



**2021**

**EMIRATISATION  
SALARY &  
EMPLOYMENT REPORT**

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# INTRODUCTION

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**Samantha Wright,  
Senior Recruitment Consultant - Emiratisation**

## Welcome to the inaugural Hays 2021 Emiratisation Salary & Employment Report.

It is my pleasure to introduce this report, which is a market-first and indeed, our first salary guide dedicated to the Emirati community.

The purpose of the report is to shine a light on the UAE's national workforce, to dispel myths and to inform employers about the hiring of Emiratis.

In the following pages you will find a comprehensive overview of the current jobs market in the UAE, the impacts of Covid-19 on the salaries and hiring of UAE nationals, and the outlook for the rest of 2021. You will also find advice for attracting and retaining the very best Emirati talent, as well as details of typical salaries paid to Emirati's across 8 core specialties.

Whether you are an employer looking to hire Emirati professionals or a UAE national working in the market, you can use the report to benchmark your salary packages against others in the region, to set new career goals and/or to inform your organisation's staffing strategy.

Of course, should you have any queries about this report or want to know more about our Emiratisation services, please do not hesitate to get in touch – you will find contact details at the back of this guide.

I hope you enjoy reading!

# SURVEY RESULTS OVERVIEW

While the UAE was relatively resilient to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic compared to other regional economies, the hiring market was nonetheless negatively hit. Of those employers who took part in our survey, 49% said they had been forced to reduce staffing budgets in a bid to remain operational, resulting in the letting go of workers – both UAE nationals and expats.

Unsurprisingly, lockdown measures and other movement restrictions saw job numbers decline most significantly within the aviation, event, hospitality and tourism industries. Yet despite the challenging market conditions, still more than half of all employers in the UAE either increased headcount in 2020 or kept it the same as in 2019. Positively and from our own experiences, we have seen hiring activity and job numbers really increase from Q4 of 2020 as lockdown restrictions eased and organisations were able to re-establish staffing budgets post-pandemic.

Specific to Emiratisation, there has been an uplift in demand for UAE national talent from both private and public sector organisations, particularly since the turn of the new year. Establishing strong In-Country Value scores remains a big focus for private sector organisations seeking to win contracts with government entities and of course, one way of doing this is by increasing the number of UAE nationals they have within their workforce. As such, we are noticing corporate services firms, consultancies, banks and investment firms within the private sector to increase the numbers of Emirati's they employ.

Motivation to hire Emiratis is not however purely based on In-Country Value scores and/or government mandates. The UAE national workforce is as educationally and skilfully equipped as it has ever been, with Emirati's holding many of the key skills employers require to achieve their business objectives. Salaries of local national talent are also becoming more aligned to the expat community and hiring Emirati talent is therefore less of a sticking point than it has been in previous years based on company budget restrictions.

From our observations of hiring in the UAE for the past 10 years, the number of Emiratis working in the private sector is at an all time high and we expect this to only increase going forwards. With confidence in the market growing post-pandemic, so too we anticipate the number of job opportunities for UAE nationals and expats to increase across all industries and sectors in the coming months. Certainly, our survey found much optimism for 2021, with 59% of employers planning to recruit additional headcount and 62% of UAE nationals and 56% of expat workers feeling positive about their career prospects for the year ahead.

## Salaries

Emirati salaries were more stable than the rest of the population working in the UAE in 2020. Almost two thirds (64%) of Emirati's said their salary remained the same in 2020 as in 2019, 26% received an increase and 10% experienced a decrease. In contrast, a marginally higher 33% of expats saw increases but more than double (21%) had their pay cut and it is clear that Emirati's salaries were more resilient to the negative impacts of Covid-19 than expats.

We do not expect the pandemic to negatively affect salaries in 2021 and therefore anticipate very few salary reductions to take place. Instead, we expect the majority of salaries to remain the same in 2021 as in 2020 (excluding any temporary reductions) and increases to be paid to those hitting required performance targets. This view is reflected by professionals working in the UAE with 53% expecting their salary to remain the same year-on-year in 2021, 44% expecting an increase and 2% expecting a decrease.

