An approach to
National Job Grading
towards equal pay in
Higher Education

AUT

An approach to
National Job Grading
towards equal pay in
Higher Education

AUT

AUT
Overview

Higher education has become an increasingly visible area of the UK culture and economy. The pressure to produce, develop, and expand, both individually and at an organisational level, has never been greater. At the same time, the Government's attention has turned to matters of equality over pay in the public sector, a focus welcomed by all partners in higher education (HE). It is a chance for employment practices to be reassessed, and inequality in pay and progression finally addressed in a groundbreaking review.

There are already a range of equal pay initiatives within HE. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), for instance, has tied additional government funding to institutions' human resources strategies – specifically to a demonstrated commitment to addressing equal pay issues. The new national bargaining machinery has also undertaken to review salary structures and methods of achieving equal pay as a matter of priority.

Transparent and fair schemes for salary progression, if appropriately designed, should go some way to addressing these issues. But this will depend very much on the remit of the scheme, and how it is implemented. Most of the schemes available are focussed on pay, and on mechanical methods of measuring jobs. The Association of University Teachers believes that this approach, while having its uses, falls short of addressing long standing difficulties in the organisation of HE staffing.

The AUT has taken a different approach, one which supports career progression and investment of the individual professional in their institution. Parity in pay across job roles is an important element. But so is a grading configuration which is robust and

review

uncomplicated, one which underpins a transparent career structure, with equal opportunities for promotion and development. Our approach recognises that to maintain a healthy, productive and rewarding working environment, wider challenges than pay must be embraced.

We believe that HE in the UK is an essential public service, one which should meet the social, cultural, and economic requirements of a dynamic society. While institutions may place emphasis on particular aspects of their work, for example, research or increased participation, most factors of HE work are shared across the sector, and coherent career paths between institutions make sense for all partners. For academic and senior staff there is a national (sometimes international) labour market, demonstrated by the use of national media for recruitment. A coherent career structure, and nationally recognised grading system are therefore both desirable and logical. To ensure the success of this national approach, we have

been in discussions with the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) throughout the development of our scheme, and are keen to work in partnership with institutions wherever possible.

Achievement of equal pay for work of equal value has also been found to be more likely where nationally recognised pay and grading structures are in place – AUT research has shown that, where these are negotiated at a local level, the gender pay gap is considerably wider.[1] To ensure the vital collaboration of academics and academic-related staff, that is, support the unity and development of the academic team, pay and progression structures need to be cohesive and closely linked.

1. Local and national pay and employment in higher education: Changes in pay arrangements. AUT briefing paper, December 2000.

AUT

Our proposal

*T*he AUT approach has been developed with simplicity, transparency and equality as guiding principles. We have simplified the existing grading structure, better representing the length of time required to master a role, and ironing out flaws which sustained inherent discrimination. Our preferred structure encompasses a straightforward grading configuration, consisting of three principal grades – entry (training) grade, main professional grade, and senior professional grade. The diagram below outlines pay bands and career structure.

