EMPOWERING WOMEN
FOR DIGITAL & REMOTE HR CAREERS

MODULE 7 · EMPLOYABILITY AND PORTFOLIO · LESSON 7.4

Negotiation under pay transparency

The law changed. You are now entitled to know the range before you are asked what you expect — and that changes the whole conversation.



1.25 training hours · Getting hired · RemoteHeR

WHAT THIS LESSON COVERS

Five things, in order

- What the Pay Transparency Directive changes for you as a candidate
- Researching a defensible range rather than naming a hopeful number
- Opening, anchoring, and responding to a first offer
- Negotiating conditions as well as pay — flexibility, equipment, development
- Accepting, declining, and keeping the relationship either way

11.1%

The unadjusted gender pay gap across the EU in 2024. A meaningful part of it is created at the point of hiring, in the negotiation itself.

Two people, the same role, different starting salaries — and every rise afterwards is a percentage of that first number. The gap compounds for thirty years.

This is why the Directive exists, and why the salary conversation is not a minor administrative step at the end of a process.

Eurostat, unadjusted gender pay gap, 2024, as cited in the RemoteHeR Skills Mapping Report (2026). Estonia 18.8%.

WHAT CHANGED

Directive (EU) 2023/970

Adopted in 2023, with member states required to transpose it into national law by June 2026.

- Pay information before the interview.
- No questions about your pay history.
- A right to pay-level information at work.



YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

What you can now expect

The range, in advance

Employers must give the initial pay level or range before the interview — in the advert or beforehand. If it is missing, asking for it is not cheeky; it is the process working.

No pay history questions

An employer may not ask what you currently earn or what you earned before. This matters most to anyone whose last salary was low, part-time, or in another country.

Criteria that are objective

Pay setting and progression must rest on objective, gender-neutral criteria. "What did you ask for" is not one of them.

Information once you are in

You can request average pay levels, broken down by sex, for work of equal value to yours. Useful long after this conversation.



"What are your salary expectations?" is no longer the first question.

They should have told you the range. If you are asked anyway, you can answer with their range instead of a number of your own — and that is a complete answer.

THE OLD SCRIPT AND THE NEW ONE

Answering the salary question

⚠ The old trap

- "I'm flexible" — which invites the bottom of the range
- "Around 28,000?" said as a question
- Naming your last salary, which anchors everything to it
- Apologising for the number after saying it
- Accepting the first figure on the call, out of relief

What you can say now

- "The advert says 30 to 36. Based on my portfolio I'd be looking at the upper part of that."
- "Could you share the range for the role before I answer?"
- "I'd rather not anchor to a previous role — I'm interested in the range for this one."
- State the number and stop talking
- "Thank you. May I have a day to consider it?"

RESEARCH

Building a defensible range

1. **Start with their published range**

   It is the most relevant number you will find, because it is the actual budget for the actual role.

2. **Cross-check against two sources**

   EURES for European comparisons, plus a national salary source. You are checking whether their range is normal, not replacing it.

3. **Adjust for location honestly**

   Remote pay may be set to the employer's location, to yours, or to a national band. Ask which, because it changes the number substantially.

4. **Write down your three numbers**

   Your target, your realistic figure, and the point below which you would decline. Decide all three before the call, never during it.

Decide your walk-away number before the conversation.

Not to use it as a threat. So that you recognise the moment you have reached it, when relief and adrenaline are both telling you to say yes.



THE CONVERSATION

Four moves that work

Ask before you answer

"Can you tell me how you arrived at that figure?" It is a fair question, it buys you thinking time, and the answer often contains the flexibility.

Justify with evidence, not need

"I'm bringing a portfolio covering recruitment, policy and HR data" works. "My rent has gone up" does not, however true it is.

Say the number, then stop

The silence after a figure is uncomfortable and it is doing work. Filling it is how people negotiate against themselves.

Ask for time, always

"May I have until tomorrow?" is never refused by a reasonable employer, and an employer who refuses it has told you something useful.

IN PRACTICE

The offer is at the bottom of the range

The advert said 30,000 to 36,000. The offer is 30,500. You have six assessed artefacts and no paid HR experience since 2022. You want the job.

What good looks like

- Do not accept on the call, however pleased you are. "Thank you — may I come back to you tomorrow?"
- Come back with a number and a reason: "I'd be looking at 33,500, on the basis of the portfolio and the compliance work."
- Offer them a route if the salary is fixed: a review at six months against agreed criteria, in writing.
- If they hold at 30,500 and you want the job, take it — and put the six-month review in writing anyway.

BEYOND THE NUMBER

What else is negotiable

Working pattern

Compressed hours, a fixed non-working day, core hours rather than fixed ones. Often easier to agree than salary and worth more to your life.

Equipment and home-office costs

Laptop, second screen, chair, and a contribution to connectivity. Some countries require reimbursement of home-working costs — check yours.

Development budget

A named amount and study time for your next qualification. Cheaper for them than salary and compounds for you.

The remote arrangement in writing

How many days, whether it can be withdrawn, and with what notice. A verbal promise about remote working is worth nothing in a reorganisation.



If it is not in the written offer, it does not exist.

Everything agreed on the call — the pattern, the equipment, the review date, the remote days — goes into the letter before you sign. Ask for it warmly, and ask every time.