Historically, salaries paid to UAE nationals have been higher than those paid to expats however, this disparity has plateaued, particularly since the local government reviewed pay scales in 2019 to moderate differences and reflect real market rates. This has also increased the mobility of labour as the local workforce is less incentivised to work for just government entities who previously offered these premiums.

All this being said, there do remain differences in the remuneration packages being offered to local and expat talent. UAE national allowances remain mandatory however, child education allowances, which were previously offered to all Emirati's, are now provided on a discretionary basis. Government organisations will typically still include child allowances but they are offered less so to those working for semi-government entities, and more infrequently at private sector organisations.

## In demand

The most in-demand professionals (both UAE nationals and expats) in the market in 2020 and who we expect to face the greatest number of job opportunities going forward, are IT specialists with digital technology and data-driven skill sets. This demand has come about as a result of the ongoing focus on digitisation and automation by organisations across all sectors. Irrespective of the pandemic, to remain afloat and competitive in their respective markets, companies must invest in enterprise applications, cloud computing and new digital apps, rather than make do with legacy technology.

For all professions, employers look for employees with local market experience and who hold a degree and industry certification. As mentioned above, the availability of talent with these competencies – particularly within the Emirati community - is the highest it has ever been in the UAE. This is thanks to the government's drive to become a competitive knowledge-based economy, to upskill the local population and to be innovators of the future. In support of this, there has and continues to be significant investment in education, training, and learning and development programmes, and all of this together sets a very exciting future for the capabilities of the local workforce.

Also mentioned above, Emirati professionals have traditionally been more motivated to work for government rather than semi-government and private sector organisations due to the salary premiums they received, as well as cultural fit. This however is very much changing with Emiratis being more open to the types of organisation they work for in an effort to be more competitive in the global talent pool.

For Emirati professionals, career development opportunities are a huge factor when considering an employer and it was the number one reason why those who moved jobs in 2020 did so. Professionals want to know that there is opportunity to progress within the organisation and be able to see a clear career path that will enable them to achieve their future career goals. Alarmingly, 48% of Emiratis who took part in our survey said there was no scope for progression at their current organisation and it no surprise then that 49% would like to move employer in the next 12 months.

Other factors important to Emirati professionals include organisation culture and flexible working. Professionals like to see that other UAE nationals are employed at the firm and that their career objectives are being supported. They also like to see that the organisation accommodates flexible working, with the option to be able to start work early in the day and flex hours according to family commitments. To attract the very best Emirati talent therefore, organisations must consider these factors as well as their offerings with regards to salary and childcare allowances.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Hays 2021 Emiratisation Salary & Employment Report is our inaugural publication that explores salaries and benefits packages, as well as career experiences and aspirations of Emirati working professionals. It also includes salary rates for the most in-demand job roles across 8 different specialities.

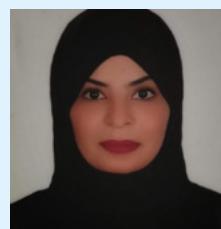
## Methodology

The report has been compiled using data gathered in Q4 2020 from over 100 UAE nationals working at organisations of all type and size across the UAE.

## Thank you

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals who provided valuable insight and participated in the collection of data for this report.

## Market insights



*"As with nations across the world, the pandemic resulted in many UAE nationals facing pay cuts or redundancy from their jobs in 2020. However, the UAE has led from the front in overcoming the negative effects of Covid-19 on the economy, and organisations are in very good shape going forwards. Many are successfully implementing hybrid, flexible working models for their employees and we expect there to be no more salary reductions for UAE nationals in 2021."*

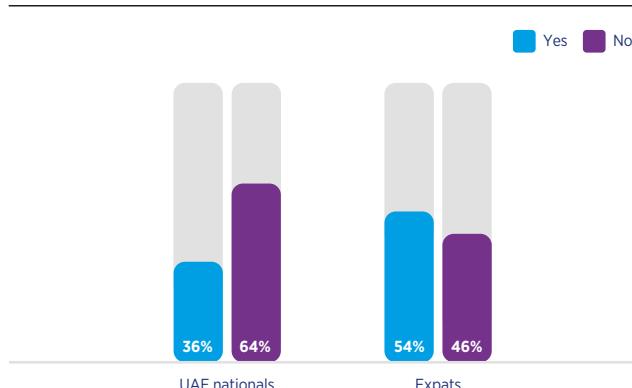
*"As a UAE national, I know I speak for all when I say children's education allowance is a significant factor when considering an employer."*