SALARY SPINE

SENIOR PROFESSIONAL GRADE

MAIN PROFESSIONAL GRADE

TRAINING GRADE
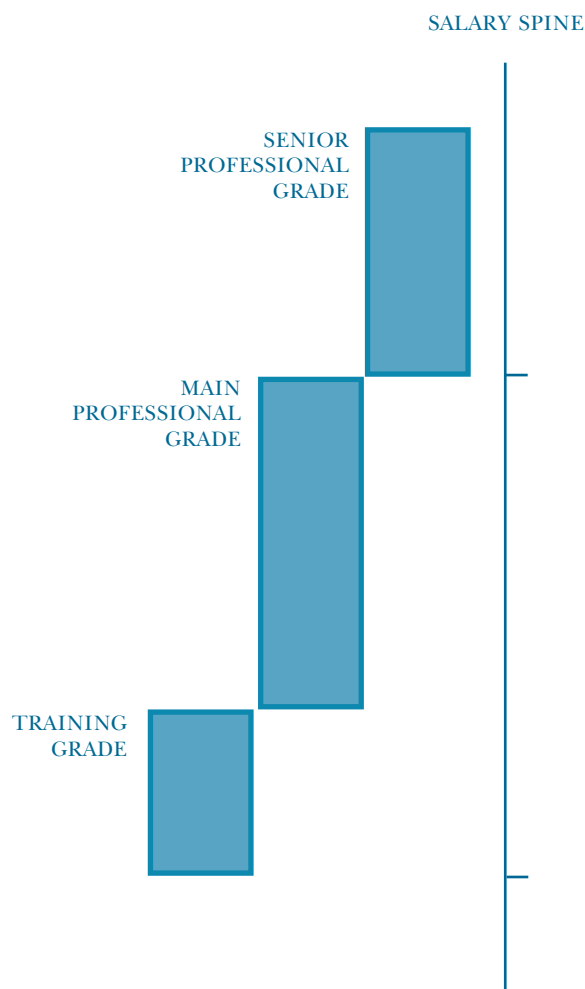
*E*ach grade will contain annual incremental points. We propose three in the entry grade and four in the main grade.

*F*or academic posts, the main professional grade contains both the existing lecturer and senior lecturer roles.
NB Within the academic-related area, there is a greater multiplicity of roles. Consequently, what corresponds to the academic main grade may need to comprise more than one grade for academic-related staff.

*T*he senior professional grade broadly corresponds to the current professorial grade, or current Grade 6 posts in the academic-related scales.

progression

Progression through each grade should be annual and automatic. The satisfactory completion of the probationary period will also result in automatic progression to the main grade. This will mean that, following our proposal, it takes a total of seven years to reach the top of the main professional grade.

Promotion will take place between main and senior professional grades. For details of the process see p. 11. It should not be influenced by competition for scarce resources, but equally it will be up to the applicant to gather and submit evidence on which any assessment would be based. The promotion procedure is designed to provide extended opportunities for promotions and career development, and address discrimination against under-represented groups.

Senior academic manager posts

Additional responsibilities taken on by academic managers (such as department heads, deans, pro-vice-chancellors) will be paid separately to the salary scale. These payments should be unrelated to the grade of the post-holder, and paid for the duration of the extra work.

Our approach

This grading structure provides an organisational framework, in which staff development and pay can be structured simultaneously. Moreover, our method recognises that academic and related roles operate within a particular working culture, one which demands a developmental, pastoral and collegiate approach.

For academic and related roles it is much more appropriate for posts to be evaluated on the input required from the post-holder to do the job – that is,. a **competency-based** approach – rather than assessment on a quantified set of tasks and outputs – a **factor-based** process. Our approach also allows for the development of a role, and the contributions a post-holder will be making in a range of roles, without necessarily holding lead responsibility for a task. A factor-based approach, where a rigid structure demands a set of prescribed tasks, cannot recognise the collaborative nature of academic and related work, or take account of the flexibility and creativity fundamental to its success.

With this in mind, we have employed a text-based, as opposed to numeric system of job comparison. A number of job evaluation schemes based on the latter approach are problematic from a transparency perspective; a complex scoring matrix and processing algorithm, for instance, may be difficult to understand, challenge, or defend.

development of the scheme

In order for a grading structure to be robust and defendable, it must be underpinned by a transparent and consistent methodology, one informed by an equality perspective at every stage. Our scheme was developed with just such an approach.

Our first step was to develop **role analyses** for each of the grades – that is, determining the range of roles and competencies to be expected from an individual within a grade over a period of time. Through establishing this range, it became clear that coherent areas of work or professional activity are carried out in clusters of jobs, for example, library and information services. These groupings form **job families**.

Role profiles were then produced for each job family – essentially descriptions of the competencies required to undertake all the jobs within it, including those required as the roles develop. Each job or role can then be mapped onto the correct role profile and grade within the appropriate job family.

