

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON  
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Human Resources  
AREA: Compensation

Number: 02.01.02

<b>SUBJECT: Classification of Staff Jobs</b>
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I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document establishes general guidelines to be used in the establishment, auditing, re-evaluating or revising staff job classifications of benefits-eligible staff jobs at the University of Houston. This directive is prepared in compliance with [System Administrative Memorandum \(SAM\) 02.B.01](#), the laws of the State of Texas, and applicable federal and local rules and regulations. It applies to all benefits-eligible staff jobs, regardless of the source of funds from which paid, but does not apply to faculty or professional librarians.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. It is the policy of the University of Houston to maintain an objective, job classification system with competitive pay ranges that provide for different rates of pay for jobs requiring different levels of responsibility, experience, skill, and knowledge. The job classification system shall provide a fair and equitable method for preparing and updating job descriptions, for assigning jobs to pay grades, and for compensating staff employees holding benefits-eligible jobs at the University of Houston.
- B. The policy of the University of Houston System and its components is to ensure equal opportunity in all its educational programs and activities, and all terms and conditions of employment without regard to age, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, veteran's status, genetic information, or sex (including pregnancy), except where such a distinction is required by law. Additionally, UH System prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment and educational programs on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For the UH System's Official Non-Discrimination Statement, see [SAM.01.D.05 – Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement](#).
- C. The Human Resources Department shall periodically conduct job audits and reviews to ensure that jobs are properly classified and, if necessary, take corrective action.
- D. No new staff job may be established and filled, nor may an existing job be reclassified, without prior evaluation and approval by the Human Resources Department.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Benchmark job: A job with characteristics that can be found in other job classifications so that it can serve as an anchor for related jobs above or below, or comparable to it. Typically, benchmark jobs are used for making pay comparisons either within the organization or to comparable jobs outside the organization.
- B. Demotion: A change in duty assignment from a job in one classification to a job in another classification in a lower pay grade. Such a demotion may involve a decrease in compensation.

- C. Exempt job: A job that is not subject to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Exempt jobs include professionals, administrators, and executives paid on a monthly basis.
- D. Job: A collection of tasks, duties, and responsibilities that constitutes the assignment for one or more individuals whose work is of the same nature and that require essentially the same qualifications. Each job has an official university job title and is assigned to a pay grade based on a job evaluation.
- E. Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ): A data collection questionnaire used to gather job information.
- F. Job classification: Assignment of a job to a pay grade based on a quantitative evaluation of the job. As a management tool, job classification provides uniform titles for use in personnel administration, budgets, payroll, and other official records; serves as the basis for establishing fair pay levels for staff employees; and establishes the requirements of jobs for promotional, recruitment, and training purposes.
- G. Job description: A summary of the most important features of a job, including the general nature of the work to be performed, job duties, and job requirements. Job descriptions are written in a generic manner, using a uniform format for applicability throughout the university.
- H. Job title: The official title of a university job that shall be used on all personnel documents and records. (A different functional title may be used by departments for internal purposes, provided it is not another approved, official university job title.)
- I. Job evaluation: The review of a job classification that may result in reassignment of the job to a higher or lower pay grade as a result of significant changes in responsibilities, duties, market value and/or requirements.
- J. Job hierarchy: A result of the job evaluation process where jobs are evaluated either by market data analysis, use of an objective job evaluation methodology, or a combination of both processes. The job hierarchy is the foundation for how jobs are placed on the pay grade structure and is a reflection of job value by the organization.
- K. Lateral transfer: A change in duty assignment to another job within the same pay grade and pay range, normally with no change in pay.
- L. Midpoint: The pay level midway between the minimum and maximum rates of the pay range. Midpoints represent the university's desired competitive job rate relative to the external market.
- M. Non-exempt job: A job deemed to be non-exempt according to the Fair Labor Standards Act and, therefore, subject to the overtime provisions of the FLSA. Non-exempt jobs are paid biweekly on an hourly basis.
- N. Pay grade: A pay level into which jobs of the same or similar value are grouped for compensation purposes. All jobs in a pay grade have the same pay range.
- O. Pay range: The range of pay rates established for a pay grade. The minimum and maximum of each pay range represent the minimum and maximum values, respectively, to the university for all jobs assigned to that particular pay range.