**Zainab Ameer, Emirati HR professional**

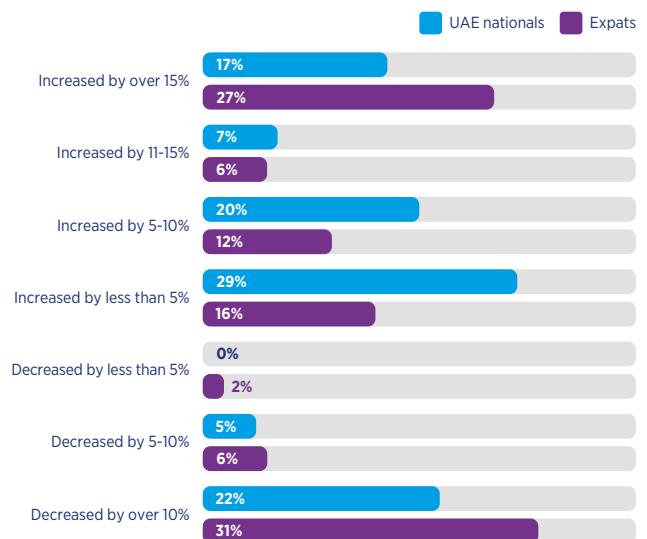
# EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

## Salary

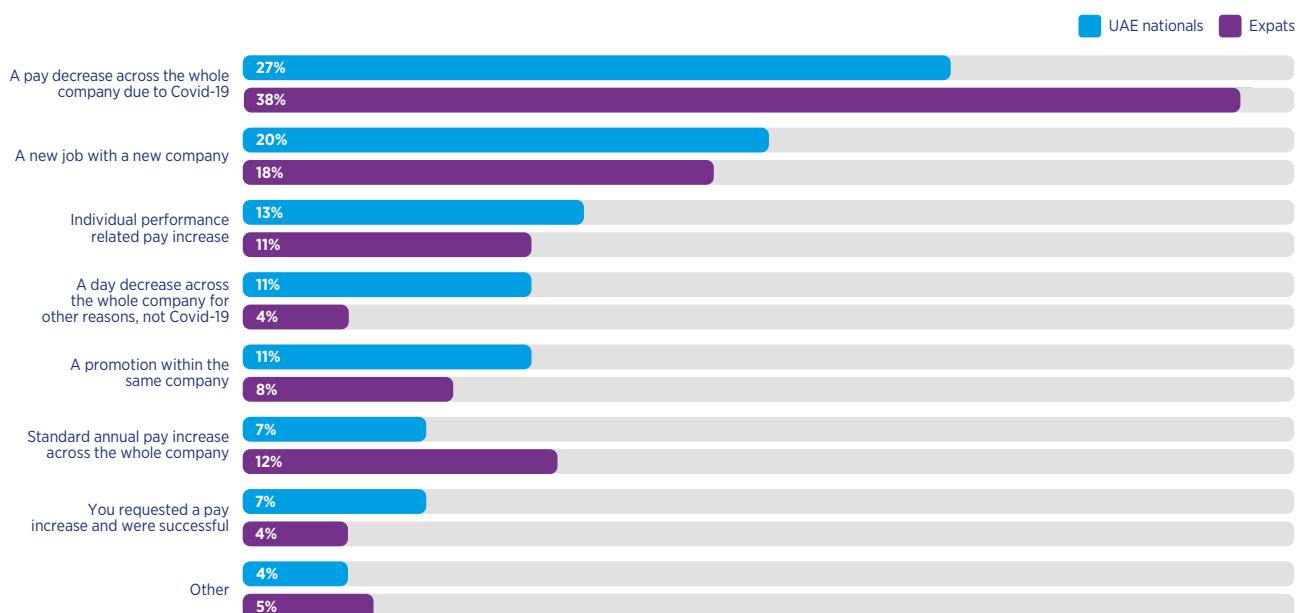
Did your salary change (increase or decrease) this year compared to last?