At the same time an **analytical framework** has been drawn up. An analysis was made of the fundamental range of competencies and learnable skills such as knowledge and expertise, required across **all** academic and related roles. The results were condensed into a **common set of criteria**, which are expressed as 11 sets of demands. These are further divided into a number of descriptive elements (see Appendix 1, p. 15).

This analytical framework is the 'processing tool', the means by which roles can be compared against one another, and thus a rank order of roles established. It works by each role being compared with every other role on that grade across all job families. From these comparisons, a rank order of **all** roles can be produced. Because the criteria and process are consistently applied to every role in every job family, this analytical framework procedure ensures fair and non-discriminatory comparisons across the academic and related sector.

AUT

... development of the scheme

This process produces the rank order of jobs, while ensuring equality across job families. Appendices 1 and 2 summarise the analytical framework and show how it works in practice. Essentially, its application involves a text-based assessment of whether one role is more, equally, or less demanding than another. In this way each role 'scores' +1, 0, or -1 against the other for each of the 11 areas of demand, giving a total number of points scored for each role. This analytical process meets the requirements of the Equal Pay Act.
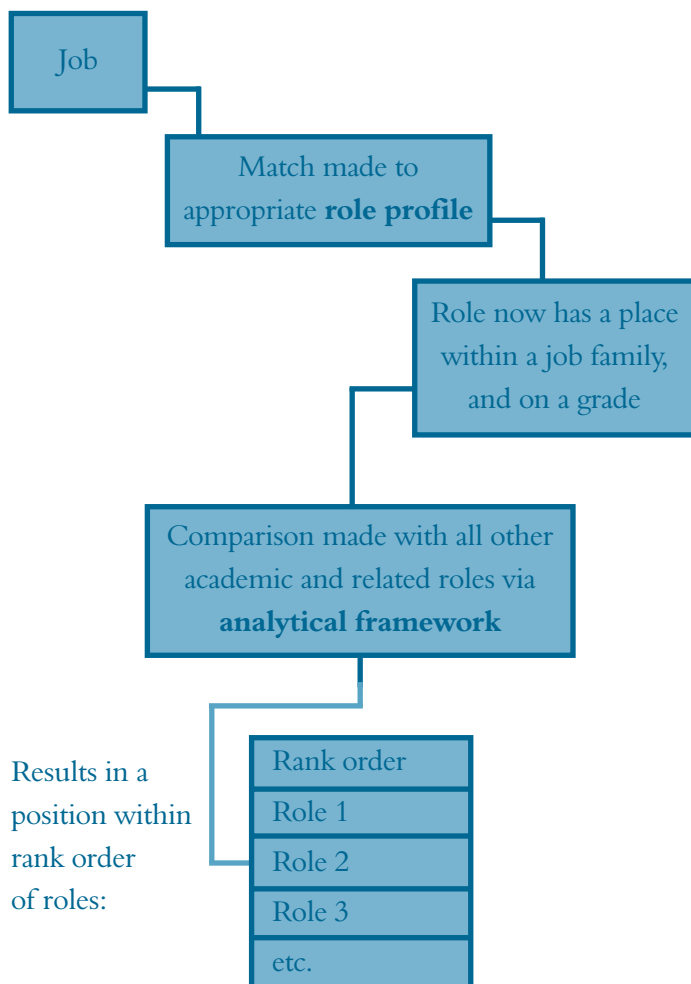
The result is a rank order of roles across the academic and related area. Because the process and criteria used are the same for all roles, they can easily be cross-referenced with roles in other job families to check for parity. This does not mean that every job family must be divided in the same way; the boundary levels within families can still be different, as long as the criteria for judging each role is the same.

Once the grading structure has been determined, it can be related to points on the pay spine to establish the pay scale.

