

JCCP FAQs

General

1. What is the Job Classification and Compensation Review (JCCR)?

The JCCR is a project to identify and implement an improved system for classifying jobs and establishing market-based compensation ranges for regular, non-faculty positions at the College.

2. Why did the College conduct the JCCR?

The College conducted the JCCR to:

- Develop a common classification and compensation system for all non-faculty positions that is easy to manage and understand.
- Assure that all positions are classified and compensated within our employment markets.
- Develop a structure for career growth (job groups and levels).
- Streamline the job classification approval process.
- Develop a compensation philosophy that supports Amherst College's desire to attract and retain high-performing employees.

3. Who conducted the JCCR?

The review was directed by a Project Committee composed of Maria-Judith Rodriguez, Chief Human Resources Officer; Lisa Rutherford, General Counsel and Chief Policy Officer; and Kevin Weinman, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer. In addition, an Advisory Committee representing College staff members and faculty provided feedback throughout the project. The Advisory Committee was composed of two members of the Employee Council, two members of the Managers' Council, and two members of the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR). Additionally, Sullivan, Cotter and Associates, Inc. (SullivanCotter), a national human resources consulting firm with extensive experience evaluating and designing staff compensation programs for higher-education institutions, conducted market surveys and analyses and provided recommendations that greatly assisted in arriving at the final classification structure and market-based pay ranges.

Classification

4. What is the new classification system?

The new job classification system combines Staff and Trustee-Appointed positions into a single structure, with five different job groups, that bring together positions with similar attributes and responsibilities from across campus. Within each job group are multiple levels based on six job factors: scope of responsibility, required levels of decision making/problem solving, supervision, leadership, knowledge, and background/experience. Each position has been assigned to the job group and level that most closely matches the attributes of the position. Please note that the system classifies positions, not employees, based on the attributes and responsibilities of each position.

5. What is the benefit of the new classification system?

The new system brings much-needed consistency, clarity, equity and transparency to the classification of all positions based upon the attributes and job responsibilities of each role. For many years, the College had two separate staff member classification systems—Staff and Trustee-Appointed (TA). Over the years, the differences between the two classifications became unclear, resulting in similar positions with different classifications and compensation. Also, Trustee-Appointed positions were not classified beyond simply the TA designation, which meant that a large proportion of Amherst College employees had no direct guidance on potential career progression paths or market-based pay ranges for their roles and other roles they might be considering. A common staff classification system provides guidance for career progression and recruitment, and allows for a better assessment of market compensation.

6. Does merging the two classification systems into a single system negatively impact my pay or benefits?

No. No staff member will receive a cut in pay as a result of the new classification system. Going forward, all staff members will have access to the same set of benefits, including research leave. A new employee handbook listing all terms and conditions of employment is forthcoming.

7. My position has been placed into a job group and level in the new system. Will the position ever move into a different a group and level?

Positions were placed in a job group and level based upon a variety of job attributes and responsibilities (see Question 4). If these attributes and responsibilities change, the position may be reclassified to a different level.

8. If I receive a promotion, will my position move into a new job group and/or level?

Most likely. A job's group and level is based upon its attributes and responsibilities; if these factors change, as is often the case with a promotion, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) in consultation with the supervisor, will re-classify the position into a different job group and level.

9. Was placement in a job group and level impacted by whether an employee is paid on an hourly or a salaried basis?

No. Placement in a job group and level was based entirely on the six job factors as described in the Job Progression Level Guide posted on the OHR website: https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/JCCP-JobGroupsLevelsGuide_0.pdf. The College follows the guidelines of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), administered by the US Department of Labor, to determine if a position is exempt or non-exempt. More information about the guidelines may be found at <https://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/>.

10. Will the College publicly post the job group and level of every position?

A list of positions will be posted on the OHR website.

Compensation

11. What is the compensation review?

The College engaged SullivanCotter to conduct an independent review of the Staff and Trustee-Appointed position salaries to create market-based pay ranges for every job group and level in the new classification system. These ranges will ensure that the College's salaries are competitive in today's job market.

12. What methodology was used?

The consultants analyzed survey pay data of *benchmark jobs** from labor markets within which the College competes for talent, primarily comparable higher education institutions, the greater Pioneer Valley or general industry.