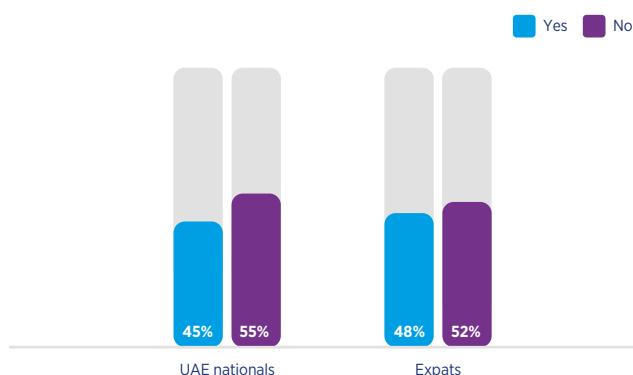
If answered yes, by what percentage did your salary change?



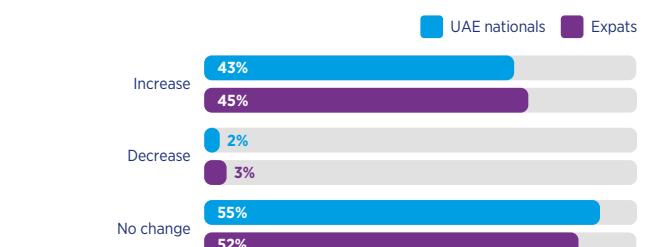
If answered yes, what was the reason for your salary change?



**Do you realistically expect your current salary to change in the next 12 months?**



**If answered yes, by how much do you realistically expect your salary to change?**



**55%**

of UAE nationals  
expect their salary  
to remain the same  
in 2021 as in 2020

**43%**

expect their  
pay to increase

**2%**

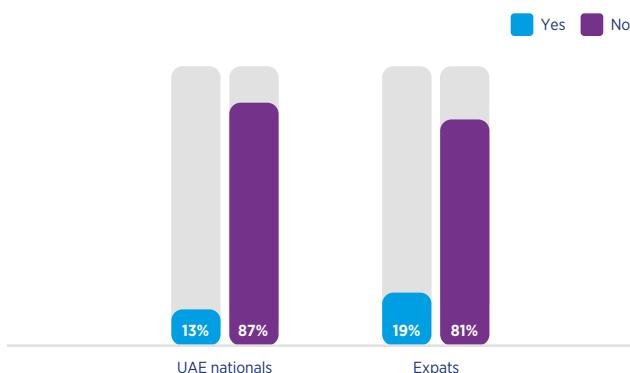
expect a pay cut



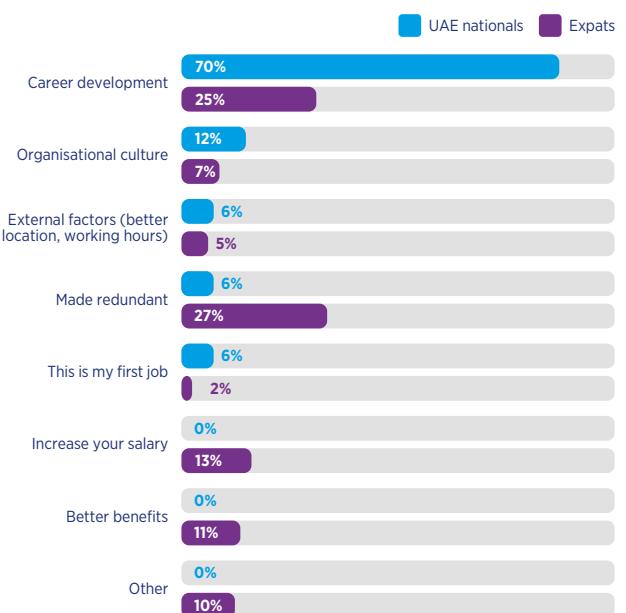
# EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

