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## Staff Compensation Guidelines

**Last Updated: April 2025**

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**Purpose:** The University seeks to attract and retain qualified employees by maintaining a compensation system that is externally competitive and internally consistent. The University is also committed to ensuring fair and equitable compensation and promotional opportunities for its employees.

**Scope:** These guidelines apply to all benefited employees of the University of Massachusetts Lowell, excluding faculty and classified positions. These guidelines are subject to the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

### **Compensation Structure:**

#### **Pay Grades and Salary Ranges**

The University's salary structure consists of pay grades with corresponding salary ranges for each pay grade for all professional staff positions. (See Professional Salary Ranges)

#### Pay Grade

Each position is designated a pay grade based on factors such as:

- a) Job requirements and knowledge;
- b) Impact of actions and complexity;
- c) Scope of position and supervision exercised;
- d) Level of Communications;
- e) Knowledge, skills and abilities required of the position.

#### Salary Ranges

Each pay grade has a salary range with a minimum, a midpoint, and maximum range. Ranges are reviewed and typically updated every 2 ½ years.

For the purposes of these guidelines, ranges are defined as:

- a) Minimum Range: The minimum pay level to be competitive for employees who meet the minimum qualifications for the job;
- b) Midpoint Range: The mathematical midpoint of the salary range;
- c) Maximum Range: The highest pay rate in a pay grade.

### **Responsible Departments:**

Human Resources oversees the development, management, and implementation of the compensation program to include making recommendations to the essential hire committee and/or executive cabinet regarding the competitiveness of salaries within the University as well as implementation of equity and promotion requests.

**Process:****Guiding Principles**

- a) Salaries shall be compared to the external marketplace applying market data surveys used to establish rates for specific types of work.
- b) Market analysis, using a sample of University jobs, is reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- c) Position and/or salary review shall consider factors such as pay for similar kinds of work in the appropriate market and within the university structure, pay for comparable benchmark universities, and availability of funds.

**New Position Evaluation and Job Reclassification:****New Positions**

Newly established positions shall be evaluated by Human Resources/Compensation for the appropriate pay grade, title, and accurate job description.

**Evaluation of Existing Positions**

The University recognizes that staff positions may change in work content or responsibilities. Therefore, a position may be evaluated when there has been a significant, demonstrated change in required job skills or responsibilities. This process may be initiated by Human Resources/Compensation or at the request of the hiring manager, department head or respective executive cabinet member, a union representative, or by the individual employee.

**Procedure for Position Evaluation:****New positions:**

A request to establish a new staff position shall be initiated by the department manager or division head and submitted to Human Resources/Compensation and area Vice Chancellor.

- 1) All requests shall include:
  - a) Job description;
  - b) Up to date organizational chart;
  - c) Manager's impact statement on the impact of the request both in terms of organizational structure and budget;
  - d) Additional supporting documentation supporting the need for the position;
- 2) All requests for new positions shall be reviewed by Human Resources/Compensation and approved by the respective executive cabinet member or designee.
- 3) Positions shall be classified as exempt (salaried) or non-exempt (hourly) in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

**Evaluation of Existing Positions or Upgrades:**

Requests to evaluate existing positions, including possible upgrades, should be initiated by the department manager or division head. On certain occasions, union representatives may contact Human Resources/Compensation or Human Resources/Labor Relations for a review of a particular position. Individual employees who do contact Human Resources directly will be encouraged to speak with their manager and/or union representative.

Requests should include:

- a) Most recent job description;
- b) Narrative of change in job duties (or proposed new job description);
- c) Up to date organizational chart;
- d) Employees resume or CV;
- e) Manager's impact statement on the impact of the request both in terms of organizational structure and budget;
- f) Additional supporting documentation supporting the need for the evaluation;

The Executive Director, Compensation & Benefits or their designee will review the request, and if necessary, conduct a job audit and provide a recommended outcome.

**Timeframe:**

Request for review of existing positions shall be limited to two times per year unless as otherwise required by law or applicable collective bargaining agreement(s). Other exceptions might include those which require an internal posting or if there is another qualifying reason for an earlier effective date.

