

dba

Survey Guide

Helping to
keep your
business

In Focus

DBA In Focus Survey – help guide

Design data to drive business decisions.

The DBA's In Focus Report is the most comprehensive analysis of industry fees, income, salaries, utilisation rates, recovery rates, benefits and trends in the UK design sector.

It allows you to benchmark your financial performance against businesses just like yours.

How the survey works

Every year, DBA members participate in the DBA's In Focus survey to create the most accurate and representative picture of the markers of design business health. Completing the survey gives you access to both the comprehensive PDF report and an online platform allowing you to segment data tables by factors such as business size, region, performance quartiles, job roles and KPIs.

"The DBA's In Focus Report provides the most comprehensive, reliable and relevant contextual data available in the industry. We find ourselves dipping into the report frequently throughout the year for all sorts of peer-set validation to benchmark our profitability, fee structures, salary mapping and even growth planning. We're duty-bound as agency leaders to contribute to studies like this that return so much value at so many junctions!"

Andy Sexton, Executive Director, 2LK

We can only produce this valuable report if members participate and share their data with us. All data is securely gathered via a secure and individual link and remains in utmost confidence - no agency is ever identifiable. **Completing the survey can be a learning experience in itself, and the results are much more valuable to you when your data is included and you can compare them to your own data.**

You can keep logging in as many times as you like during the period the survey is open to complete your response up to the point that you submit your data. You can forward the link to colleagues to allow them to input data, and when you submit your response you will be able to save a copy for your records.

How to participate

In this document, we've compiled a list of data you'll need to have to hand when filling out the survey. We recommend you gather the information listed together, asking any colleagues for assistance with information, as you need. Completing the survey is not a test. If you struggle with any questions, please contact us.

On the next two pages, you'll find a list of the information you'll need to gather to complete the survey. Your unique, secure link is in the email we sent you. The survey saves your progress as you go, so you can open it at any time to review the questions in more detail while you prepare your data.

Adam Fennelow
Membership Director

Any questions?

Contact Adam Fennelow on adam@dba.org.uk if you have questions as you are completing the survey.

About the Business

- What type of entity is your business
- When is your financial year end
- In what regions do you have offices
- Do you hold any sustainability certifications

Current Business State

Your perception of how business is going for you currently:

- The health of your business currently
- The biggest issues facing your business currently

Future Business State

Your perception of what's coming up for your business, as well as some questions around your finances and plans over the coming 12 months:

- The percentage change you expect to see in your gross income in the coming 12 months
- The percentage change you expect to see in your permanent staff levels in the coming 12 months
- Planned pay rise percentage levels
- The biggest issues you expect that your business will face in the coming years

New Business

A few general questions about your plans in this area:

- Are you targeting new sectors or regions.

Business Software

What software do you use for accounting, project management and new business.

About your Finances

- Fee income and gross income by UK / international location of client in the last 12 months of available figures
- Fee income and gross income by design discipline in the last 12 months of available figures
- Total staff costs in the last 12 months of available figures
- Total overheads in the last 12 months of available figures
- Income by retained clients vs new clients in the last 12 months of available figures

Charging Clients and Invoicing

- Do you offer both hourly billing rates and fixed price and what is the percentage split between either
- What percentage of time incurred on billable work do you actually bill to clients
- When do you invoice your clients – before, during, and / or after completing work
- What are your payment terms
- How often do you accept clients' terms over yours
- What percentage of your invoices are paid late

Salaries, Charge Out Rates, Utilisation and Bonuses*

- Staff numbers in every job role and their genders
- Average salary for each role (inc dividends) plus bonuses
- Hourly charge out rate for each role
- Utilisation rate for each role
- Numbers of staff by gender

***Notes for Completion**

FTE Staff: Please indicate the number of male, female and non-binary full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in each position. If you do not have any staff in a position, please leave blank. If a role is filled by a part-time member of staff put the appropriate decimal e.g. 0.5.

Average Salary: Please provide the average annual total salary including taxes, that members of staff receive in each position that you have staff in. If any part of the salary is paid as dividend this should be included when working out average salaries. We want a realistic picture of what people are earning, not how they are reducing their tax liability.

If you have part-time staff, please provide the full-time equivalent salary. For example, if you have a financial controller working 2 days a week earning £10,000 put 0.4 in the FTE Staff column and £25,000 in the salary column.

Hourly Charge Out Rate: Please provide the average hourly rather than the day rate in pounds sterling for each position that you have staff in. Even if you do not discuss hourly rates with clients, what rate would you have to charge to get to the profit margin you are achieving?

Utilisation Rate: Please provide the average utilisation rate for each position you have staff in. Utilisation rate is defined as the percentage of total time charged to fee generating work, excluding holidays and illness. For example, if a designer works 9am - 6pm with an hour for lunch they have 8 hours available to bill. If they bill 6 of those hours their utilisation rate will be 75% ($6 / 8 \times 100$). If you don't monitor utilisation of staff in certain positions, please leave blank.

Bonus %: Please provide the average annual proportion of annual salary that was awarded to members of staff in each position that you have staff in.

About the Staff

- How many FTE staff on your payroll
- Number of EU and International staff
- Percentage split of chargeable / non-chargeable staff
- Ethnicity of your employees
- Headcount turnover over the past year
- Home working frequency

Gender Average Pay

- Total salary bill per gender by seniority

Freelancers, Temporary Staff and Out-sourcing

- Number of FTE freelancers included in overheads
- Freelancers as percentage (approx.) of total salary costs
- Freelancer day rates across various roles
- Job functions you outsource to external providers

Internships and Placements

- Duration and education level of interns and placements
- Salaries per week

Parental Leave and Pay

- Details of any enhanced parental pay
- Any additional parental benefits

Other Benefits

- Details of health, travel and additional benefits offered to different levels of staff
- Percentage value of benefits (excluding pension contributions) on top of basic salary, by level of seniority

Pensions

- Percentage company contributions by level of seniority