

# MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY<sup>™</sup>

## Policy and Procedure

[Table of Contents](#) | [Index](#) | [Internal Audit Web](#)

### Staff Compensation Program

#### Purpose

The purpose of the staff salary compensation program is to establish and maintain a staff compensation system that is externally competitive and internally consistent with the following objectives:

- To ensure Mississippi State University's ability to attract, retain, and motivate well-qualified employees in support of the institution's strategic plan;
- To maintain a compensation framework (grade structure) for Mississippi State University's staff positions that is internally consistent and aligns roles of similar scope and complexity across staff jobs;
- To provide Administrators a streamlined approach to describe jobs, evaluate jobs, archive and share information, manage all related processes, and produce reports relative to job analysis, evaluation programs, and salary decisions;
- To establish procedures regarding staff salary decisions; to ensure that staff salary decisions are unbiased and are not made in a discriminatory or retaliatory manner.

While closely related, job evaluation and salary administration serve a different purpose in the staff compensation program and are addressed separately in this policy.

#### Policy

#### Compensation Structure

##### Job Grades

The University utilizes a salary structure that establishes a salary range for each regular staff position within the salary structure. Each position receives a job grade.

Each job grade has a salary range with a minimum, a midpoint, and maximum. For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- The minimum range of the salary grade is the competitive salary for employees who meet the minimum qualifications for the job;
- The midpoint of the range is the mathematical midpoint of the competitive salary range; and
- The top of the range is the highest competitive pay rate in a particular job grade. An employee whose salary has reached or exceeded the top of the range may only receive an annual adjustment in salary based on merit up to the average percentage available to all staff employees on a University-wide basis.

#### Procedure

Mississippi State University's entire administrative and management team is responsible for the implementation and administration of the compensation program, including salary administration and job evaluation.

- Human Resources Management is responsible from a University-wide perspective for developing, managing, and communicating the guidelines, and structure of the compensation program;
- The President, Provost and Executive Vice President, each Vice President, and the Athletic Director are responsible for implementing and informing employees within their division about the compensation program;
- Prior to the beginning of each odd-numbered fiscal year, or as requested by the President, Human Resources Management will make recommendations to the President's Council regarding the salary structure and the competitiveness of staff salaries within the University. Recommendations will be based on the following:
  - o Salaries shall be compared to the external market place, applying published market data surveys used to establish rates for specific types of work from the area in which we compete;
  - o Market analysis, using a sample of University jobs (benchmark jobs); Pay for comparable benchmark universities;
  - o Availability of funds.

The President shall be responsible for revising the salary structure based on the recommendations of Human Resources Management and the President's Council.

### **Job Salary Grade or Classification Determination**

As a new job is created or as the duties of an existing job are changed, arrangements need to be made for a representative from Human Resources Management to conduct a job study. A job study is an analytical process that Mississippi State University uses to determine the job's appropriate classification. The outcome of a job study includes:

- A formalized job description, and
- The recommended job grade or classification, based on the evaluation

### Job Study Procedures

Evaluations of staff positions are made using a web-based evaluation system. This system creates accurate and meaningful comparisons between one university job and another, and additionally provides meaningful comparisons between jobs within other organizations in our recruiting areas. Jobs are analyzed based on what each position requires in:

- **Know-How** – or the knowledge and skills that are necessary for acceptable job performance
- **Problem-Solving** – or the analysis of the thinking challenge and the thinking environment of a job; and
- **Accountability** – or the answerability for an action and the consequences of that action

### Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are the basis of all job classifications. Human Resources Management prepares job descriptions through use of questionnaires and interviews. The job description:

- **Outlines** the job's key duties, responsibilities and essential functions
- **Clarifies** the position's reporting chain
- **Documents** the salary grade or classification of the position, and
- **Provides** a document of common understanding about the job between supervisor and employee

### Changes to Job Descriptions

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that each job description is current and complete. **Significant** permanent changes in job descriptions should be communicated immediately to Human Resources Management, in order to make any necessary revisions.

### Evaluation of Existing Positions for Reclassification

Mississippi State University recognizes that staff positions may change in work content or responsibilities. Therefore, a position may be evaluated for reclassification when there has been a **significant** change in required job skills or responsibilities.

### Procedure for Job Evaluation

- A request to establish a new staff position or to evaluate an existing staff position shall be initiated by the division, department, or unit head and submitted to Human Resources Management through the use of the online Request for Position Evaluation electronic form.
- A link and temporary password to the online job evaluation system will be sent to the employee and the employee's supervisor for existing positions or to the supervisor requesting a new position for completion of the Job Evaluation Questionnaire.
- After the Job Evaluation Questionnaire is complete, Human Resources Management staff will conduct a job study and/or evaluate the job. This process may include interviews with the employee and/or the supervisor.
- The Director of Human Resources Management will review, approve, and communicate the results of the job evaluation in terms of title and/or salary grade.
- Human Resource Management's assignment of title and/or salary grade will be approved for implementation in the same manner as recommendations for new hires listed below.

