**The importance of an accurate job description**

At recent new exams manager/officer training events, **22% of delegates said the job description they applied under did not reflect their actual role and responsibilities** once they were in post.

Although a job description does not have to capture every aspect of a role, it should accurately reflect its main duties, responsibilities and level of accountability. This benefits both the employee and the centre by setting clear expectations, identifying the skills required and helping ensure the right person is appointed.

An inaccurate or outdated job description can contribute to employees feeling undervalued or overwhelmed, particularly as responsibilities evolve. If a centre experiences frequent turnover in its exams team, it is worth considering whether the job description reflects the demands of the role. Repeated recruitment without reviewing the role itself can perpetuate unrealistic workloads and the same problems for successive appointees.

**1. Approaching your line manager**

If your job description no longer reflects your responsibilities, approach your line manager or senior leadership team with a structured, evidence-based case. Remain calm, professional and tactful, focusing on the facts and the benefits of reviewing the role.

Use the NAEO's suggested job description to compare against your current one and identify any discrepancies.

**Prepare your evidence**

Before meeting your line manager, prepare a clear overview of:

- **Your current duties:** Compare the responsibilities in your original job description with the tasks you undertake each week
- **Changes in the role:** Quantify additional duties, increased accountability and changes in the time required to complete tasks
- **Skills and expertise:** Identify the skills you use, and any additional skills required to perform the role effectively
- **Impact on the centre:** Explain how your responsibilities support compliance with JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements, manage risks and help avoid unnecessary costs, such as late or very late entry fees
- **Accountability:** Highlight how your work supports the Head of Centre and senior leadership team in meeting their obligations, including those associated with signing the Head of Centre Declaration each October.

Keep the discussion factual and focus on the impact of the role and its responsibilities, rather than simply expressing dissatisfaction with your workload.

In summary, prepare to:

- Clearly explain why your job description needs updating
- List your duties, responsibilities and key deadlines

- Identify the skills and level of accountability required
- Compare your role with similar positions within your centre.

**2. Escalating your concerns through HR**

If discussions with your line manager do not lead to meaningful change, consider approaching your HR department or HR business partner.

HR can help review whether your role accurately reflects the centre's organisational structure, job evaluation framework and pay arrangements.

Provide the evidence you presented to your line manager, together with a summary of previous discussions and any agreed actions that have not been implemented. This demonstrates that you have attempted to resolve the matter informally and are now seeking further support.

**3. Reviewing your job title, responsibilities and salary**

If your actual responsibilities have increased significantly or differ substantially from those originally advertised, a review of your job description, job title and salary may be appropriate.

A formal job evaluation may provide an opportunity to demonstrate that your role has developed beyond its original scope. It may also be an appropriate time to request a change of job title from *Exams Officer* to *Exams Manager*, in line with the NAEO's guidance on professional recognition.

When preparing your case, consider benchmarking your role against internal job frameworks and relevant external salary data. Within your centre, potentially useful comparisons include:

- Bursar
- Business Manager
- Finance Manager
- Office Manager
- Premises Manager
- ICT Network Manager

Focus on comparable levels of responsibility, skills and accountability rather than job titles alone.

For example, if your role involves managing staff, overseeing budgets, ensuring regulatory compliance, managing risks and undertaking significant organisational responsibilities, explain how these duties compare with other management positions.

This may provide an opportunity to discuss revised terms and conditions, including a salary review, a more appropriate job title or additional support, such as the appointment of an exams assistant.

Be prepared to consider alternatives if an immediate salary increase is not possible. These might include phased salary adjustments, a development plan leading to future promotion,

additional resources (such as the appointment of an exams assistant, which would reduce your workload) or a commitment to review the role at an agreed date.

**Ensure that any agreed changes are documented in writing**, with clear timescales and follow-up review dates.

### 4. Making a compelling case for change

When requesting a revised job description, job title or salary review, consider the following five steps.

- **Arrange a formal meeting**

Book dedicated time with your line manager to discuss your concerns and proposed changes. Avoid relying on an informal conversation.

- **Gather evidence**

Quantify your duties, deadlines, responsibilities and the impact of your work. Include evidence of regulatory compliance, risk management, budgetary responsibilities and the contribution you make to the effective running of the centre.

- **Demonstrate the benefits**

Explain how an accurate job description and appropriate recognition can improve role clarity, staff morale and retention, while supporting compliance with JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements.

- **Benchmark your role**

Use the NAEO's annual survey findings, when available in December, to compare your responsibilities and remuneration with those of colleagues nationally and regionally. Also consider comparable roles within your own centre.

- **Use the opportunity to seek wider improvements**

If your job description is being reviewed, consider whether this is also an appropriate time to request a change from Exams Officer to Exams Manager, a salary review or additional staffing support.

### Summary

An accurate job description benefits both exams managers/officers and their centres. It provides clarity about responsibilities, recognises the demands of the role and helps ensure that expectations, resources and remuneration are appropriate.

With careful preparation, clear evidence and a professional approach, you can make a compelling case for reviewing your role. However, budgetary or organisational constraints may prevent immediate changes to your job title, salary or staffing levels.

If your request cannot be accommodated, seek constructive feedback, agree on realistic development objectives and establish when the matter can be reviewed again. This will help you work towards appropriate recognition of your responsibilities and the opportunity for future progression.