Job

Match made to appropriate **role profile**

Role now has a place within a job family, and on a grade

Comparison made with all other academic and related roles via **analytical framework**

Results in a position within rank order of roles:

Rank order
Role 1
Role 2
Role 3
etc.

testing and quality assurance

The process described in the development section (p. 6 and 7) is the result of extensive and rigorous testing, with over 700 academic, academic-related and research staff completing detailed questionnaires. Having initially established the methodology, testing was carried out to refine the role profiles and job families. Tests took place at a number of institutions across the UK (both pre- and post-1992) in a number of stages: from the initial analysis of the results, modifications were made for a second round of tests, with all relevant staff groups examined separately. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results were then fed into penultimate drafts. At every stage, care was taken to test for gender balance, and that participants were representative.

We are now at the final stages of testing – assessing the refined role profiles through a number of focus groups, work which we would like to take forward with institutions.

With the essential building blocks in place, work on refining the grading structure and ensuring parity with job evaluation schemes can now take place. Working in partnership with employers to decide the incremental divisions within grades, for instance, or whether the three grade structure is the most appropriate for all job families, will help ensure that all parties have key input to the scheme. Work on cross-referencing our approach with grading systems for non-academic and related staff can only be undertaken jointly, with all schemes available for comparison. Having undergone such a rigorous testing process already, we are confident that our role profiles and job families form a robust base for progressing this vital work in partnership.

AUT

Local operation

Since the scheme has been devised, tested, reviewed and revised by he professionals, we are certain that institutions will be confident about working with us on its implementation. Moreover, as its design has been spearheaded by the AUT, it has the backing of the biggest HE-dedicated trade union in the UK. The implementation of any new pay and grading system is likely to cause some disruption. However, as our approach has been devised by those familiar with he systems, it has been formulated to minimise difficulties wherever possible. Moreover, it has been designed to accommodate any changes resulting from national negotiations on pay, so any further adjustments to the grading system will be automatically taken into account in determining national grading models.

Given that a grading structure, role profiles and job families have already been outlined, as an institution adopting our approach you will not have to commit vast resources of time and money commissioning this analysis. Working in partnership with us on the mechanics of the scheme will ensure that all parties are satisfied with how it will operate. All that remains for local implementation is to match individual job descriptions with the role profiles. As we are using nationally agreed role profiles, national guidance on assimilation to the new grading structures will also be provided to institutions.

Appeals

Should there be an appeal – a claim for re-grading, or that a job had been wrongly graded compared with another for instance – a panel of human resources staff, academic/academic-related professionals, and trade union representatives would need to be convened locally. Trained to use the analytical framework, they would then decide whether it had been applied appropriately and free of bias. If an appeal continued to tribunal, as a partner in the scheme the AUT would support its application where it had been correctly implemented.

promotion

Promotion to the senior professional grade will depend on individual performance, an assessment of competencies required to meet the responsibilities of the post, and an expectation of continuing achievement. Criteria for promotion may be dependent on the organisation of any particular job family, but all grades should be reached by merit wherever appropriate.

The promotion procedure will also involve local panels, or promotion committees, which should be as balanced as possible regarding women (no more than two thirds should be any one gender), ethnic minorities and disabled staff. We would recommend that a committee comprises:

*V*ice-chancellor/principal or nominee (chair);
*P*ro-vice chancellors;
*T*hree professors/department heads or equivalent;
*O*ne (minimum) external member of at least professor level or equivalent, nominated by the vice-chancellor/principal;
*U*niversity equality officer and a trade union representative as observers.

The committee chair would issue an annual invitation to apply, similar to the current procedure at many institutions. The onus would be on the individual staff member to submit documentary evidence arguing their case, together with up to three nominated referees. For academic staff where subject knowledge is relevant to the application, at least one referee should be external to the university.

AUT

... promotion

Promotion should be based on the following principles, and in order to be considered, candidates must be able to demonstrate excellent achievement in one of these areas:

*E*xperience or achievement in teaching and learning;

*A*chievements in research, scholarship, or other professional activities;

*S*ervice to the relevant profession or academic discipline, or relevant contributions to the wider community;

*A*dministrative leadership including contribution to institutional planning, equality and/or governance.