DECIDING

Before you sign

1. **Read the whole contract, including the dull parts**

   Notice period, probation length, and any clause about where you may work. You spent Module 6 learning to read these.

2. **Check the remote clause specifically**

   Is remote working a term of the contract or a discretionary arrangement? The difference is everything if the policy changes.

3. **Compare against your three numbers**

   Not against your hopes, and not against how much you want it to be over. Against what you wrote down beforehand.

4. **Ask one more question if anything is unclear**

   The day before signing is the cheapest moment to ask. Afterwards it is a renegotiation.

EITHER WAY

Declining, and keeping the door open

Decline promptly and warmly

As soon as you know. It lets them move to their second choice, and being remembered as considerate costs you nothing.

Give a reason, briefly

"I've accepted a role that fits my hours better." One sentence. You do not owe a full account, and vagueness invites follow-up.

Offer to stay in touch

Mean it. The HR world in any country is small, and the person you decline this year interviews you again in three.

Ask for feedback anyway

Even when you are the one declining. What made them offer, and what nearly stopped them, is genuinely useful information.

Tools you will see used

EURES

The EU job mobility portal, with comparable salary information by country.

Payscale or Glassdoor

Useful as a cross-check. Weaker for smaller markets and for remote roles.

Your activity worksheet

Its comparison table puts salary, pattern, equipment, development and notice side by side.

Free tiers are enough for everything in this lesson.

NOW IT IS YOUR TURN

Build your position



Prepare a real negotiation, for a real advert

Find a genuine remote HR vacancy with a published range. Research it, write your three numbers with the reasoning, list what else you would negotiate, and draft your opening sentence.

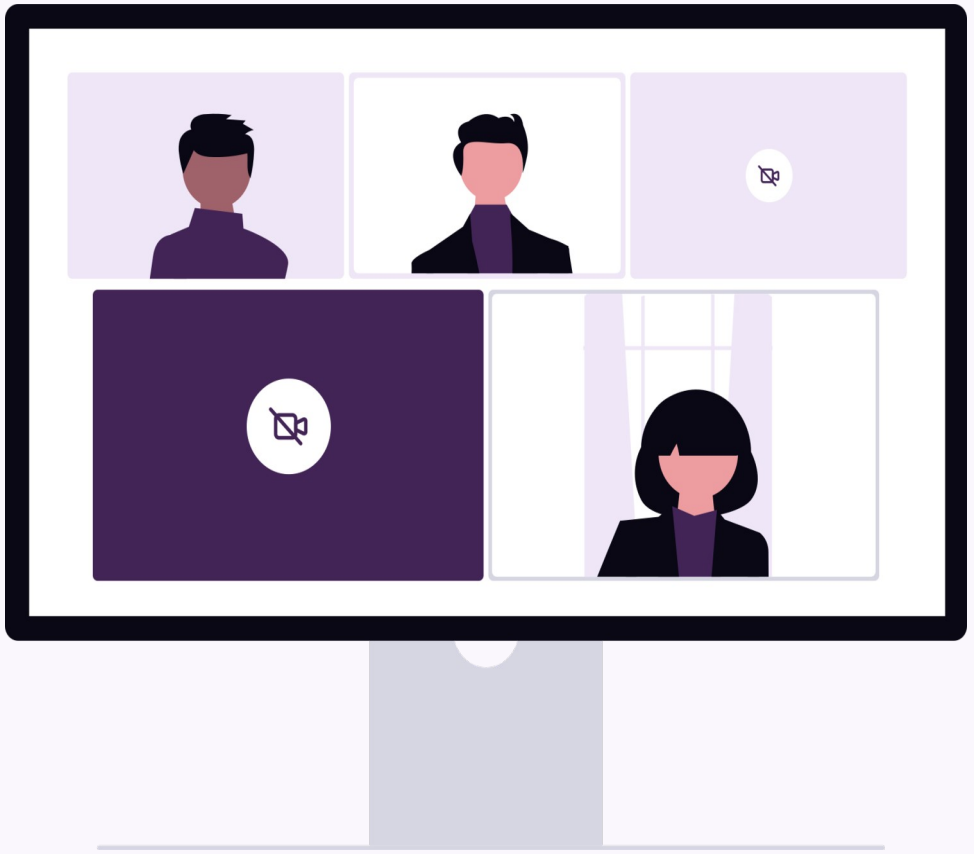
It feeds into

Every salary conversation you have after this programme.

No mark

Your tutor reads it and replies in writing. Activities carry no mark: only the module test and the artefact have a result.

Say your number out loud, then stop talking.



Say it to an empty room if you have to. The sentence is short and the silence after it is the hard part — and the only way to find that out is to leave one.

RECAP

Before you move on

- You are entitled to the pay range before the interview, and they may not ask your pay history.
- If asked for expectations, answer with their range and where you sit in it — that is a complete answer.
- Write down three numbers before the call: target, realistic, and the point you would decline.
- Say your figure, then stop talking. The silence is doing work.
- If it is not in the written offer, it does not exist. Ask warmly, and ask every time.

Next: take the knowledge check. It is never graded, you have unlimited attempts, and every option comes with feedback.

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Lesson 7.4 complete

Do the activity with a real advert. Lesson 7.5 assembles everything into your portfolio.

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