*A benchmark job is defined as a job that is used to make pay comparisons to comparable jobs outside Amherst College. These jobs are similarly structured or require similar skill sets at another institution. Compensation data for these jobs are readily available in published surveys.

13. Does every position at Amherst College have a market benchmark?

We found that approximately two-thirds of the College's positions have a well-defined market benchmark. However, we do have a number of positions that are unique in how they are structured or that are not included in compensation surveys; as a result, do not have a direct comparison in their respective labor market(s).

14. If my position did not have a benchmark, how is my salary compared to the market?

For positions for which there is not a benchmark, SullivanCotter, in collaboration with the OHR, senior staff and supervisors analyzed numerous factors of the position (including responsibility and knowledge, experience, leadership, supervisory, and decision-making requirements) and compared them to the closest benchmark positions. Based on the analysis, the appropriate job level and pay range was selected.

15. Will the result of the compensation study be available to employees?

Since not all jobs are benchmark jobs and there are several factors that determine where a job is placed in a level, some of which include confidential salary information, this information will not be shared. However, we will work and communicate with each division to update our market comparables regularly with reliable compensation survey data.

16. Why were the salaries of some institutions with whom we compete for employees not included in the market study?

For the market study, we needed to use a common set of institutions to produce a large and broadly-representative comparison group, so the choice of institutions to include was based on size and location, as well as on the availability of data.

17. How do Amherst College salaries compare to those in the Five College Consortium?

Unfortunately, we cannot compare the College to the Five College Consortium because, to have reliable market data, we need large sample sizes in the data set. Reliable salary surveys do not report data below five organizations and, with sample sizes that small, only limited data

can be reported to protect confidentiality. Once Amherst is removed from the data set, there are only four institutions, and as a result a reliable comparison becomes impossible. However, wage data for the comparison group includes those Five College Consortium institutions that agreed to participate as part of the larger group of comparable institutions. [This seems squishier than it should be. I'd say something like "Several Five College consortium members agreed to participate in the market study, and their data was included in the determination of market compensation. Although these are good comparisons to Amherst, using only these schools would result in unreliable data due to the small sample size. As a result, data from other comparable schools and employers were added to the study."]

18. What are the results of the compensation review?

The data showed that Amherst College salaries are competitive within the market and, specifically, are slightly above the 50th percentile (middle) of the markets reviewed. The study identified approximately 40 employees with salaries below the new salary range minimum and 50 employees with salaries above the upper end of the range across a variety of positions and departments. The employees whose salary fell below the new salary guidelines were raised to the minimum, and those whose salary fell above the guidelines retained their current salary.

19. How can I be assured the market data is valid?

SullivanCotter and OHR compared the responsibilities of the Amherst jobs to similar survey jobs. The pay data comes from reliable salary surveys conducted by independent third parties with the participation of human resource professionals.

20. I read online through a salary website or professional journal that I should be paid more. Why does the College have different data?

We used data from several respected published survey sources whose surveys are conducted annually by objective third parties. Websites and professional journals typically do not rely on third-party objective surveys in developing their reports. For this reason, although this data is of interest to us it is not considered reliable.

In addition to the salary, the College also offers a very competitive benefits package. In fact, in a recent benefits survey, the College's benefits ranked the same or better than those of other similar institutions.

A summary of the benefit's survey results is posted on the OHR website: <https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/Benefits%2520Survey%2520Detailed%2520Summary.pdf>.

21. How is the compensation review related to the classification restructure?

The compensation review and job classification restructure are two separate components of a single large project. Each job group and level in the new classification system includes a corresponding salary range determined by the market data collected in the compensation review.

22. What are salary ranges?

A salary range refers to the minimum, midpoint, and upper-end salary for all positions within a job group and level, and reflects the market for similar jobs.

23. Do salary ranges include benefits?

No. Salary ranges refer only to the wages for a position and do not include benefits. As previously noted, we recently engaged a consulting firm to compare the College's fringe benefit offerings to peer institutions and they found that the College's benefits are as strong or stronger than peers. In addition, the College's fringe benefit offerings, as those of other colleges and universities, are generally far more comprehensive and generous than employers in the private sector, particularly retirement benefits, medical benefits, and grant-in-aid offerings.

24. How were the salary ranges determined?

The salary ranges were determined by SullivanCotter and taking into account the market pay for the jobs in each, the responsibilities and skills required for each job, and the College's current pay levels.