To ensure equality of opportunity, members of committees should not act as advocates for any candidate, and should be provided with equal opportunities training. Those applying should also have access to the role profiles for the senior professional grade. A commitment to equality of opportunity should also mean just that – appropriate training and development opportunities should be available to staff throughout their career, both for their own progress professionally and to enable them to meet promotion requirements.

Work with other schemes

As discussed, the AUT approach, though developed for academic and academic-related posts, must cohere with other HE jobs graded on alternative schemes. This is desirable from an organisational perspective, and of course to achieve equal pay for work of equal value.

AUT has already embarked on processes to ensure that our scheme can be matched with others. Cross-referencing between schemes will need to be established before any new systems can be implemented. This work cannot progress in a vacuum however; we welcome the opportunity to make the necessary comparisons in the workplace between other systems and our own to ensure parity. The AUT is willing to take this work forward with any institutions using alternative schemes for other groups of staff.

Job market flexibility

It is also important to acknowledge that for higher education, both local and national labour markets coexist for different staff constituencies. Academic and senior professional staff, for instance, operate within the latter market.

Any job comparison scheme must take account of varying relationships between different market rates. Far from detracting for the need for a single, national pay spine, however, such differences are reflected in national bargaining arrangements. Hence adjustments can more readily be built into our job grading system, while still ensuring coherence with other jobs across HE.

Conclusion

The AUT approach to job grading is absolutely suited to the sector for which it was designed. Its simple structure means that it is straightforward to understand and operate. It is also constructed for easy implementation, so that the transfer from existing schemes causes minimal disruption. Further, it is designed to work with grading systems for other groups of staff within HE. Its development through comprehensive testing procedures, and its transparent working practice make it a robust and effective system for achieving equal pay for work of equal value. In this sense it is highly defendable, and has the advantage of being supported and recommended to members by the AUT.

Most importantly, however, the AUT scheme is not just about pay scales. Its wider purpose is to organise a system of appropriate and transparent career progression, underpinned by an equally unambiguous job grading structure. The ethos and methodology employed by our approach ensure that it supports individual development, and encourages staff to see the benefits of their investment in the institution. With equality of opportunity assured, anxieties over inappropriate decision-making are relieved to the mutual benefit of staff and employers. Both groups are free to concentrate on furthering knowledge, developing careers and working to advance higher education.

appendix 1

Analytical framework

Background

The following indicates those demands and roles placed on academic and academic-related staff in higher education. The findings were as a result of analysing a number of job descriptions and questionnaires for academic and academic-related staff, combined with informed discussion from the AUT job grading group.

Use of the analytical framework should take into account:

A different nature of decision-making that prevails in HE institutions where decision-making is generally carried out on a collegiate basis, through discussion, consultation, and agreement. This may be different to many other sectors and should be reflected in the demands of those jobs that do not have direct line responsibility for decision-making but nevertheless participate in the decision-making.

*T*he range of differing roles undertaken in a position may make it more complex and demanding than a position with a more limited role.

Range of roles and demands

T *The following were identified as roles and demands that spanned the academic and academic-related jobs. Definitions of these roles and demands are set out on subsequent pages.*

Management roles
  Data and information;
  Knowledge;
  People (staff and students, visitors, contractors);
  Physical resources.

Demands of roles
  Knowledge base;
  Effective interpersonal communication;
  Analytical ability;
  Initiative and creativity;

Working arrangements
  Mental effort and emotional demands;
  Sensory demands;
  Physical hazards.

  In each of the above is the inclusion of processes, procedures, and systems.

Managing roles

Within each of the managing roles the following should be considered relevant:

*T*he responsibility for processes, procedures and systems including the ability to follow, implement, suggest amendments, design and ensure adherence. For example, processes, procedures and systems may relate to personnel, security, finance, marketing, and computerisation.

*T*he management of programmes and projects.