## Career

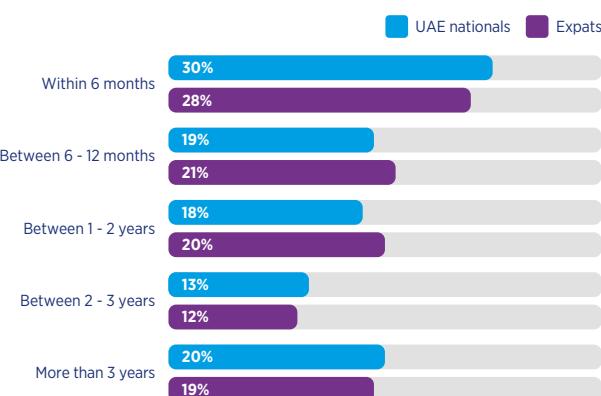
### Did you start a new job with a new organisation this year?



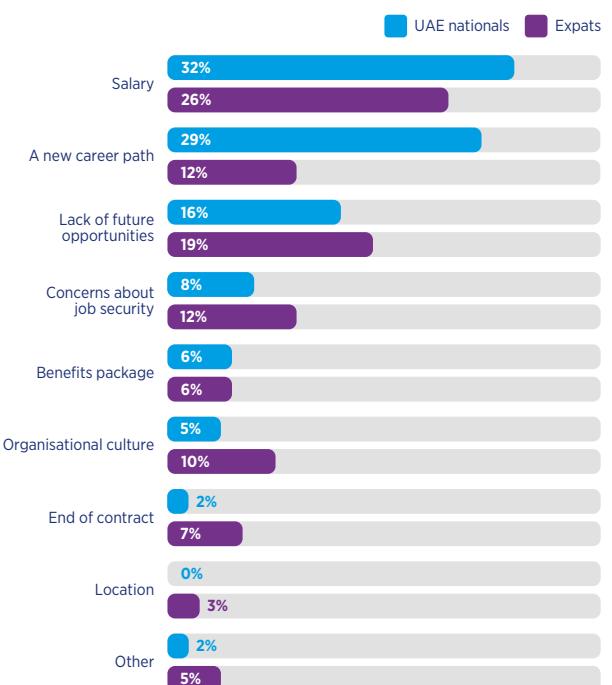
### If answered yes, what made move to a new job?



### When do you anticipate you will next move jobs with a new organisation?



### If you anticipate a job move within the next 12 months, why is this?



### Job search tips



*"On average, 1 job will attract 250 CVs. As technology evolves, you must get smarter with the way your CV navigates its way towards the top of searches. Focus on building an ATS, NLP, an ROI friendly, and concise CV."*

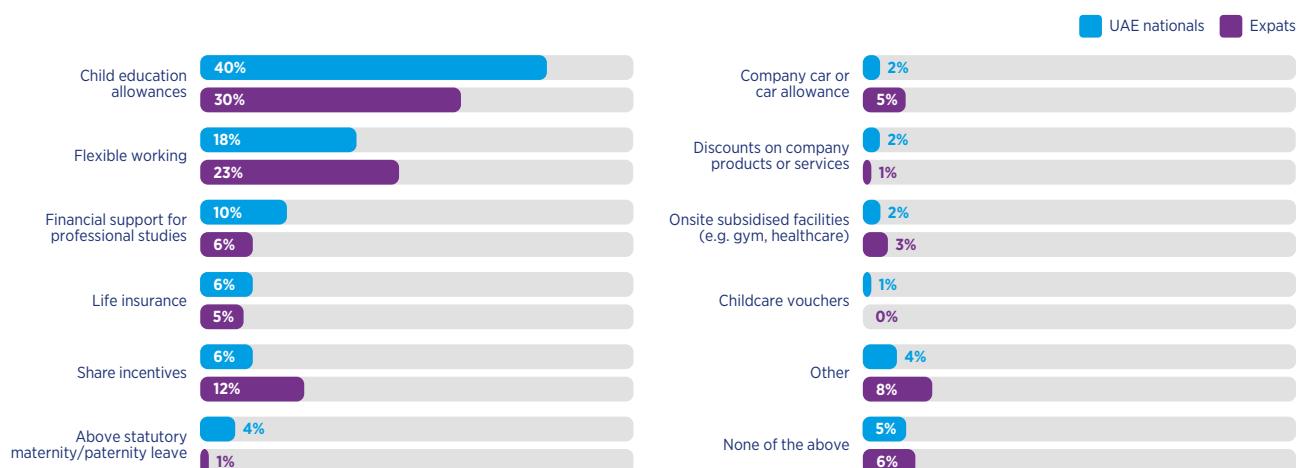
***On average, recruiters take 6 to 7 seconds to scan a CV, so carry over your most important aspects."***

