

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR REGRADING OF POST
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFF (ALL GRADES)

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that the University recognises the tasks and responsibilities which are undertaken by staff in their posts and in doing so, it applies the principle of equal pay.

2 SCOPE

This regrading procedure applies to:

- New, existing and vacant posts,
- Where there has been a significant and permanent increase in the requirements of the job or the level of responsibility.
- Professional services staff on grades 1-8

The regrading process is focused on a post, not an individual, and therefore a business need for the changes to the post must be evident in the application.

Accompanying this procedure is a [regrading process flowchart](#) which illustrates the main steps in this procedure.

Existing Post

A member of staff or their line manager can request a regrading of the post – please refer to the guidance below relating to the ‘Regrading Process’. Minor changes to the role will not affect the grade of the post.

New Post

If a new post is created, the manager responsible for the post will complete the HERA evaluation form and will draft the job description and recruitment documentation. New posts cannot be re-evaluated within 12 months from the date of appointment of the first employee to take up the post.

Vacant Post

If a post becomes vacant and the Section wishes to make changes to the post, the Section should submit a regrading form for the vacant post. The changes should be permanent and significant in order to grant a regrading of a post.

N.B. Minor changes to tasks and duties can be done without affecting the grading of a post. Advice can be sought from Human Resources as to whether these changes would alter the grade of the post.

If changes are made to a vacant post, the post cannot be regraded within 12 months.

Applications can be submitted at any time, however the member of staff must have normally been in the role for a minimum of 6 months prior to an application being made.

Restructure

If a post (or a number of posts) need to be regraded because of wider changes, such as during a team/departmental review, please contact HR team to arrange a more in-depth discussion.

Fairness and Equity

The University of Aberdeen is committed to ensuring that all applications for regrading are fully considered on their merits, within a framework of equality and fairness, irrespective of contractual status. Any career breaks or other lengthy periods of absence or periods of part time working which have affected the volume, but not quality of work will be taken into consideration. Any member of staff involved in the consideration of applications for regrading will be required to declare a conflict of interest where they believe this may exist.

3 CRITERIA FOR REGRADING OF POST

This regrading procedure applies to new, existing and vacant posts, where there has been a significant permanent increase in the requirements of the job or the level of responsibility.

Decisions on regrading of post will be based on an objective matching or scoring process (matching for grades 1-6, scoring for grades 7-8), taking account of:

- Permanent increases in responsibility and/or complexity in the tasks undertaken
- Significant permanent changes to tasks that affect the level of responsibility attached to the role

This procedure is focused on the levels of tasks and responsibilities of a post and does not take into account matters of individual performance or volume of work (for which recognition may be sought under different [University procedures](#)).

Applications for regrading must be based on significant and permanent changes to roles and must not include temporary duties e.g. covering maternity leave/sickness absence or one off / temporary projects (for which recognition may be sought under different [University procedures](#)).

It is recognised that a number of individuals within the University undertake the following additional duties as part of their role which can be taken into account in making an application for regrading. It should be noted that undertaking the duties associated with these roles is deemed to be part of an individual's overall duties and will not warrant regrading in isolation:

- Radiation Protection Supervisors
- Laser Protection Supervisors
- General Safety Advisors
- Role Analysts

4 REGRADING PROCESS

Submission of application

An application for regrading of a post can be made through either a joint submission prepared by a member of staff and their line manager or by the member of staff themselves, regardless of whether the case is supported by the line manager or not. The line manager or the member of staff can initiate discussion on the intentions to apply for a regrading of post. If the member of staff initiates the process, they should advise their line manager of their intention to submit a regrading application. If the process is initiated by the line manager, they will discuss the application with the member of staff and will allow them to contribute to the process. In both cases, the line manager will consider the application by providing statement on why the application is supported or not – in doing so they should not include their views on the member of staff's abilities and/or performance.