Consideration should be given to:

*T*he management of such responsibilities within the post itself.

*T*he responsibility the post has through others by assessing the actual exercise of these responsibilities by the post-holder in the role rather than simply the authority level of the post. This is particularly important given the collegiate approach taken by many universities where decisions may often be taken by groups of professionals rather than one person.

*T*he contribution to decision-making and strategy by post-holders, acknowledging their contribution to any analysis or joint decision-making.

*T*he responsibility for ensuring that work is carried out within budgetary and regulatory constraints as well as the extent and ability to which legal and other regulatory obligations are adhered to.

*T*he differing degree of personal autonomy and the 'time-span of discretion' that academic and related staff have, and the degree to which this requires time management.

*T*he probable and possible impact upon the university, HE, and the wider community, including the image and status of the university in external relations and publications.

Managing data and information

*T*he range and level of demand in this area involves the ability to manage the:

Gathering of information from internal and external sources, collection from known/unknown sources, seeking sources of information, identifying gaps or shortfalls in information.

Storing and retrieving, transcribing, checking, collating, securing and maintaining confidentiality of information and records.

Provision of information: in terms of specific facts, interpretation of rules, policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Providing guidance based on information.

Manipulation of information.

Forecasting.

The range of information includes that from internal and external sources; financial and budgetary; and personal information concerning students and staff.

Managing knowledge

The range and level of demand in this area involves the ability to manage the:

Transfer of knowledge through the development of students, staff and others.

Assessment of existing knowledge (including students).

Expansion of knowledge and understanding: through identification of individual and professional needs, engage in research by the identification of appropriate research options, methods and theoretical perspectives. The demand for understanding may be greater in a field where the rate of change is more rapid.

Development of knowledge through the publication and application of knowledge for social, economic, cultural, and community use.

Managing people

For example, staff, students, visitors, and contractors.

The range and level of demand in this area involves the ability to manage the:

*E*ffective use of people by making judgments and decisions regarding the level of staffing and students including selection, allocation and dismissal, or discontinuation.

*P*romotion of the health, safety and welfare of people.

*A*ssessment of the work of others (excluding student assessment covered elsewhere, but including, where appropriate, the work of contractors and staff).

Managing physical resources

Including equipment, machinery, infrastructure, finances, materials, and related systems. The range and level of demand in this area involves the ability to manage the:

*E*ffective use of physical resources by making judgments and decisions regarding the level of resourcing, procurement and the nature of use of those resources.

*A*ssessment and development of physical resources, for example, infrastructure, equipment, finances, materials, and IT systems.

Demands of roles

*K*nowledge base

This takes into account the breadth and depth of knowledge required by the post-holder to enable competent performance of the full range of duties.

It examines the requirement to have knowledge and understanding of facts, procedures and relationships within and outwith specific areas. This will allow the post-holder to apply the knowledge in different circumstances or to a range of tasks.

It examines the knowledge required to test or judge facts, opinions and conduct within an area. The extent to which the post-holder will need to know about methods of inquiry, techniques, and procedures employed. This encompasses the knowledge and understanding of concepts, principles/schemes/ patterns within an area that allows the post-holder to critically assess and reflect upon to inform their own practice and the practice of others.

In summary it takes into consideration the demand for knowledge of:

*C*onceptual and theoretical principles that may lead to knowledge of professional standards and practices that will be generally learnt before entering work in HE but will require continuous learning.

*P*rocedures, regulations, policies, where generally these will be learnt in the job or similar job roles within HE.

communication

This takes into account the ability required to communicate effectively in the role, for example to:

*C*onvey through written, oral and other communication (such as visual imal143 ac

In assessing the level of effective communication required it is important to assess the nature of the communicative task rather than the status of the person with whom the communication is taking place. It is important to recognise the demands of these roles, in a collegiate environment as distinct from a hierarchical one. In particular it should be noted that securing commitment from others might be more demanding where there is no direct line management responsibility, for example, communication with students, colleagues, and external contacts.