**Jessica Chambers,  
CEO & Author of Writing a Powerful CV, iFormat**

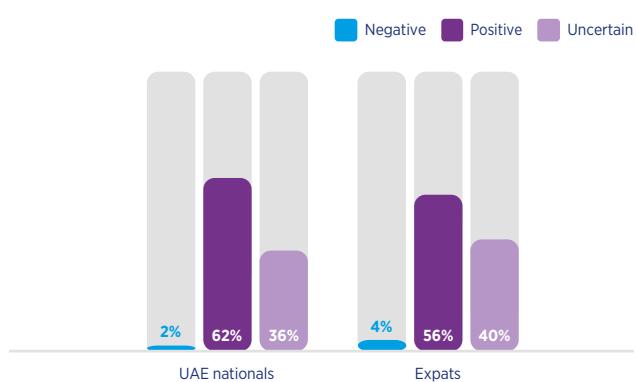
## What is the most important factor keeping you with your current employer?



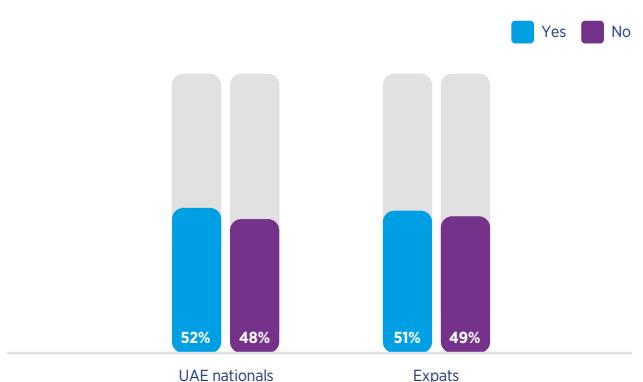
## When it comes to benefits, which is the most important to you when considering a new role?



## How do you feel about your career prospects for the next 12 months?



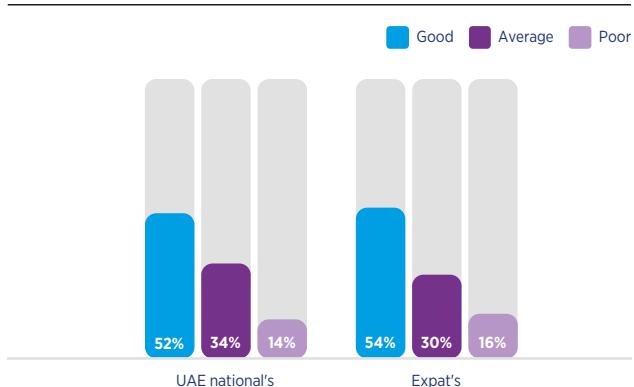
## Do you feel that there is scope for career progression within your organisation?



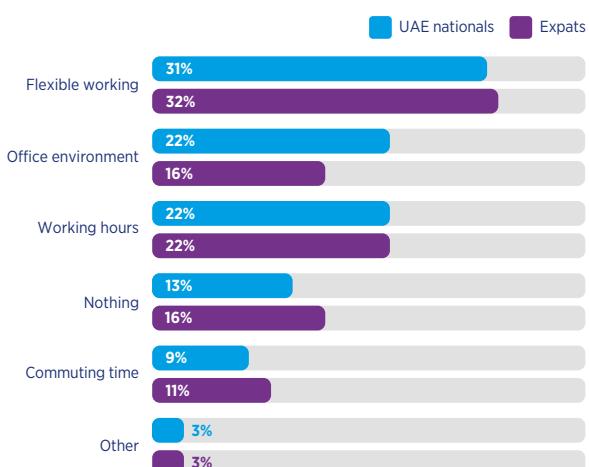
# EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