- P. Pay rate: The specific salary or hourly rate within the pay range that is paid to the employee. Under terminology provided in federal law, exempt employees are paid salaries, and non-exempt employees are paid an hourly rate.
- Q. Pay structures: The structures of pay grades and pay ranges, each with a minimum, midpoint, and maximum rate, developed by the university for regular, benefits-eligible staff jobs. Specific information on pay structures is available from the Human Resources Department upon request.
- R. Position: A unique placeholder used to assign a specific job code and title to a department for an individual employee, used to track full-time equivalency (FTE). Many positions may be assigned to the same job code and title. Positions are typically used for budgetary tracking of FTE.
- S. Promotion: A change in duty assignment from one job to a new job in a higher pay grade, which involves a higher level of responsibility and higher job requirements, and which usually involves an increase in pay. Generally, promotions are movement within the same job family or following a defined career path.
- T. Position Request Form (ePRF): The official electronic university form used for staffing purposes to request creation of a new position, creation of a new job, or reclassification of a job or position.
- U. Quartiles: The four equal parts of the pay range. Typically, an employee's pay position in the pay range is related to factors such as performance and years of service.
- V. Reclassification: A change in a position's job, title, and/or grade level based on a significant change in the duties and level of responsibility.
- W. Transfer: A move by an employee from one university job to another vacant job, resulting from voluntary application for the job by the employee. A transfer may be a promotion, a lateral move, or a demotion, depending upon whether the job transferred into is assigned a higher, the same, or a lower job classification and pay grade.

#### IV. PROVISIONS

- A. The Chief Human Resources Officer or designee is responsible for administration and maintenance of a quantitative job and classification system for university staff employees and for the development and maintenance of related compensation programs, procedures, and practices.
- B. Jobs that involve substantially the same kind of work, equivalent levels of complexity and responsibility, and require comparable knowledge and experience will be grouped together into the same job title and job code.
- C. Each staff job shall have a job description that includes the official job title, a description of the job function, examples of job duties, and job requirements. Job descriptions shall be written in a generic manner using a uniform format for applicability throughout the university.
- D. The job title assigned by the Human Resources Department to each job in the job classification system will be used for official university purposes. This job title shall be used on all personnel documents and records. A different functional position title may be used by departments for internal purposes with the approval of division administration; the functional position title is not the same as an approved, official university job title.

- E. All wage and salary funds received by the University of Houston are subject to university regulation and control, regardless of the original source of funds. The origin of wage and salary funds has no bearing on the pay grade assignment or pay rates established for jobs and positions.

#### V. JOB DESCRIPTIONS

- A. The duties, responsibilities, and job requirements of all jobs in the university's job classification system are documented in writing by means of a job description. Job descriptions are necessary for the following reasons:
  - 1. To evaluate and classify jobs to determine appropriate internal job relationships;
  - 2. To communicate to new or existing employees their fundamental duties and responsibilities;
  - 3. To provide job information that can be used to determine competitive pay relationships in the labor market;
  - 4. To provide job information that can be used in the recruitment and selection process;
  - 5. To provide job information that can be used in employee relations matters, such as performance appraisals, employee orientation, grievance resolution, and identification of training and development needs; and
  - 6. To ensure compliance with government legislation.
- B. The Human Resources Department is responsible for preparing and updating job descriptions for all benefits-eligible staff jobs using a uniform format. The job description format may be revised from time to time to better meet the needs of the university and conform to changing legal requirements.
- C. Official job descriptions for all university staff jobs are maintained by the Human Resources Department.
- D. Changes in the duties or responsibilities may require a job evaluation. Where changes are judged to be significant by the supervisor and/or manager, he or she should direct the employee to complete a JAQ and solicit review by the appropriate college or division business administrator. If the administrator concurs, he or she signs the JAQ and forwards it to the Human Resources Department, where it will be reviewed according to established procedures.
- E. To ensure that job descriptions are maintained and current, the Human Resources Department will review all new jobs, plus those jobs for which evaluation is requested. An annual review of the university's jobs and pay structures will be made by the Human Resources Department.

#### VI. JOB EVALUATION AND CLASSIFICATION

- A. Most benefits-eligible staff jobs will be assigned to pay grades. Jobs are assigned to pay grades based on their relationship to the job hierarchy and the market value.
- B. New or significantly revised jobs must be reviewed by the Human Resources Department in order to classify them into their appropriate pay grade. When a new job is created or an existing one is substantially revised, a JAQ should be completed and submitted

through the college or division business administrator to the Human Resources Department as an attachment to an ePRF. A memo explaining the request should also be included with this documentation. To assist in expediting the request, colleges/divisions should include all pertinent information, including organization charts.

- C. Based on information contained in the JAQ, the Human Resources Department will perform the following tasks:
1. Coordinate the gathering of all necessary supplementary job data to achieve a detailed understanding of the job, including supervisor and incumbent input;
  2. Work with the department or division to prepare a new job description, if justified;
  3. Assign the job to the appropriate pay grade according to the job evaluation results, if substantiated.
- D. When a new job is created or an existing job is evaluated, the Human Resources Department will work with the department or division to develop a draft job description for the college or division business administrator(s) to review and notify him or her (or as many business administrators as may be affected) of the job evaluation rating. After comments are obtained from the administrator(s), the new or revised job description will be finalized and a formal determination on pay grade assignment will be made by the Human Resources Department.
- E. Once a formal determination on pay grade assignment has been made by Human Resources, the department may challenge the determination with appropriate documentation (including, but not limited to, descriptive job documentation) with approval from the division Vice President. For record purposes, the vice president must submit a written rationale for the exception for the official job file.