Analytical ability

*T*his takes into account the ability required to:

*C*oordinate, plan, schedule, and organise where there may be multiple factors to be brought together effectively, for example: staff, students, physical resources, systems, and procedures.

*C*heck, compute, and calculate a range of factors.

*I*dentify, dissect, unravel, and interpret as a means of understanding.

*P*roblem solve.

*O*bjectively assess and evaluate factors, work, ideas, concepts, and theories. These may derive from self or others, for example, staff and students.

The demand increases when: the number and complexity of factors increase; there is greater uncertainty about the factors; there is greater scope for choice, and the choice needs to be exercised outside rigid procedures and practices.

Initiative and creativity

This takes into account the ability to use and take initiative appropriately in the role and to be creative in the way in which the role is undertaken. This takes into account the ability to:

*E*xercise judgment. Consideration should be given to the degree to which the post-holder is expected to exercise judgement in the application of routines and procedures and to deal appropriately with situations not covered by such procedures and guidelines.

*S*earch for new developments or innovation within the work role. This might be more demanding where the areas are intellectually demanding, uncharted or untested.

*B*e creative in carrying out the work role where the post-holder is required to use or incorporate new techniques or methods or where there is a requirement to use imagination rather than to rely or draw upon existing methods/procedures.

working arrangements

Mental effort and emotional demands

This takes into consideration the ability to:

Concentrate, taking into consideration the level and breadth of concentration required to perform the job role, as well as the degree to which this is made more difficult by uncontrollable interruptions and changes in focus within a day.

Memorise or retain information over periods.

Manage pressures within the work role for meeting deadlines set by others or within systems (for example student assessments, publications, external bodies and authorities). While recognising that these pressures should fall within accepted range of risk assessment and not fall foul of a university's responsibilities for the health and safety of their workforce this should take into account those pressures faced by the post-holders.

Manage emotionally difficult circumstances. In some of the work undertaken by HE professionals there are also emotional demands placed on a post-holder in terms of caring for those who are facing emotional problems. This may range from first point of contact with staff or students with financial, health, or personal problems to those responsible for counselling.

Sensory demands

This takes into account the ability to:

Meet the sensory demands required in carrying out the role effectively including the demand for visual, aural, or other sensory attention as well as spatial ability. Consideration should be given to the level and nature of the sensory demands.

Use fine motor coordination or gross manual coordination when using machinery or equipment as well as in practical demonstrations as required.

Physical hazards

This takes into account the physical hazards that may be inherent in the job.

2. This, as other criteria, considers the demand generally required in the job not by any individual and thus is not intended to discriminate against any individual whose disability allows them to carry out the post using reasonable adjustments.

AUT

Appendix 2

*U*sing the analytical framework
Each role profile is compared against each and every other role profile using the analytical framework. Set out below is the method for each comparison.

Compare two role profiles against each of the 11 demands in the analytical framework. The comparison is recorded as follows: +1=more demanding overall; 0=equal; -1=less demanding overall.

Demand	Role x compared with role y
A1 – managing data and information	
A2 – managing knowledge	
A3 – managing people	
A4 – managing physical resources	
B1 – demand for knowledge base	
B2 – demand for effective communication	
B3 – demand for analytical ability	
B4 – demand for initiative and creativity	
C1 – mental effort and emotional demands	
C2 – sensory demands	
C3 – physical hazards	
Total score	

The highest possible score is 11, the lowest possible score is –11. A score of 0 indicates the two roles are of equal value overall in terms of roles and demands.

The scores for all graded roles can be recorded as follows (assuming a total of 10 roles).

Record role profile scores along horizontal axis to give comparison score against every other role profile. Add these scores to give total points score for each role (points range will be –99 to +99). These then give the rank order of the roles. This rank order would then have to be analysed to determine grade boundaries for each role, and checked for any gender bias in the final grading structure.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	**Total points**	**Rank order**
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												