## Work-life balance & flexible working

### How would you rate your work-life balance?



### Which of the following would you ideally change to improve your work-life balance?



### Do you currently use any of the following flexible working options?



### What are your expectations regarding remote work at your company in the future?



**31%**  
of UAE nationals would like more flexible working to improve their work-life balance



# SALARY GUIDE

**Salary ranges by profession**



# SALARIES

## Audit

Position	Private sector AED Range	Public sector – Abu Dhabi AED Range	Public sector – Dubai AED Range
Head of Internal Audit	65,000-85,000	85,000-120,000	68,000-85,000
Audit Director	45,000-65,000	80,000-110,000	45,000-70,000
Audit Manager	30,000-45,000	50,000-75,000	35,000-50,000
Audit Specialist/Associate	15,000-24,000	23,000-30,000	20,000-28,000

## Finance

Position	Private sector AED Range	Public sector – Abu Dhabi AED Range	Public sector – Dubai AED Range
CFO	65,000-95,000	85,000-110,000	70,000-95,000
Finance Director	55,000-75,000	75,000-90,000	55,000-70,000
Financial Controller	50,000-65,000	60,000-80,000	55,000-70,000
Finance Manager	35,000-50,000	65,000-80,000	35,000-48,000
Credit Controller	30,000-45,000	45,000-55,000	32,000-47,000
Senior Accountant	23,000-33,000	38,000-55,000	25,000-35,000
Financial Analyst	18,000-28,000	22,000-35,000	20,000-28,000
Accountant	15,000-25,000	28,000-35,000	18,000-24,000

## Human Resources

Position	Private sector AED Range	Public sector – Abu Dhabi AED Range	Public sector – Dubai AED Range
CHRO	65,000-95,000	85,000-110,000	70,000-90,000
HR Director	50,000-80,000	75,000-95,000	50,000-75,000
HR Manager	25,000-45,000	55,000-70,000	35,000-45,000
L&D Manager	25,000-45,000	45,000-65,000	32,000-45,000
Talent Acquisition/Recruitment Manager	25,000-45,000	45,000-65,000	32,000-45,000
HR Specialist (3+ years' experience)	20,000-30,000	25,000-35,000	22,000-26,000
HR Generalist	15,000-25,000	25,000-35,000	16,000-26,000
HR Assistant	12,000-18,000	20,000-25,000	14,000-18,000

## IT & Digital Tech

Position	Private sector	Public sector – Abu Dhabi	Public sector – Dubai
	AED Range	AED Range	AED Range
CISO	70,000-95,000	85,000-115,000	70,000-95,000
CTO	70,000-90,000	85,000-110,000	75,000-90,000
IT Director	50,000-70,000	80,000-100,000	55,000-75,000
IT Manager	35,000-45,000	45,000-65,000	35,000-50,000
IT Project Manager	35,000-47,000	45,000-65,000	35,000-45,000
Senior IT Engineer	25,000-35,000	35,000-45,000	28,000-35,000
IT Analyst	21,000-28,000	28,000-35,000	22,000-28,000
IT Officer	15,000-23,000	20,000-25,000	16,000-21,000

## Legal

Position	Private sector	Public sector – Abu Dhabi	Public sector – Dubai
	AED Range	AED Range	AED Range
Chief Legal Officer	80,000-120,000	85,000-125,000	60,000-90,000
General Counsel	75,000-85,000	85,000-110,000	70,000-85,000
Head of Legal / Legal Director	70,000-80,000	75,000-85,000	65,000-75,000
Legal Manager	50,000-60,000	60,000-75,000	55,000-65,000
Senior Legal Counsel	45,000-55,000	50,000-60,000	45,000-55,000
Legal Counsel / Advisor	35,000-42,000	38,000-48,000	35,000-45,000
Paralegal	25,000-32,000	28,000-40,000	25,000-35,000
Legal Secretary	18,000-23,000	22,000-28,000	20,000-25,000