## **Salary Administration**

### New Hires

Starting salary for new hires shall be determined as follows:

- The hiring official shall review the prospective employee's relevant education, length of related experience, and knowledge and skills.
- If the new employee possesses only the minimum requirements for the position, the hiring official shall set the salary at the minimum of the salary range without additional approvals.
- If the employee possesses relevant education, skills, or experience beyond the minimum required, the hiring official (Dean, Director or Department Head) has the flexibility to approve a request that a new hire be appointed at a rate between the minimum and midpoint of the salary range. If any salary above the minimum is approved, written justification for the higher salary must be submitted with the hiring paperwork and will be maintained in the new employee's personnel file.
- For salaries above the midpoint, the hiring official shall propose a salary and provide justification to Human Resources Management, who will review the recommendation and will either approve it or write an explanation of why an alternative is recommended. The recommendations of the hiring official and Human Resources Management shall be provided to the Provost and Executive Vice President, the Vice President, the Athletic Director, or the President for the employees or departments who report directly to the President. The decision shall be made by that individual. Justification for the decision along with the recommendations must be submitted with the hiring paperwork and will be maintained in the new employee's personnel file.

- No salary above the maximum of the range shall be approved without approval of the President. A recommendation by Human Resources Management accompanied by an endorsement by the Provost and Executive Vice President, Vice President, or Athletic Director is required prior to submission to the President for approval. For employees or departments that report directly to the President, Human Resources Management shall submit a recommendation directly to the President.
- If an employee in a position that is not in the staff job grade classification structure applies for and is hired into a regular staff position, the salary shall be based on new hire guidelines for regular staff employees.

### Promotion

Promotion is defined as advancement to a position with a higher job grade.

- Salaries for employees who are promoted shall be proposed and approved in the same manner as new hires.

### Reinstatement

The salary of a reinstated employee shall be determined by the procedures established for new hires. However, if an employee returns to the same position within one year, the employee's previous salary shall be reinstated, unless a different salary is recommended based on the current salary for new hires. This recommendation must be made by Human Resources Management and approved by the appropriate parties required for approving new hires.

Note: An employee who leaves the University and then returns to University employment for the sole purpose of circumventing this policy shall not be entitled to any provisions of this policy that would enhance the employee's salary.

### Lateral

A lateral transfer is the movement by an employee to another staff position with the same assigned grade level.

- In the case of a lateral transfer, the employee usually receives no increase in pay; however, if a salary adjustment is warranted, it shall be proposed and approved in the same manner as salaries for new hires.

### Demotion

A demotion is the movement of an employee with a full-time equivalent (FTE) of 0.5 or greater, from one regular position to a position with a lower grade level.

- The employee's salary in the new position shall normally be adjusted to the same relative percentage of the grade from which the employee was demoted. In exceptional cases, the hiring official can follow the same procedure to seek approval of a different salary as for new hires.

### Interim Assignments

An employee may receive a salary increase for assuming a position on an "interim" basis. For an active, vacant position, an employee may be designated and compensated as "interim."

- An employee in an interim role shall normally receive a ten (10) percent increase over his or her current

salary. Exceptions to this shall be made in the following instances:

- o If ten percent is less than the minimum pay range of the position which the employee is temporarily filling, the employee shall receive an increase to the minimum of the new range, provided the employee meets the minimum qualifications.
- o If a ten percent increase is greater than the salary for which the employee would be eligible if hired on a regular basis, the interim's salary shall be the salary at which the interim would be paid if hired on a regular basis.
- Upon completion of the interim assignment, the employee's salary shall return to the employee's regular salary plus any performance based (merit) increases earned during the interim assignment.
- Interim assignment terms shall not exceed a period of twelve (12) months in duration. Requests for extensions must be approved by the President.

### Salary Adjustment for Additional or Reduced Duties

An employee may receive a salary adjustment for the assignment of significant additional duties outside the position's current scope or for the reduction of duties within the position's current scope which do not warrant a reclassification but are **not temporary** in nature. If the revised duties do not warrant a change in title and/or salary grade after review by HRM, the base salary may be adjusted by an amount up to eight (8) percent of the base salary. If the salary adjustment results in a salary above the midpoint of the range for the job, the recommendations of the department's administrator(s) and HRM will be provided to the Provost and Executive Vice President, the Vice President, the Athletic Director, or the President for the employees or departments who report directly to the President. The decision shall be made by that individual. Justification for the decision along with the recommendations must be submitted with the employment action form paperwork and will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

### Counter-Offers

- External to Mississippi State University – while a formal offer letter for another job external to the University is not required, the existence of the job offer must be verifiable.
- Internal to Mississippi State University – one salary counter-offer may be extended by the department in which a staff employee is currently employed if the staff employee has a verifiable job offer for another position at Mississippi State University.
- The title and/or salary shall be proposed and approved in the same manner as salaries for new hires for external and internal counter-offers.

### Exclusions

This program excludes the following positions and/or employee groups:

President  
 Provost and Executive Vice President  
 Vice Presidents  
 Athletic Director and Coaches  
 Academic Deans  
 Faculty  
 Skilled Craft and Service Maintenance

### **Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources Management at least every four years.

***For information about this policy, contact the Department of Human Resources Management.***

*For comments about the MSU Policy website, contact: [webmaster@audit.msstate.edu](mailto:webmaster@audit.msstate.edu).*