If the line manager does not support the application, the post holder can still proceed with submission of the application to the Regrading Panel. In the interests of transparency, where the manager or senior approver feels unable to support an application, discussions should take place and, where appropriate, additional information sought to try and resolve any differences in opinion about the requirements of the role. If no resolution is possible, and the member of staff still wishes to submit their application, the manager and/or senior approver should clearly explain their reasoning to the member of staff and complete the relevant section of the Regrading Application Form in advance of the application being submitted. In cases when the application is not supported, the line manager is responsible for providing detailed information on why the post is not suitable for regrading and writing an evaluation report (Section 3 of the application form) clearly indicating why the application is not supported. The information should confirm how the post (applicant) did not meet the criteria required for the regrading, and include any supporting evidence. The information should provide a clear view on why the post is not suitable for regrading to the higher grade.

Regardless of whether the application is supported or not, the line manager (in conjunction with the member of staff) is responsible for drafting and then approving an up-to date job description that provides a true reflection of the responsibilities of the post. The job description should clearly highlight the significant and permanent changes to the role since the current grade was established.

For regrading application Grades 1-6, within the application, the member of staff or their line manager must clearly outline how the duties of the post meet the criteria specified within the Role Descriptors.

The application form must be signed by all parties to confirm they had contributed to the application and approved as appropriate.

The application must be approved by an appropriate senior manager (e.g. Director). In cases when the application is not supported, the director's (or appropriate senior manager's) responsibility is to provide detailed information on why they do not approve the application and writing an evaluation report (Section 4 of the application form - in addition to line manager's report) clearly indicating why the application is not supported. The information should confirm how the post (applicant) did not meet the criteria required for the regrading, and include any supporting evidence. The information should provide a clear view on why the post is not suitable for regrading to the higher grade.

Once the above information is provided, the line manager will submit the regrading application together with the following information:

- **Existing job description**
- **Draft of amended job description (or existing documents with tracked changes), including information on the business needs for the changes to the post AND the proposed new job title (if applicable)**
- **Organisational chart clearly identifying the team structure as it is currently AND the structure following the regrading as specified below:**
 - **The position of the member of staff and current grade within the structure AND the proposed position of the member of staff after the regrading;**
 - **The job title and grade of the post(s) managed by the member of staff currently and after the regrading;**
 - **The job title and grade of the member of staff immediate colleague(s) currently and after the regrading;**
 - **The job title and grade of the member of staff supervisor and/or line manager currently and after the regrading.**

Fully completed and verified application forms, accompanied by appropriate supplementary information, should be submitted electronically (in a scanned/pdf format) by the line manager to Human Resources at regradingapps@abdn.ac.uk

Application forms will not be accepted unless they contain the mandatory information referred to above. Incomplete applications will be returned to the line manager unprocessed.

If a member of staff believes that the submission of the regrading application by their immediate line manager would result in a conflict of interest, the application may be discussed and submitted by an individual at the next higher managerial level within the Section. The line manager will still be required to verify the accuracy of the information contained within the application form.

Advice and support on the regrading process and completion of the application form can be obtained from the HR Partner/Advisor. N.B. completion of the regrading application is the responsibility of the post holder or the line manager.

Evaluation method for Grades 1-6

All posts grades 1-6 within Professional Services are evaluated through an objective assessment (matching) against the Role Descriptors which incorporate the 14 HERA Role Evaluation elements and which have been developed and agreed following consultation with the University's recognised trade unions. The University will normally require a post to achieve a match in at least 11 out of the 14 Elements within a Role Descriptor before it is accepted that an appropriate match exists.

It is recognised that there may be some posts for which the abovementioned matching process would not be appropriate. In such circumstances, a job evaluation process using the HERA scoring system will be undertaken instead.

Evaluation method for Grades 7-9

All posts grades 7-9 within Professional Services are evaluated (scored) using the HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis) job evaluation scheme. The scheme was adopted by the University as part of the implementation of the Framework Agreement. This tool uses an externally validated uniform scoring system to help allocate staff to grades on the basis of their work responsibilities. The HERA scheme evaluates the roles based on 14 elements – more details on the scheme can be found [here](#).

