

Career Pathways

Toolkit for Managers

A Career Pathway is when an employee is supported to develop the specific skills, experience, and/or qualifications required in order to fulfil a role.

All roles within the council have a set of skills, knowledge, experience and/or qualifications that are considered essential in order to fulfil a role. Where a manager is either experiencing recruitment difficulties due to the lack of candidates with all the essential criteria, or where a development opportunity is identified to 'grow our own', a Career Pathway can be utilised.

The key principles of a Career Pathway are:

- There is an Entry Level job description with an evaluated grade
- There is an End Level job description with an evaluated grade
- The Career Pathway must incorporate **all** grades between Entry and End Levels, setting out clear criteria of what to do to progress to each grade
- Managers must be clear whether they are seeking someone to ideally start on the top, or the bottom of the Pathway

Terminology

Entry Level = the job description at the very start of the Career Pathway, the lowest grade within the Pathway

End Level = the job description at the very end of the Career Pathway, the highest grade within the Pathway

Learning Provider = an educational organisation such as a College or University, someone who will provide a qualification and training.

Framework = a type of qualification, usually free of charge. Predominantly work-based learning, this type of qualification used be called (and often still is) an Apprenticeship. However these qualifications are available for current staff of any age unlike historical apprenticeship schemes.

Module = in a Framework qualification, there will be a mix of compulsory and voluntary topics to be addressed. These topics are called modules e.g. the Level 5 Human Resources Framework has a topic/module within this called 'Understanding Employment Law' – different modules are completed to pass the qualification.

Creating a Career Pathway

In implementing a Career Pathway, you will create three documents; an Entry Level job description, an End Level job description, and a Career Pathway document.

The Entry Level and End Level job descriptions will both have an evaluated grade to determine the pay range, however the Career Pathway will bridge the gap between these, encompassing any grades in between, and these 'middle' grades do not need to be evaluated.

For example, a manager has an Entry Level job description evaluated at grade 2, and an End Level job description evaluated at grade 6. The Pathway will therefore set out criteria

required for grades 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, but only grade 2 and grade 6 will go through the Job Evaluation Process.

Often, the End Level job description has already been evaluated, as usually this is the vacancy the Career Pathway is aiming to fill.

Step 1 – The focus:

Determine whether you are focusing on Entry Level or End Level for your Career Pathway.

Typically a Career Pathway is usually developed because either;

- a vacancy has arisen and the manager would like to use the opportunity to grow someone into the role
- the manager is experiencing difficulty recruiting/retaining someone in a specialist position, and therefore would accept someone requiring some development

This means there are two different focuses – where you are either specifically seeking someone meeting the Entry Level, **or** the End Level criteria. It is important to be clear from the start which you are seeking.

Targeting **Entry** Level

This Career Pathway is specifically aimed at individuals who do not have the qualifications, experience and/or skills to step straight into the end level higher salary job description. Instead, the purpose of the Career Pathway is to target those who meet the entry level requirements and provide the support in order for them to reach the end level role.

Targeting **End** Level

This is usually used for more specialist roles, such as Surveyors and Architects. It is recognised that for some professions it can be difficult to find individuals with the specific qualifications and experience required. The aim is to recruit someone meeting the end level criteria and individuals meeting the high salary criteria will be prioritised. However, should there not be a suitable candidate meeting all the end level higher salary criteria, the career pathway provides a development plan for individuals meeting lower criteria.

Step 2 – Qualification:

Determine whether there is a qualification available to support the Pathway.

We seek to use Frameworks wherever possible as these are generally free of any cost, and are holistic qualifications that combine both academic learning and practical competence. They have traditionally been called Apprenticeships, and colleges may still use this terminology. However the qualifications are available for current staff as well as new starters, and are open to any age.

It is the managers' responsibility to contact the Learning Provider and find the right qualification for them. The courses on offer are usually listed on their website, but you can also contact them to ask what courses they have that they feel would be suited to the role. They are usually very happy to discuss this and find a solution that will benefit all involved. However please contact HR if you are unsure and would like to discuss further.

Below are links to the Learning Providers we tend to use:

| Learning Provider | Used by: |
|--|----------|
| Coleg Llandrillo Menai | All DCC |

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| | |
| Coleg Cambria | All DCC |
| Babcock International | Leisure Services |
| Progression Training (specialise in Health & Social Care) | Community Support Services |

It is recommended that you speak to the Learning Provider to ensure the qualification is right for the role. The Learning Provider can support you in making sure the modules they complete for their qualification are appropriate for your area of work, and you can even decide on which modules are completed in a lot of cases. The Learning Providers are keen to work with managers to make a qualification that will benefit both our business and the employee.