Requests should be submitted 60-90 days prior to the requested effective date of January 1 or July 1. Human Resources/Compensation will make every effort to respond to inquiries in a timely manner.

**Salary Administration**

New Hires

Starting salary\* for new hires generally shall be determined as follows:

- 1) The hiring manager shall recommend a salary offer based upon the candidate's education and experience as well as knowledge and skills and abilities. Human Resources/Compensation shall review the proposed salary for compliance with University policy prior to final approval of an offer.
- 2) Generally, for positions in lower pay grades, the hiring manager shall propose a starting salary from minimum to the first quartile. For those with significant experience, education and skills, a proposed starting salary may be considered between the first quartile and the midpoint.
- 3) For salaries above the midpoint, the hiring manager will work with Human Resources/Compensation to provide justification to the appropriate executive cabinet member for final approval.
- 4) If an employee applies or is hired into a position that is not covered by the professional staff pay grade classification structure, the salary shall be based on new hire guidelines for such positions.

\*Salaries are also subject to availability of funds. Principal Investigators are encouraged to consult with HR/Compensation for salary recommendations when writing new grants.

**Promotion:**

Promotion is advancement to a position with a higher pay grade. Promotions may occur within the same department or when moving from to another department in a higher grade.

- 1) Salaries for employees who are promoted shall be proposed and approved in the same manner as new hires. The amount of the increase will be based on the employees' current salary in relation to the new range, the individual's qualifications and experience as well as the rate of other employees in similar positions. The promoted employee's new salary shall be at least the minimum of the new salary range.
- 2) Promotional increases also require approval of the respective executive cabinet member or designee.

**Rehire Process:**

The salary of a rehired employee shall be determined by the procedures established for new hires.

**Transfers:**

- 1) A lateral transfer is the movement by an employee to another staff position with the same assigned grade level.
  - a) In case of a lateral transfer, the employee usually receives no increase in pay.
  - b) If an employee transfers before the effective date of a merit or general adjustment increase, the department to which the employee transfers should consult with Human Resources/Compensation to determine the proper procedures for handling the transfer.
- 2) A transfer to a position in a lower grade is the movement of an employee from one staff position to a position with a lower pay grade level.
  - a) The rate of pay for this type of change shall be determined by Human Resources/Compensation with input from the hiring manager.
  - b) The employee's salary in the new position shall normally be adjusted to the same relative percentage of the grade from which the employee transferred.

**Maximum Salary:**

Employees with salaries that are at or over the maximum for the pay grade for a position into which they transfer generally do not receive an increase. At this time, none of the labor union agreements prohibit members from receiving a union increase if they are over the maximum of their range.

**Market and Equity Review:**

Salaries for positions will be reviewed from time-to-time and compared to market data and reviewed for internal equity with comparable positions. The University conducts periodic equity reviews to stay compliant with the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act and other federal and state regulations. Requests for market or equity adjustments will be determined by Human Resources/Compensation and will require approval of the appropriate executive cabinet member or designee.

**Other Compensation Review Requests:**

There may be instances where other requests for compensation adjustments may be requested. Similar to requests for position evaluation or upgrade, these compensation review requests should be initiated by the department manager or division head. On rare occasions, union representatives may reach out to Human Resources/Compensation or Human Resources/Labor Relations. Staff who do contact Human Resources directly are encouraged to speak with their manager and/or union representative.

Requests should include:

- a) Most recent job description;
- b) Narrative of change in job duties (or proposed new job description);
- c) Up to date organizational chart;
- d) Employees resume or CV;
- e) Manager's impact statement on the impact of the request both in terms of organizational structure and budget;
- f) Additional supporting documentation supporting the need for the evaluation;

The Executive Director, Compensation & Benefits or their designee will review the request, and if necessary, conduct a job audit to ensure that the proposed new position or upgrade aligns with University standards and structures.

**Timeframe:**

Human Resources/Compensation will make every effort to respond to inquiries within 60 days of the request. However, implementation for any approved increases will be effective either July 1 or January 1. Exceptions will be made if required by law or applicable collective bargaining agreement(s). Other exceptions might include those which require an internal posting or if there is another qualifying reason for an earlier effective date.