## VII. PAY STRUCTURES

- A. The University of Houston uses pay structures to establish compensation limits for most benefits-eligible, staff jobs. Copies of pay structures are available in the Human Resources Department and on the [HR web site](#).
1. UHN – pay structure for most non-exempt staff jobs;
  2. UHE – pay structure for most exempt staff jobs;
  3. ITN – pay structure for non-exempt information technology jobs;
  4. ITE – pay structure for exempt information technology jobs;
  5. RSE – pay structure for exempt research jobs; and
  6. RSN – pay structure for non-exempt research jobs.
- B. Pay structures are based on competitive practices and internal equity considerations and provide the possibility for progression to more responsible jobs with higher and broader pay ranges. The structures are intended to accomplish the following functions:
1. Define the competitive pay for the university to the relevant external market for jobs and job families;

2. Establish differential pay levels between jobs to recognize differing demands; and
  3. Establish lower and upper limits of value for each job.
- C. Midpoints of the pay ranges represent the university's desired competitive policy line or position to the external market. Midpoints are determined by a statistical calculation based on external pay survey data for benchmark jobs in each pay grade. The minimum and maximum of each pay range represent the minimum and maximum values, respectively, to the university for all of the jobs assigned to that particular pay range.
- D. In most cases, the first quartile is considered the range of value for a newly hired employee who meets the minimum qualifications of the job. Thus, most new employees should be hired within the first quartile of the range, but colleges and divisions have full authority to hire or promote into jobs at rates up to midpoint. Hiring employees above the midpoint requires the prior approval of the appropriate vice president and the Human Resources Department.
- E. Hiring employees at salaries below the minimum of the pay range is not permitted. Conversely, the maximum of a pay range is the upper limit of pay for a job. An employee's rate of pay may not normally exceed the maximum of the pay range for his or her job.
- F. Annually, as part of the budget process, the Human Resources Department will review the competitiveness of the university's pay structures. The review will include (1) comparisons of the competitive status of the university's pay ranges to the relevant external markets, and (2) a review of anticipated average movement of pay structures by peer and comparison organizations. Based on the findings of the review, a recommendation will be made to the administration concerning adjustments to the pay structures. The recommendation will include detailed cost analyses.

#### VIII. RECLASSIFICATIONS

- A. Significant changes in the duties and level of responsibility of a position may result in a change in job and/or pay grade level.
- B. Requests for reclassification of positions, filled or vacant, should be submitted to the Human Resources Department on an ePRF. The ePRF should be accompanied by a memo explaining, in detail, the basis for the proposed reclassification. Other pertinent information, such as organization charts, similar functions in the organization, etc., should be included if it will aid in understanding the request.
- C. On requests for reclassification of a filled job, a JAQ must be completed and signed by the incumbent. The immediate supervisor and manager must also sign the JAQ to indicate their review and concurrence. The completed JAQ should be attached to the ePRF with the memo and other pertinent information, such as organization charts, similar functions in the organization, etc., that will aid in understanding the request.
- D. The Human Resources Department will review the request and determine whether sufficient information exists to make a determination. If necessary, a meeting will be scheduled with the incumbent to obtain additional job information and reach a better understanding of the job.
- E. After review of all relevant information, Human Resources will make a preliminary determination and discuss it with the college or division business administrator to obtain his or her input. Shortly thereafter, a final determination will be made and communicated

formally in writing to the college or division. Once a formal determination on pay grade assignment has been made by Human Resources, the department may challenge the determination with appropriate documentation (including, but not limited to, descriptive job documentation) with approval from the division Vice President. For record purposes, the vice president must submit a written rationale for the exception for the official job file.

- F. An employee whose job is reclassified to a job having increased responsibilities or complexity of duties and in a higher pay grade, and who is eligible to remain in the job, is considered to have been promoted as a result of the reclassification. Compensation for such reclassification will be in accordance with the university's policies and procedures governing promotions.
- G. An employee whose job is reclassified to a job having decreased responsibilities and complexity of duties, resulting in a lower job classification and pay grade, is considered to have been demoted as a result of the reclassification.
- H. An employee whose job is reclassified to another job assigned to the same pay grade is considered to have received a title change or lateral reclassification as a result of the reclassification. Normally there will be no change to the base pay rate of an employee who is laterally reclassified.

- IX. Responsible Party: Associate Vice President for Human Resources  
Review: Every three years on or before September 1

X. APPROVAL

Raymond Bartlett  
Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance

Renu Khator  
President

Date of President's Approval: 10/27/20

XI. REFERENCES

[UH System Administrative Memorandum \(SAM\) 02.B.01 – Classification of Staff Jobs](#)