Where a suitable qualification is identified, this can be built into the Career Pathway, either in terms of completing the qualification before progressing in grade, or completing certain modules within a qualification in order to progress. Ideally a Career Pathway would blend both qualifications and work experiences e.g. progression from one grade to another is dependent on certain modules being completed, **and** certain tasks being undertaken in work. Managers may also require the employee to undertake traditional short courses in order to meet the needs of the end role

Example:

A Bridge Inspector must be qualified in a range of areas to carry out their full role. Therefore, as part of the Career Pathway they may undertake a Construction Framework (lasting around 15 months), as well as a City and Guilds Level 2 Confined Space Certificate (1-2 days).

Multiple qualifications can be factored into a career pathway, it is up to you as the manager to determine what is required for the role.

A Career Pathway does not have to include a qualification, it depends on the requirements of the End Level job description.

Step 3 – Job descriptions

There must be an Entry Level job description and an End Level job description. These must both go through the Job Evaluation Process (if they haven't already) and have a confirmed grade for each. The Job Evaluation Process is the method in which all council jobs are evaluated to determine the fair grade for that position. Please see the Job Evaluation Maintenance Process for more details.

Typically, a manager will have an End Level job description already in place, and it is just the Entry Level job description that is required. Career Pathways can also be built using existing job descriptions.

Example 1:

A Career Pathway could be designed using the generic Administration Officer Level 1 (grade 2) job description and the Family Support Worker (grade 6) job description. The job descriptions have already been evaluated so would not need re-evaluating, and the Career Pathway would simply set out the criteria required and evidence needed in order for the post holder to move from grade 2 to 3, then grade 3 to 4 and so forth up to grade 6.

Example 2:

A Career Pathway is required using the End Level job description of Grade 7 Mechanic. The manager wants to start at about a grade 4 and put someone through the required qualification and experiences. There is no existing job description for the Entry Level, so this job description must go to job evaluation. The Grade 7 Mechanic job description does not need to go through job evaluation.

Where there is no Entry Level job description already evaluated, you will need to create one. The easiest way to do this, is to look at the criteria for the End Level job description. Then ask yourself, can I provide the opportunities/support to develop that criteria in someone? Is there a qualification that someone could complete that can provide the essential criteria? You would then take out all the criteria and tasks that you consider could be provided and developed through a Career Pathway, and put that job description through job evaluation.

It is important to note here, that the duties of the job description may also need to be amended – some could remain the same duties, but as this would be a development role, many tasks would now be 'under direction of the manager/colleagues', or 'to support colleagues' etc.

See the below example of how a grade 6 End Level job description might be amended to get to a grade 3 End Level job description to reflect the development nature of a Career Pathway:

| Grade 6 | Grade 3 |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide advice and support to customers on complex issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under direction of colleagues, provide advice and support to customers on basic issues |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To undertake research and preparation of committee reports relating to policies and initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist colleagues in the research and preparation of committee reports relating to policies and initiatives |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To review financial performance of contracts and agreements, and to manage the tender and procurement process as required. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To assist the team in reviewing financial performance of contracts and agreements occasionally. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be an expert in your area, and provide professional advice to customers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be proactive about seeking development and learning opportunities, undertaking CPD with a view to progressing in this area of work |

Step 4 – Career Pathway

The next step once you have your two job descriptions, is to design the Career Pathway itself, bridging the two job descriptions together and outlining what criteria needs to be met in order for someone to progress in grade.

The Career Pathway will look like this, but with however many columns as you need (remember, every grade in between Entry Level and End Level must be accounted for in the Career Pathway table):

| Once in post, the post-holder will progress through the grades as they develop their skills, knowledge, abilities and gain qualifications, in line with the Career Pathway below. | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Grade 8 | Grade 9 |
| | Job Title (ID xxxx) | Job Title | Job Title | Job Title (ID xxxx) |
| Qualifications | | | | |
| Relevant Experience | | | | |
| Knowledge and Skills | | | | |
| Personal Qualities | | | | |
| Any Other Requirements information | | | | |

The Career Pathway is based on the Person Specification template. Not all the sections will need to be updated with each grade, it's up to you as the manager to decide on what will be developed as they progress. I.e. will it just be their qualifications that differ at each grade? Will they develop project working skills? Will they develop their knowledge in the area? Will they be expected to work more autonomously and take on more responsibility for decision making at each level?

Each grade between Entry and End Level must be accounted for and there must be progression at each level.

