

Executive Secretary (Pay Band 13) – Grade Descriptor

Overview of Roles at this Pay-band Level

- The Executive Secretary grade is the most senior grade in the Secretarial Group. The duties of the post will normally involve the provision of a high level of support to a senior officer or the management of a section, typically of 4/5 staff providing secretarial and administrative services. The staff will normally be in the Secretarial Group but may include staff from the administrative and support grades.

Key Functions at this Pay-band Level

- The work for senior officers will commonly require a need to examine a range of detailed, complex, and on occasions highly specialised material and to exercise discretion by deciding;
 - 1) whether it is in conformity with given regulations;
 - 2) policies or relevant to proposals; or
 - 3) considerations being examined at a more senior level. Also important is the need to be pro-active, to be capable of spotting things that could improve the senior officers' and the organisation's effectiveness, and to be prepared to use initiative.
- The position may also include a high level of support to the Department's political members. Linked to this involvement is a need to be aware of Departmental business and how to increase its effectiveness, and to be flexible about meeting these needs.
- Post holders will have considerable discretion, particularly where staff management is concerned. Although normally a framework is laid down, both in terms of staff deployment and other functions post holders are commonly required to make operational decisions in order to dispose of specific individual situations, for example the deployment of individual members of staff, or the extent to which a given case satisfies given regulations.

Key Differences from Roles in the Pay-band Level below

- By comparison with the grade below, there is a step change in relative levels of responsibility. Roles at this level involve a range of tasks that typically require role-holders to exercise initiative in the processing and analysis of information or in determining how work should be progressed. Roles in the grade below largely operate in more structured work environments, undertaking work in relation to transactional, operational or process issues where necessary judgements can be made from a choice of a number of options. The main focus of roles in the grade below is narrower and limited in the main to transactional secretarial tasks.

Knowledge & Skills

ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for appointment to the grade applicants must:-

- hold an acceptable external qualification in text processing and audio transcription (e.g. OCR Text Production (Advanced) distinction and OCR Audio transcription (Advanced) distinction or RSA III Text Processing Part 1 distinction and RSA III Audio transcription Part 2 pass); or
- pass the Civil Service Typewriting Grading Test and Audio Grading Test; and
- Have at least 2 years' relevant experience of duties in the Senior Secretary or Personal Secretary Grade description (NOTE: relevant experience in a post outside of the Civil Service will be accepted).

Contacts & Communications

- Staff at Executive Secretary level will generally provide dedicated support for senior officers or politicians, and will therefore act as the first point of contact for that person(s), as well as managing their diary commitments. Often acting as a 'gatekeeper', they will provide advice and support on matters to staff, stakeholders and the public within the remit of the person/s to whom they are assigned.

Problem Solving

- The grade of Executive Secretary will be involved in the work of their senior officer and as such will commonly require a need to examine a range of detailed, complex and highly specialised material and to exercise discretion by deciding whether it is in conformity with given regulations or policies or relevant to proposals or considerations being examined at a more senior level. Role holders will need to be aware of Departmental business and how to increase its effectiveness, and to be flexible when meeting those needs.

Decision Making

- Role holders at this level may also contribute to short-term projects and will be expected to use their own initiative. The grade may also be the main source of specialist advice to a Department on matters relating to the secretarial group (e.g. on the layout of letters reports etc. to provide a consistent and acceptable presentation of documents).

Autonomy

- Staff will have freedom to manage an area with minimum supervision and will likely report directly to a senior officer.

Management of Resources

- Post holders will have considerable discretion, particularly where staff management is concerned and are commonly required to make operational decisions in order to dispose of specific individual situations. They will likely manage several staff in the secretarial group, but may also manage staff from the administrative and support grades.

- Staff at this level will likely be able to sign off orders and invoices within the relevant financial delegations, however budget management is likely not a feature of roles at this level.

Impact

- Roles at this level are likely to have an impact on relationships, delivery of services and the perception of efficiency and effectiveness of the area's interface with other stakeholders.