

8.29 Starting Pay on Appointment

This policy provides guidance on the starting pay on appointment for successful applicants to non-industrial and Senior Civil Service posts advertised through open competition.

- The principles of how starting salaries are determined –are set out in Section 2 General Principles
- Arrangements that apply to those who join the Senior Civil Service are outlined in - Section 3 New Entrants At Senior Civil Service (SCS) Level
- Starting salary will normally be at, or as close as possible to, the minimum of the grade – Section 3 New Entrants at Senior Civil Service (SCS) Level and Section 4 New Entrants Below the Level of the Senior Civil Service
- Guidance on starting salary for existing civil servants successful in open recruitment competitions is outlined at Section 5 Existing Civil Servants

The following terms within this policy are defined in the glossary:

There are currently no terms within this policy defined in the glossary.

You may also be interested in the following policies:

8.30 Starting Pay on Transfer to a New Substantive Grade, 6.10 Probation.

This policy is version 3.0

For a printable version please click the icon. Please make sure that your printed version is current with the one on this portal.

This homepage is only a guide to the policy, not the policy itself. In the event of any discrepancy between the content of this homepage and the associated policy, the wording of the policy shall apply.

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8.29 STARTING PAY ON APPOINTMENT

1 Introduction

1.1 This section of the HR Handbook provides guidance on the starting pay on appointment for successful applicants to non-industrial and Senior Civil Service posts advertised through open competition.

2 General Principles

2.1 When considering starting salaries Departments should always bear in mind the objectives of the pay arrangements and in particular the requirements that:

- a.** pay should be relative to what is necessary to recruit, retain and motivate staff; and
- b.** Departments should reconcile their responsibilities for the control of public expenditure with their responsibilities as an employer.

2.2 Starting salary therefore should normally be the minimum of the pay scale for the grade.

2.3 A starting salary higher than the scale minimum should be considered only where there are justifiable business reasons. Where a higher starting salary is considered then this should be as close to the minimum as possible.

2.4 Higher starting salaries therefore must be used sparingly, bearing in mind the need to have regard to: -

- a.** market rates where appropriate;
- b.** the need to avoid creating anomalies in pay relativities between new recruits and existing staff; and
- c.** the need to give individuals an opportunity to demonstrate that they can undertake the full range of duties of the grade.

2.5 Exceptional skills or experience do not automatically justify a higher starting salary – the skills and experience must be relevant to the post and contribute to the individual's ability to carry out the duties of the post.

2.6 Higher starting salaries should not be awarded simply to match a successful candidate's existing salary. Immediate salary level is only one element in the remuneration package.

2.7 Remuneration should be viewed as a whole package and other terms and conditions of service available to the new recruit should be taken into consideration, including for example: the value of NICS pension arrangements, the availability of flexible working hours and patterns, security of tenure (if for example a successful candidate does not have a permanent contract with the previous employer), additional leave entitlements, sick pay arrangements and so on. There may also be a number of reasons underlying a candidate's decision to join the Civil Service such as the opportunity for further training and development or suitability of location.

2.8 The expectation therefore is that only a minority of applicants will qualify for a higher starting salary.

3 New Entrants at Senior Civil Service (SCS) Level

3.1 Starting salary should normally be to the minimum of the SCS pay band appropriate to the grade level (as determined by job evaluation (JESP) score).

3.2 Exceptionally Departments may consider it necessary to award a higher starting salary to get the right person for the job. This would be particularly relevant, for example, for high-level posts such as Chief Executive posts where there is an expectation that the postholder will achieve value for money in their management of an organisation or where market rates for a particular discipline suggest a higher starting salary is required.

3.3 If it is proposed to pay a new entrant higher than the pay band minimum there should be a justifiable business case for doing so. Where, on consideration of the business case, a higher starting salary is believed to be justified, Departments have discretion to pay up to the starting salary reference points for NICS SCS Pay Bands 1, 2 and 3 (Grade 5, 3 and Permanent Secretary level posts). Information on starting salary reference points can be obtained from Pay and Grading Unit, Central Personnel Group.

3.4 If a Department considers that the delivery of its business needs are contingent upon the appointment of a candidate with a proven record in a particular area and they are also aware that market rates and competition within that particular employment sector mean that the starting salary reference points are unlikely to be at a high enough level to attract candidates with the required level of qualifications and or experience, a business case may be made to Central Personnel Group for a starting salary above these levels

3.5 The terms of an appointment with a starting salary above the starting salary reference points must balance Departmental business needs with the needs of the wider Civil Service and the demands of public sector pay policy.

3.6 It is important that the use of higher starting salaries is limited. In cases where a Department considers it may be necessary to offer a starting salary above the starting salary reference points approval of both the Department concerned and Central Personnel Group in the Department of Finance and Personnel must be obtained. A full business case and supporting evidence, including an assessment of market rates, should be prepared by the recruiting Department in support of any proposal.

3.7 Departments proposing to advertise to fill posts at Senior Civil Service level should, if necessary, consult Central Personnel Group (Pay and Grading Unit) about the wording relating to salary.

4 New Entrants below Senior Civil Service Level

4.1 Starting pay for new entrants below the Senior Civil Service level should normally be at the minimum of the pay scale or as close to the minimum as possible.

4.2 A higher starting salary may be appropriate where there are justifiable business reasons, for example, where there is a defined skills shortage, if there are recruitment or retention difficulties within the discipline or where in exceptional circumstances, qualifications and/or experience allow for a higher starting salary (but see section 2.5 above).

5 Existing Civil Servants

5.1 The starting pay on appointment for serving Northern Ireland Civil Servants (both at SCS level and below SCS level) who are successful in an open recruitment competition may be determined by either promotion or re-grading terms if these are more favourable than the application of recruitment terms.

5.2 Promotion terms apply where the open competition is to a higher grade. Re-grading terms apply where the competition is at the same grade level.

5.3 For further information on promotion and re-grading terms see section 8.30 Starting Pay on Transfer to a New Substantive Grade.