**Note on Classified Union Reclassification Requests:**

Classified union employees (CTU, MTU and Teamsters) are allowed to submit a Job Classification Appeal request through Human Resources/Compensation. Please see the respective union Collective Bargaining Agreement for more details. Classified employees may appeal the decision with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD) under the provisions of Chapter 30, Section 49 of the Massachusetts General Laws. If HRD denies, the employee may then appeal to the Civil Service Commission.

**Additional Pay:**

The University recognizes the need for additional pay for employees in some designated positions and/or for hours of work which may be in periods of time or in circumstances other than those considered normal. Human Resources/Compensation is responsible for establishing and administering supplemental pay policies.

**Acting or Interim Duties:**

On occasion, an employee may be asked to assume additional duties or another position on an interim or "acting" basis. An appropriate salary shall be determined by Human Resources/Compensation in consultation with the department and will be paid either as

additional compensation or in base as a temporary reclassification. Upon completion of the acting assignment, the employee's rate shall be adjusted.

**FLSA Status:**

A staff position may be exempt from overtime compensation based on job duties, responsibilities, salary and in some cases, minimum education required.

- 1) The exempt determination is made under the provisions of the FLSA and is administered by Human Resources/Compensation.
- 2) The FLSA requires that positions which are determined to be non-exempt (i.e., not exempt from overtime compensation) will be compensated at one and one-half times the rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 in a work week.
- 3) Except as indicated otherwise by union contract, only actual hours worked are counted in computing eligibility for overtime pay. Leaves and other absence codes will not be counted or added to the number of "hours worked" in a work week and will therefore not be calculated in the overtime rate of pay. Leave hours will be at the regular rate of pay.

\* In the event that these guidelines and the bargaining unit contract differ, the bargaining unit contract shall prevail, as long as the provisions adhere to applicable federal and state law.\*

*Last updated: 4/1/25*

## ***Glossary of Compensation & Classification Terms***

<i><b>Term</b></i>	<i><b>Definition</b></i>
<b>Appeal</b>	A request for reconsideration of a compensation decision.
<b>Benchmark Job</b>	A job that is commonly found in many wage and salary surveys and has reliable market data readily available.
<b>Classification</b>	Method of categorizing jobs, each having a description and pay range, for purposes of job comparisons as well as wage comparability.
<b>Compa-Ratio</b>	<p>The ratio showing the relationship of an employee's actual salary to the midpoint of the salary range for a particular grade.</p> <p>Example: Employee earns \$65,000/year. Job is listed as Grade P15 Midpoint: \$69,126 Compa-Ratio: 94 % (<math>\\$65,000/\\$69,126</math>)</p>
<b>Compensation</b>	Total monetary and non-monetary pay provided to an employee.
<b>Compensation Review</b>	A formal evaluation of an employee's current salary to determine if an adjustment is necessary based on performance, market conditions or internal equity. These reviews may also include consideration for promotion or upgrade.
<b>Equity</b>	Pay equity is similarity in pay for all jobs requiring comparable levels of knowledge, skills and ability. Two types: internal equity and external equity.
<b>Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)</b>	U.S. Federal law which sets the minimum wage and requires overtime (of time and one-half pay) for "non-exempt" positions. Jobs are referred to as "exempt" from the FLSA or "non-exempt." Non-exempt positions require overtime if an employee works more than 40 hours in one week.
<b>Market Analysis</b>	Each benchmark job is compared to reliable salary survey data of comparable positions.
<b>Pay Compression</b>	Occurs when there is little to no difference in pay between employees with different levels of experience, skills and qualifications.
<b>Pay Grade</b>	The level under which a position is classified based on the level of knowledge, skills and responsibilities. Salary ranges are maintained for each pay grade.
<b>Promotion</b>	An advancement to a higher-level position or grade.
<b>Range Spread</b>	<p>The distance from the minimum to the maximum of the grade. (Range Maximum – Range Minimum) / Range Minimum</p> <p>Example: <math>(\\$49,200 - \\$32,800) / \\$32,800 = 50\%</math></p>
<b>Slotting</b>	Assigning a grade to each position based on its comparison to related benchmark job data and with consideration of the level of the job compared to other positions within the department and the organization.