The job title should be different for each grade to avoid any confusion when progressing. They should be relevant to the End Level job title. An easy way to do this is to use the below terminology:

- Trainee
- Assistant
- Level 1, Level 2, Level 3
- Senior

Example:

- Trainee Mechanic – Level 1 (Grade 3)
- Trainee Mechanic – Level 2 (Grade 4)
- Trainee Mechanic – Level 3 (Grade 5)
- Assistant Mechanic (Grade 6)
- Mechanic (Grade 7)

Remember not to include any criteria which could be discriminatory or unmeasurable such as:

- length of service within each grade before progressing

- requiring a driving licence and car (in some cases this may be justified, please speak to HR)
- a sense of humour

Step 5 – Advertising

At this stage you will have three documents in place; the Entry Level and End Level job descriptions, and the Career Pathway. You will also know whether you are using any qualifications to support this, and whether you are focusing on Entry or End Level.

Career Pathways are advertised using the normal process, and you as the manager will determine whether this will be advertised internally first, or if there is justification to advertise this opportunity externally straight away.

In order to advertise, please use the template advert pack which includes the pathway instead of a person specification. Send the completed vacancy pack and Vacancy Control Form to Human Resources for advertising as per our normal recruitment methods. The VCF includes a section for Career Pathways:

| Career Pathway Consideration | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| If you would like to develop a Career Pathway, please speak to HR for support in creating this using the correct templates and ensuring a consistent process. If a Career Pathway is already in place, please ensure the table is included within vacancy pack when submitting this VCF. | | | |
| Is this position part of a Career Pathway? | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| If YES: | Job title/ID of starting position: <input type="text"/> Job title/ID of end position: <input type="text"/> | Ideally, are you seeking to appoint someone at the top, or the bottom of the Pathway? | <input type="checkbox"/> Top <input type="checkbox"/> Bottom |
| If YES, is there a Framework that provides the essential qualification / experience / skills / competencies? (Please contact HR if unsure) | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| College/Learning Provider: | Name of Framework: | Level of qualification: | |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |

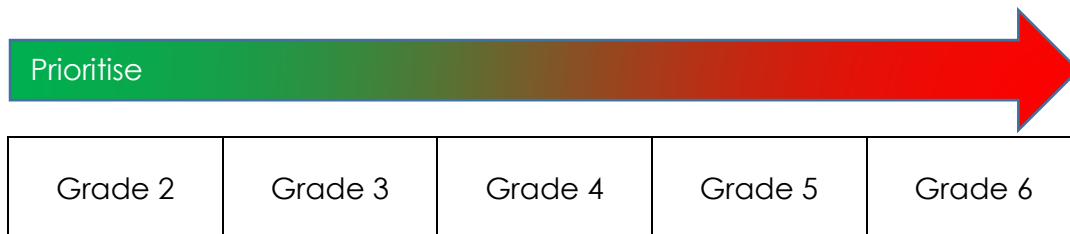
If you are working with a Learning Provider as part of the Career Pathway, they can also usually advertise this through their channels, so remember to send them a copy once the advert is live.

Step 6 – Shortlisting

Once the vacancy closes, you will need to shortlist. How you do this will depend on whether your focus is on Entry Level or End Level. Using the normal shortlisting matrix, go through each application and shortlist in the normal way. The only difference is which criteria you use to do this.

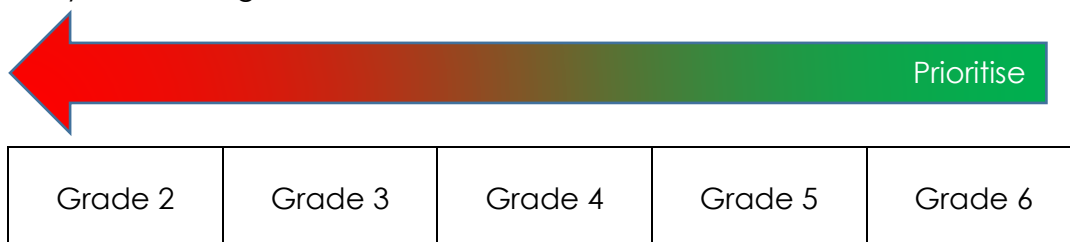
Entry Level focus

If you are hoping to appoint someone at the start of the Career Pathway, you prioritise these applicants. Using the Entry Level criteria on the Career Pathway (the criteria listed under the lowest grade), shortlist in the usual way. If you do not have enough applicants at this level and would like to expand your interview selection, you can then move on to the next grade above, and shortlist using that criteria. You continue to work your way up the grades until you have a good interview selection.



