



### Job Evaluation Case Study – Jewel and Esk College



Jewel & Esk College is a Further Education college catering for 8,000 students across Edinburgh and the Lothians. With two campuses – one in Edinburgh and one in Midlothian, we offer courses across four faculties; Technology, Creative Industries and the Arts, Integrated Curriculum Services and Service Industries. The vast majority of our students move into employment or further studies on completion of their course at Jewel & Esk. Many move onto University degree programmes. The college employs over 350 staff across all disciplines.

In 2006 the college made a commitment to review pay and grading with the joint aims of ensuring the structures were fair and equitable whilst at the same time validating the existing single pay spine structure. It was important that the job evaluation exercise was clearly defined and transparent in order to win the confidence of staff and unions.

Shona Dougall of SDA Associates was recruited in July 2007 to manage the project which then took around 18 months to complete. It was agreed that a consultative approach would be taken to job evaluation whereby both roleholders - those in the role - and verifiers - their line managers - would be involved in the evaluation of each role.

First we identified an appropriate Job Evaluation system. We were particularly keen to find an evaluation system that had been used to evaluate all roles within an FE College. We assessed three different Job Evaluation systems and after seeing Compensate Job Evaluation in operation at a local college, decided that it best met the College's needs.

#### About Jewel & Esk College

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The version which was implemented had been adapted for use within the FE sector and utilised at Forth Valley College. The system was web-based and enabled role analysts to input data simultaneously.

We recruited a team of in-house role analysts who were then trained by Northgate trainers in the principles of Job Evaluation and how to use the system.

We identified 100 roles within the college – 75 unique roles and 25 generic roles. We evaluated the benchmark roles first which represented the current pay spine. Briefings began in November 2007 and continued throughout the information gathering stages of the project until around February 2008. The first briefings given were to benchmark roleholders. These were the first staff to go through the job evaluation process. One benchmark role was selected from each of the current points on the pay spine in order to represent it.

It was decided that preparation documents should be used to enable roleholders to prepare for their interviews on their roles. These were completed by the roleholder and sent to the role analysts in advance of the interview to enable the role analyst to prepare questions and thus to capture as much information about the role as possible.

Interviews began in November 2007 and were conducted by role analysts working in pairs to ensure that information gathered at interview was recorded in full.

To ensure consistency of practice, the role analyst team met on a regular basis to discuss any issues arising during the job evaluation process and share best practice across the team.

A consistency group was set up in December of role analysts who checked the output from the job evaluation exercise to ensure consistent practice across the role analyst team. The Consistency team continued to meet each month until April to review roles.

In February 2008 the generic role comparison process began. For generic roles, one person was interviewed for each generic role and then others in the same role were given the resulting job report to review and compare with their own role. Role comparison forms were issued for all generic roles and were returned to the Job Evaluation Project Manager to be scored.

All Job Evaluation interviews were completed by the end of March 2008 with one senior role being the only exception.

In April the output from the JE process was been taken through a pay modelling process using appropriate software to create a preliminary grading scale.

Role analyst job reports were taken through the consistency process twice as role analysts were obviously familiar with the job evaluation process and this is to ensure a fair and consistent process.

A Job Evaluation Executive Group was formed in April comprising representatives from the trade unions, HR, Finance and the role analyst team. This group met to review the output from Job Evaluation and make recommendations as to which roles should be taken through the consistency process.

Consistency meetings then took place throughout May. The results from the generic role comparison forms indicated that most staff in generic roles agreed that the generic role was appropriate. A small number of mini interviews took place where information in the comparison forms appeared to indicate that the role was not a generic role.

A small number of disagreements arose between roleholder and verifier on the content of the job reports. These were addressed successfully through meetings between roleholder, verifier and role analyst.

The preliminary results from the Job Evaluation Project were presented to the senior management team in July 2008. They asked that extreme green circled roles and red circled roles be taken through consistency process again to ensure that the end results were fair and accurate reflection of the role.

Further consistency meetings then took place during September and October and the results were fed back to the Job Evaluation Executive Group. The final results were passed to the Senior Management team and approved in October.

The final results were intimated to staff in November 2008 with minimal appeals. Most roles remained unchanged, a small proportion were red-circled and a slightly larger proportion were green circled.

Regular communication with staff was a key component throughout the Job Evaluation project. We regularly updated staff through a dedicated section on the College intranet. Regular meetings were held with trade union representatives of both academic and support staff.

It was of particular benefit to us that part of the system had been tailored to the FE sector with questions directly related to FE roles. We also found it useful that the system was web-enabled allowing the 12 members of the role analyst team to access the system wherever they were.

For us, the Compensate Job Evaluation system was an essential component of the Job Evaluation process, providing us with all of the scoring information. We also purchased the Pay modelling software which used the output from the Job Evaluation software to determine a new pay and grading structure. The software was accessible and user friendly and Helpdesk staff were friendly, supportive and on-hand to help us with any queries. The consultants from Northgate were extremely knowledgeable on Job Evaluation and Pay Modelling and provided invaluable support at critical times during the project.

Re-evaluation of roles will become an integral part of the College procedures in conjunction with staff appraisals. Job descriptions will also be revised in line with the factors in the Compensate Job Evaluation system to make it easier to evaluate roles.

For an initial discussion about your requirements call us on 01244 572722.  
Email: [rewardinfo@northgearinso.com](mailto:rewardinfo@northgearinso.com)  
or visit [www.northgearinso-reward.co.uk](http://www.northgearinso-reward.co.uk)