



Guidance for archives, records management and conservation freelancers

The ARA recognises that increasing numbers of archivists, records managers and conservators are working independently on a freelance, contract or agency basis, often at an hourly or daily rate. The nature of this work can vary widely, and different levels of skill are required, from a simple short-term contract to management of a complex project or consultancy work on detailed matters of policy or legislative compliance. This guidance is in response to ARA member demand and aims solely to orientate members that are considering a move into freelance work. We advise members to do more detailed research according to their own specific circumstances before making any such move.

What to consider

In many instances, advertised positions for freelance, contract and agency work are not accompanied by a fee; fees often depend on skills and experience and are negotiated or budgeted into a defined project. This document is intended to assist professionals by highlighting issues to consider when negotiating fees in the range of situations they may encounter.

Professionals working independently must absorb and pay costs that those in regular salaried jobs do not generally need to consider. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Income tax and National Insurance (UK) or Pay Related Social Insurance (Republic of Ireland)
- pension contributions
- annual leave
- gaps between contracts
- time off for sickness
- work-related insurance (particularly professional liability)
- training
- any professional services you may need (e.g. accountancy, tax preparation, legal advice)
- equipment, stationery, utility and energy costs (if working from separate business premises)

It is therefore appropriate that **a percentage be added to the gross recommended pay in any of the given bands in the ARA salary table (see page 2)** to cover the costs mentioned above. This total is then divided by the total number of days worked in the year to give a daily rate, bearing in mind that allowance should be made for gaps between contract work, national holidays, annual leave that you intend to take and possible sickness when calculating the total number of days that you expect to work. This daily rate can be further sub-divided to give an hourly rate (also bearing in mind the number of average hours worked per week can vary by contract).

While a definitive recommendation on the percentage that should be applied is not possible given the variety of project work and the differing levels of expertise of professionals working in this area, a percentage surcharge of 30-35% on the gross recommended salary in any of the given bands is not unreasonable when some of the costs outlined above are taken into consideration.

Some other points to note

- If income tax and national/social insurance must be paid on a given fee, factor this in *before* calculating any surcharge and ensure you are registered with your national tax authority as self-employed, for tax purposes, if appropriate.
- It is standard for a daily or monthly rate to be higher for a short-term post, e.g. a six-week standalone job should pay more than six weeks equivalent of a year-long project. Similarly, very short contracts can attract in the region of 15-20% more per hour/day than longer contracts.
- It will be very unusual for employers to factor leave into a contract work. If you expect or need to take leave during the period of a contract, you will need to alert the contract employer in advance. This may affect your chances of winning a particular contract.

Sample salary calculation

Please note that the calculation given below is intended as an example only. The amount used in this calculation is not indicative of a standard or recommended salary for freelancers. Remuneration should vary depending on the nature of the work and the skills and experience of the professional. The outline gross daily-rate fees in each column below will also likely be, in most cases, minimum figures, assuming a long-term contract (i.e., 30% more than a salaried rate), inclusive of likely self-employed income tax and national/social insurance costs, and a total number of working days per year of 200.

Sample calculation of daily rate based on a salary of £44,791/€48,659

1. There are generally 261 working days in a given year.
2. Subtract 9 days to allow for national holidays, and a further 52 days (for example) to allow for annual leave, sickness and gaps between contracts, giving a rough total number of working days of 200.
3. 30% of £44,791/€48,659 is £13,437/€14,598 (rounded up) giving a total of £58,288/€48659; divided by 200 = a rough daily rate of £291 for the UK or €316 for Ireland.

Freelancers may find it useful to refer to the baseline ARA Salary Recommendations below to help inform the tender process when bidding for freelance work.

Level	Salary	Description
Para-professional	£23,392 / €23,788	Eg: support staff, performing some tasks independently. Possibly working towards qualification as a Foundation Member of the ARA and/or towards a degree/diploma.
Lower Management	Level 1 £30,233-£35,832 €32,438-€37,845	Eg: responsible for a discrete area of work/delivers on short term targets. Basic level of responsibility. Recently completed a specialist degree and/or qualified as a Foundation Member of the ARA.

	Level 2 £35,832 / €37,845	Eg: responsible for a discrete area of work/delivers on short term targets. Basic level of responsibility. Recently completed a specialist postgraduate degree and/or qualified as a Foundation Member of the ARA.
Experienced – Middle Management	£44,791/ €48,559	Eg: service delivery and resource leadership; specialist role, e.g. sole conservator; general consultant. May have qualified as a Registered Member of the ARA and may be working towards Fellowship qualification.
Senior Professional – Senior Management	£61,589/€6,878	Eg: multi-role, strategic, senior leadership position, substantial sector experience in the sector; specialist consultant and/or conservator. May have qualified as a Fellow of the ARA.

Other guidance for freelancers

It might also be useful to consider hourly rates in the conservation sector where freelance or contract work is more established and skills can be highly specialised. Icon’s Conservation Register lists many practices/workshops which often give their daily/hourly rates, e.g. the National Conservation Service (a not-for-profit) advertises an hourly rate of between £26-£60 and a daily rate for professional advice (for non-members) of £450-£600: <http://www.conservationregister.com/WorkshopDetail.asp?WorkshopID=733>

Consult guides in parallel sectors to archives and records management, eg museum freelancers:

<http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/working-with-freelancers/>

<http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Going-Solo-how-to-become-a-freelancer-ME.pdf> (Section 2.4 – the explanation of fees in ‘Going Solo...’ - is good and clear).

If in the UK, be aware of **IR35**, a tax law. It is properly known as the Intermediaries Legislation and came into force in April 2000 as part of the Finance Act. IR35 was introduced to tackle ‘disguised employment’, where organisations engage workers on a self-employed basis, usually through an intermediary, rather than on an employment contract. This kind of employment can save the engaging organisation a significant amount of money, as it no longer has to pay employers’ national insurance or offer any employment rights or benefits. An example is the ‘Friday to Monday’ phenomenon, where an employee ‘leaves’ employment

with their employer on a Friday only to return to the same role in the same place on Monday, but is formally engaged as a contractor or consultant trading through a personal services company and is thereby paying much less tax. For more details, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/off-payroll-working-in-the-private-sector> and

<https://www.ipse.co.uk/our/news-listing/consultation-everything-to-know.html>

While there is no legislation equivalent to IR35 in the Republic of Ireland, it is worthwhile consulting the Office of the Revenue Commissioners 'Code of Practice on Employment Status', which clearly lays out the differences between being an employee and being self-employed:

<https://www.revenue.ie/en/self-assessment-and-self-employment/documents/code-of-practice-on-employment-status.pdf>

An institution/employer cannot simply state that a particular position/project is for a self-employed person without meeting the conditions outlined in the above document.

For more details on the PRG's work visit: <https://www.archives.org.uk/careers/salary-recommendations.html> and <https://www.archives.org.uk/what-we-do/pay-review-group.html> or contact payreviewgroup@archives.org.uk (@ARAPayReviewGr1 on Twitter)

Pay Review Group
ARA

October 2023