

Personal Secretary (Pay Band 10) – Grade Descriptor

Overview of Roles at this Pay-band Level

- The Personal Secretary grade normally provides a range of support services to a Senior Officer. Although these will include some straightforward typing/word processing the grade is characterised by an active involvement in assisting the senior officer with the more routine tasks of their post and organising the senior officer's working day in respect of meetings etc. The grade is the first management grade in the Secretarial Group with responsibility normally limited to one or two staff in the grades of Secretary, Senior Secretary, Administrative Assistant, Administrative Officer or Support Grades 1 or 2.

Key Functions at this Pay-band Level

- A personal secretary will be expected to be highly computer literate and able to provide training and advice on the production of documents. In addition to managing the diary commitments of the senior officer, the personal secretary will usually have authority to acknowledge correspondence on the senior officer's behalf, and will manage the interface between the senior officer and others in the organisation. They will also maintain a personal file system for senior officers, prepare papers for meetings including making up folders, reading Hansard and marking extracts of potential interest.
- Personal secretaries are often involved in analysing data, management or financial information to support the senior officer.
- At this level, good communication skills together with good interpersonal skills are key requirements. The role holder will often deal with very senior officers on a regular basis. For some roles first level management skills will also be a requirement. A personal secretary will often be responsible for the administration work of committees, preparing agendas, briefing documents, minutes and reports with input provided by the senior officer. They will often handle confidential personal or highly classified papers and will be expected to be highly organised in terms of managing papers and files. They are usually expected to have fairly detailed knowledge of the work area in which they are based.

Key Differences from Roles in the Pay-band Level below

- By comparison with the Senior Secretary role, there is a step change in the level of responsibility and autonomy. The range of tasks is likely to be greater, with a greater degree of problem solving and decision making, albeit not at the level of executive officer in the general service class.
- Interaction internally and externally will be more substantial with roles in the grade below typically dealing with a variety of general and more complex enquiries or queries. Much of the work will involve some fact-finding and initiative in terms of selecting the right choice or approach from one or two alternatives. Role-holders will also need to have a good understanding of their work area and a good understanding of the work of the organisation to be effective.

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 Secretary/Senior Secretary grade description (NOTE: relevant experience in a post outside of the Civil Service will be accepted).

Contacts & Communications

- Staff at Personal 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

- Work at Personal Secretary Level will often involve research, investigation and identification of potential solutions to issues related the work of their senior officer. They may do this on behalf of several officers undertaking a co-ordinating role in matters such as parliamentary questions.

Decision Making

- Personal secretaries may be required to draft and authorise correspondence on behalf of senior officers to enquiries, as well as drafting and checking important / confidential documents and reports.

Autonomy

- Personal secretaries will largely work unsupervised in day to day terms, organising their working day and adjusting priorities as required.

Management of Resources

- Staff at this level will likely manage other staff, and are responsible for providing training and advice on the production of reports, documents and office procedures.

Impact

- At this level, the work of the personal secretary can have an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the senior officer they support, as well as the perceptions of internal and external customers.