End Level focus

If you are hoping to appoint someone at the end of the Career Pathway, you prioritise these applicants. Using the End Level criteria on the Career Pathway (the criteria listed under the highest grade), shortlist in the usual way. If you do not have enough applicants at this level and would like to expand your interview selection, you can then move on to the next grade below, and shortlist using that criteria. You continue to work your way down the grades until you have a good interview selection.



Once you have shortlisted, the normal method of recruitment applies – interview and selection. Please refer to the Recruitment and Selection Policy for further information.

Step 7 – Appointment

After the recruitment and selection process, you should be in a position to appoint a suitable candidate. This is done via the Appointment Form, just like regular recruitment. Please be sure to state on the appointment form that this is a Career Pathway role, and the starting grade you are appointing the candidate onto.

It is your decision as the manager to determine the correct grade in line with evidence of skills, experience, qualifications etc. They do not have to start on the Entry Level or the End Level job description – if they satisfy the criteria for a middle grade, they should be appointed as appropriate.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Salary Grade: (all roles commence on the bottom scp of the Grade, except where 1 increment should be granted in line with the Pay Policy, unless full justification is noted in the 'Other relevant details' section below. Supply staff remain on bottom scp) | ■ | Salary note (career grade etc): | ■ |
| Other relevant details (including justification for Supply Teacher): | ■ | | |

It is important to state on the appointment form that this is a Career Pathway as there will be sections of the employee's Employment Contract relating specifically to their Career Pathway.

The usual processes apply in terms of appointing an employee onto a grade; all staff start on the bottom of the grade, unless their current salary is higher which could lead to starting at a different increment within that grade.

During a Career Pathway

Employees will be supported to develop in line with the Career Pathway. It is important to remember that employees appointed on a Career Pathway are contractually obliged to progress, and as such, should be allowed time in work to complete mandatory qualifications and development opportunities. Please refer to the Learning and Development Policy for further information on time allowed for qualifications and learning.

Performance management

It is recommended that at least one specific Career Pathway objective is set for employees during their regular performance management, and progression/development should be discussed at each one-to-one.

Progression

When an employee has satisfied the criteria of the next grade within the Career Pathway, managers should complete the relevant sections on the Contract Change Form and send in to Human Resources. If the progression is reliant on a qualification being achieved, please ensure a copy of this certificate is also sent along with the CCF. There is a section on the CCF specifically for Career Pathway progression:

| Career Pathways section only | | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Current Grade: | <input type="text"/> | New Grade: | <input type="text"/> |
| Evidence/justification (provide reasons/evidence to support application form progression, using the Career Pathways table criteria): | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Does this progression require qualification completion? | <<please select>> | Qualification title: | <input type="text"/> |
| Institute/Learning Provider: | <input type="text"/> | Date qualification achieved: | <input type="text"/> |

Salary increases

Salary increases will be in line with the Pay Policy, meaning staff on a Career Pathway cannot be accelerated through the increments within a grade. Increments will be in line with employee terms and conditions, and will occur in line with service length. Once the criteria for the next grade has been achieved/evidenced, employees will progress to the next grade, starting on the bottom increment.

Completion

Once the employee has satisfied the criteria required for the highest grade in the Career Pathway and is carrying out the role of the End Level job description, they will be confirmed in that position and their Career Pathway will be complete.

Resignation

Should an employee resign from their role part way through a Career Pathway, managers will need to review whether any training courses or development opportunities have been funded financially by the council. If there have been no costs incurred by the council, the normal leaver process will apply (i.e. leavers form, exit interview).

However, if the council has incurred a cost, from a training course for example, then the employee may need to repay this cost as per the Learning and Development Policy. This will depend on the length of time since the cost was incurred.

Dismissal

Where a manager is considering dismissal via the usual HR processes (e.g. attendance at work, disciplinary), consideration should be given to whether they are undertaking a qualification as part of their Career Pathway. For employees undertaking a Framework, there is additional legislation covering 'apprenticeships' that should be considered. Managers will need to consider the type of qualification, the stage they are at within their qualification, and the opportunity for this to be continued with a different employer. Please contact Felicity Chandler, Organisation Development Specialist, or Human Resources for advice if you are considering dismissal of an employee on a Career Pathway.

Recording qualifications and development

There is a section on iTrent in both People Manager, and Employee Self Service where learning and development can be recorded. Where a Framework is being undertaken, it is important to record this on iTrent so the council can produce statistics for Welsh Government on the numbers and types of qualifications being undertaken. These can be recorded when the employee enrolls, and is simply updated once they have completed the qualification. Short courses and CPD events can also be recorded, either by managers or the employee if they have self-service access.