## Marketing & Comms

Position	Private sector	Public sector – Abu Dhabi	Public sector – Dubai
	AED Range	AED Range	AED Range
VP/CMO	60,000-90,000	85,000-105,000	65,000-85,000
Digital Marketing Director	50,000-70,000	75,000-95,000	55,000-70,000
Marketing Director	45,000-65,000	75,000-90,000	50,000-70,000
Head of Digital	35,000-55,000	65,000-80,000	38,000-60,000
Marketing Manager	25,000-45,000	45,000-65,000	28,000-36,000
Brand Manager	20,000-35,000	40,000-55,000	25,000-28,000
Social Media Manager	18,000-28,000	32,000-45,000	24,000-27,000
Marketing Specialist	15,000-22,000	28,000-35,000	20,000-25,000

Salaries shown here represent the total fixed monthly salary package for each position, in United Arab Emirates dirham (AED) as of Q4 2020.

'Range' represents the upper and lower salary rates from salary survey responses, as well as from job listings, job offers, and candidate registrations with Hays Middle East. Many factors can affect salary, including: location of role, size of business, industry, and the level of experience of the candidate.

# SALARIES

## Office Support

Position	Private sector AED Range	Public sector – Abu Dhabi AED Range	Public sector – Dubai AED Range
Office Manager	20,000-35,000	30,000-55,000	25,000-32,000
Executive Assistant	18,000-32,000	27,000-35,000	22,000-30,000
Personal Assistant	15,000-28,000	25,000-38,000	18,000-25,000
Admin Assistant	14,000-25,000	17,000-28,000	15,000-25,000

## Procurement & Facilities Management

Position	Private sector AED Range	Public sector – Abu Dhabi AED Range	Public sector – Dubai AED Range
Procurement/FM Director	45,000-55,000	75,000-95,000	45,000-65,000
Head of Procurement/FM	35,000-45,000	65,000-75,000	40,000-55,000
Procurement/FM Manager	30,000-40,000	45,000-65,000	35,000-45,000
Procurement/FM Executive	15,000-24,000	23,000-30,000	18,000-26,000

Salaries shown here represent the total fixed monthly salary package for each position, in United Arab Emirates dirham (AED) as of Q4 2020.

'Range' represents the upper and lower salary rates from salary survey responses, as well as from job listings, job offers, and candidate registrations with Hays Middle East. Many factors can affect salary, including: location of role, size of business, industry, and the level of experience of the candidate.

## SALARY BENCHMARKING

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# LOOKING FOR A MORE TAILORED REPORT?

Our salary benchmarking team focuses on delivering bespoke salary and reward reports to help you make the best workforce management decisions.



[FIND OUT MORE](#)

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# ABOUT US

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Hays is the leading global expert in qualified, professional and skilled recruitment. Last year our experts placed around 81,000 people into permanent jobs and around 254,000 people into temporary assignments. Hays was established as a recruitment business in 1968 and is a FTSE 250 listed company, with net fees of £1.1Bn. We employ 11,500 staff in 265 offices across 33 countries and we have become the most followed recruitment company on LinkedIn globally.

Hays Middle East was founded in December 2005 in Dubai, with a second office more recently established in Abu Dhabi. It has a specialist Emiratisation division which is committed to helping UAE employers find the very best Emirati talent.

Hays Emiratisation team has a unique breadth and depth experience in the region, providing an expert and consultative service to both Emirati professionals and employers seeking to hire UAE nationals. Its partners with private and public sector organisations from a range of industry sectors in the UAE, dealing with a range of vacancies for fresh graduates and experienced professionals.

Through our network connections and recruitment tools, we match candidates to the right organisations so both will flourish.

## Specialist areas

- Accountancy
- Banking
- Construction
- Engineering
- Executive Search
- Finance
- Facilities Management
- Healthcare
- HR
- IT & Digital Tech
- Legal
- Life Sciences
- Logistics
- Marketing
- Office Support
- Oil & Gas
- Procurement
- Property
- Sales
- Supply Chain

# 20

Specialist areas

# 10,000+

Database of UAE nationals

# #1

Most followed recruitment company on LinkedIn



# CONTACT US

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If you require any further information on Hays or would like to discuss your recruitment needs, contact Hays Emiratisation experts:



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