25. Why are the ranges so broad?

The breadth of the ranges reflects the difference in market pay for jobs with similar responsibilities and allows for growth in salary levels.

26. Why are salary ranges based on 40 hours?

We recognize that some salaried employees are scheduled to work 35 hours per week and others are scheduled to work 40 hours per week. Salaried employees, however, are not paid on an hourly basis. The salary ranges take market pay into account regardless of the scheduled hours worked. While different organizations have different standard scheduled hours, we have decided to use one salary schedule set at 40 hours per week since this represents the majority of our salaried staff. Also, the use of a 40-hour schedule is beneficial to our employees since the pay ranges are higher than they might otherwise have been. This allowed for more adjustments to the minimum of the range and leaves room for more opportunities for increases over time than otherwise would have occurred.

27. Does the College base salaries solely on market data?

No. In determining an appropriate salary, the College relies on market data, job responsibilities and internal equity. Internal equity means that staff members who perform similar jobs receive similar salaries and that the salaries are related to the type of work the staff members perform.

28. Do the salary ranges take years of service into account?

No. The salary ranges are based solely on market data for individual positions.

29. Could a salary for a position fall within a range but, nevertheless, be out of sync with the market?

This is possible, but uncommon. If you believe your salary is not in line with similar positions in the market, please contact your direct supervisor or the division's senior staff.

30. What does salary range minimum mean?

The minimum salary represents the lowest pay for jobs that fall within that range. A salary is considered within the market range if it is at or above the minimum of the range.

31. Why does a salary fall at the minimum or upper end of a range?

The salary ranges are purposely very broad and include many different types of positions. Where a position falls within the salary range is based upon the market study.

An individual salary within the salary range is set based upon the qualifications of the individual holding the position, including, among other factors, length of time in the job and level of experience.

32. Do all new hires start at the minimum of the range?

No. Salaries for new hires to the College are based upon a number of factors including external market data, internal equity, and skills and experience.

33. As an Amherst employee, if I take a new job within the College, will my salary be set at the minimum of the new job's range?

Not necessarily. Similar to new hires, an individual's salary is based upon a number of factors including the employee's current salary, the external market, internal equity, and the skills and experience the employee brings to the new position. However, salaries will not be decreased if the employee is taking a job at the same level (lateral move) or at a higher level.

34. I am thinking about applying for a different job in my same group and level. How will I know if it pays more or less than my current position?

When the College posts position openings, the job group and level will be included in the description, which provides the pay range for that position. For a more specific indication of where in the range the salary might be set for a given opening, please discuss with the hiring manager during the recruitment process.

35. Does any position in a job group and level have a salary below the minimum of the corresponding range?

No. Based on the market study, the College increased the salary of any staff member whose salary fell below the minimum of the range.

36. My salary is at the upper end of the range. Will I be eligible for future pay increases?

Yes. All staff members will continue to be eligible for salary increases.

37. How long will it take to move through a range and can I ever get to the end?

There is no set time frame for moving through a salary range. The best way to move through a range is through strong performance that results in merit increases. Employees are also encouraged to identify opportunities to grow their skill sets and take on new and additional

responsibilities, which may result in adjustments in pay within a pay band or in the employee moving to a group/level combination with higher pay ranges.

38. Will the salary ranges be available to all employees?

Yes. The pay ranges will be available on the Office of Human Resources website.

39. Do the salary ranges apply to casual employees?

No. The salary ranges apply to regular, benefited employees.

40. Will the salary ranges ever change?

Yes, the OHR regularly will conduct a market compensation study, similar to the study recently completed, and adjust the ranges accordingly.

41. If my position moves into a different job group and level, will my salary change?

That's possible. Salary ranges overlap between groups and levels. However, if a position is reclassified due to a substantial change in duties and responsibilities, this likely would support a change in pay.

42. Some staff members in a lower level than me have a higher salary. How is that possible?

Because the salary ranges overlap, it is possible for staff members in a lower classification level to earn more than staff members in a higher classification. A typical example is when a long-term employee in a lower level may have a salary at the upper end of the range while a new employee in a higher level may be paid at the lower end of the range.

43. Whom should I contact if I have questions about my position classification and compensation?

Please contact your direct supervisor or the division's senior staff.