

FOI DOF/2024-0203

Request

1. Why is a Forest Officer 111, who has been graded at EO1 on a separate pay scale (different from the normal EO1 pay scale)?
2. From when has a Forest Officer 111 graded at EO1 been on a separate EO1 pay scale?
3. What is the NICS policy on job roles that require a specified degree? Query in relation to rate of pay?

DoF Response

I can confirm the department holds the information requested.

1. With some roles such as the Forest Officer III, there may be a requirement for a higher salary than that of an analogous EO1 role. This higher pay is called a pay lead and may be in place for a number of reasons. The rationale for the Forest Officer grades' pay lead is because of an "all hours worked obligation". This obligation incorporates the requirement for availability at any time out of hours without further remuneration for a variety of situations including emergencies, meetings/consultations, during busy periods and public holidays.
2. The role of Forest Officer III has had a Pay Lead in place since 1987.
3. The NICS operates a hierarchal grading system based on staff being assigned to a specific grade. The Job Evaluation and Grading Support system (JEGS) is an analytical, points-based job evaluation system which is used to determine the weight of roles within the NICS and the grading that is appropriate. The Knowledge, Skills and Experience factor is one of seven factors used in the JEGS system as set out here: [JEGS - job weighting and boundaries \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/jegs-job-weighting-and-boundaries). The Knowledge, Skills and Experience factor examines the level of qualification and post-qualification experience required to perform a role effectively. Professional roles that require a degree score considerably higher in this factor than general service roles. This factor contributes to the weight of the job role which determines analogous grade and therefore pay.