Responsibility of the Role Analysts

The responsibility of the Role Analysts is to undertake the evaluation (matching or scoring) of the post that is regraded and score it against each of the 14 elements. The Role Analysts explain the HERA metric as appropriate and advise the Regrading Panel members on their initial assessment of the role based wholly on the paperwork presented to the Analysts at the outset of the process.

Prior to the Panel, the Role Analysts will have made their assessment 'blind' i.e. they will not be aware of the gender of the applicant. After this stage the Panel members will however be aware who the applicant is, and therefore their gender.

The Analysts will receive the views and any additional information provided by the other members of the Regrading Panel and are entitled to amend their initial assessment in light of the discussion and the evidence presented.

Consideration of Applications

Upon receipt of regrading application, the Head of HR will arrange for the application to be evaluated (scored/matched) by 2 Role Analysts. Once this is completed, the application will be allocated to an appropriate Regrading Panel. The Regrading Panel will assess the applications through consideration of the job evaluation/matching outcomes provided by Role Analysts, the information provided within the application, and the opinion of the Subject Expert provided during the Panel meeting. The Subject Expert is a senior level representative (from the same area as the applicant) who will attend the Regrading Panel meeting to provide any further information about the post or to address any queries the Regrading Panel may have.

The Regrading Panel will meet on an ad hoc basis and will consist of:

- Chair (Head of HR)
- Role Analyst x2
- TU Representative x1
- HR Representative x1
- Subject Expert

The line manager and the member of staff will be advised of the date when the regrading panel will meet to consider the regrading application.

There are three possible outcomes that may be reached by the regrading panel:

1. The role is regraded to a higher level
2. The level of the role remains the same
3. The level of the role does not meet the current level (lower than current grade) – in this case the application will be returned to the Section for reconsideration and resolution of concerns expressed by the Regrading Panel.

For borderline cases, where it is unclear if an appropriate match exists further information may be obtained from the line manager for clarification purposes or a site visit may be arranged. If an appropriate match still does not exist two Role Analysts will then score the application using the HERA job evaluation scoring system.

Following a full consideration of all the evidence, the Regrading Panel will make an informed decision on the regrading application.

5 NOTIFICATION OF REGRADING OUTCOME AND FEEDBACK

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their regrading application within 15 working days of the Regrading Panel meeting.

Applicants whose posts are successfully regraded at either the first submission or at appeal stage, will be advised in writing by the Human Resources Office. If the application is successful, the new grade and salary will be effective from the 1st of the month after the application was submitted.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive a constructive feedback covering the process by which the decision was made and the reason for the decision. The feedback will cover the elements of the evaluation criteria which did not meet the requirements of the higher grade. Feedback will include a contribution by the identified Subject Expert. Candidates will also be given the opportunity of discussing their application with their line manager. They will also be advised of their right to appeal the outcome of the regrading process.

6 APPEAL

Any applicant has the right of appeal against an unsuccessful regrading application on the grounds of procedural irregularity including insufficient feedback from the Regrading Panel. If the regrading and any subsequent appeal is unsuccessful, then a re-submission cannot be made until a 12 month period has elapsed from the date the original application was considered by the Regrading Panel.

The appeal process is not intended to query the judgement reached on the regrading application.

Notification of an appeal, clearly outlining the alleged procedural irregularity, must be made in writing to the Head of Human Resources within 10 working days from the date of issue of the regrading outcome. The detailed grounds of the appeal should normally be lodged within 15 working days from the date of the original intimation of intention to appeal. In exceptional circumstances members of staff may seek an extension to these timescales by writing to the Head of Human Resources.

Appeals will be considered in the first instance by the Director of People. If the Director of People decides that there is a case to be heard, they will refer the appeal to an Appeal Hearing. The appeal will be heard by the individual at the next higher managerial level to the line manager who submitted the original regrading application. The individual hearing the appeal will be supported by a Role Analyst who has not previously been involved in the case. The appeal will be heard in line with the [University Procedure for Hearing an Appeal](#).

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