasised.

### Budget

Exams officers are responsible for one of the largest budgets within the centre when dealing with examination entry fees. An exams officer can also help in preventing/minimising unnecessary late entry or other penalty fees.

### Stakeholder engagement (internal and external)

Exams officers are required to engage with a range of external and internal stakeholders. Apart from the head of centre and members of the senior leadership team, it is unlikely that any other member of staff will engage with external stakeholders which include:

- Department for Education
- Ofqual
- Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)
- Awarding bodies
- Management Information System provider
- National Association of Examinations Officers
- The Exams Office

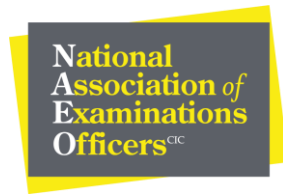
...and internal stakeholders which include:

- Head of centre
- Senior leadership team
- Heads of year
- Heads of department
- Head of Special Education Needs/Co-ordinator
- Teaching staff
- Teaching assistants/Learning Support Assistants
- Invigilators
- Site staff
- Reception staff

...and, of course, you will also be dealing with candidates and their parents/carers.

### **Conclusion**

Although salaries have been increasing in recent years, exams officers should still strive to acquire a salary which reflects the scale and significance of their role.



Exams officers should take the time to research the areas detailed in this article and gather evidence which should be used during any discussions within their centre. However, the role and responsibilities undertaken by the exams officer in enabling candidates to sit their examinations in the best possible conditions in line with JCQ regulations should also be emphasised and how this supports candidates in achieving their academic potential.

In recent years, with the support of JCQ and the major awarding bodies, the NAEO has made good progress in achieving our aim of raising the profile and status of the exams officer role. However, whilst we strive for national pay agreements/negotiations, it is the responsibility of individual exams officers to ensure that their salary is regularly reviewed, and to use this negotiation as an opportunity to obtain remuneration which reflects the significance of their role and their value to their centre.

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