

CAREER TRACKS

FAQ: General Questions and Salary Information

1. What is Career Tracks?

Career Tracks is a new job classification framework that aligns jobs at the University to their respective labor market by occupation and supports the development of possible career paths designed to enhance career mobility. Levels for individual contributor, supervisory and management roles within each distinct functional area are defined consistently across occupations and with the labor market for comparable jobs.

2. Who will be impacted by the Career Tracks project?

Career Tracks is being implemented as a replacement classification system for jobs within the University of California (UC) for non-represented employees. Career Tracks is not for represented staff, academic personnel, senior management, or student employees.

3. Why is Career Tracks being implemented?

Our current classification system is built on UC system-wide classifications that have become outdated. Career Tracks will more accurately reflect current job duties, organized within job families and functions. This new structure will set the foundation for a more transparent classification and career planning process going forward and allow us to better align our jobs to the external labor market.

4. How will Career Tracks affect employees?

Each employee will be assigned a new job title that is part of a designated job family and function. Each job title will be assigned a personnel program (MSP or PSS), an exemption status and new salary grade and range. The personnel program and exemption status will be applied consistently throughout UC as locations transition into Career Tracks job titles.

5. For different job families and functions, there are categories of jobs, and career levels in the new job structure. What do those terms mean?

The terms in the proposed job structure distinguish the work that people perform. By looking at the differences in scope and responsibility between jobs, we can describe each job more accurately in relation to other jobs.

The family is a group of jobs that involve work in the same general occupation. These jobs have related knowledge requirements, skill sets, and abilities. Finance is an example of a family. It is a general way to organize job functions into bigger groups to ease searching through the numerous job functions available.

The function is a more specialized area within a family. In a function, the same or relatively similar work is performed, a similar skill set is required, and it is possible to move within the function with minimal training. For example, Purchasing is a function within the Finance family.

The category defines the type of work performed, as opposed to the occupation or subject matter. The three categories are: 1) Operational & Technical, 2) Professional, 3) Supervisory & Managerial. A job function can include more than one type of work, so within Purchasing, you could have jobs in both professional and supervisory & managerial categories.

The career level reflects the amount of responsibility, impact, and scope that a job has. We have determined the appropriate number of levels within each category per job function by looking at market survey data and working with subject matter experts for that family and function. For example, a Buyer in the Professional job category could be a level 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 professional. In the Supervisory and Managerial category, there are a total of 6 levels. Establishing the appropriate number of levels based on category, facilitates comparison of UC jobs with comparable jobs in market salary surveys. At the same time, not all functions will require the full number of levels. The number of levels in the Career Tracks job structure for each function is reflective of how the work is currently organized at UC.

6. What if a Job Standard does not fully represent an individual's job duties?

The "boiler-plate" or generic job standards rarely reflect the unique work each individual may be asked to perform as part of his or her regular responsibilities. The work performed by an individual reflects the organizations goals and structure. The goal is to capture at least 50% - 60% of the predominant job duties for a given job. Supervisors and managers can use the job standards as a starting point in developing customized job descriptions that reflect the individual's unique responsibilities, yet still align to the job standards for all UC staff in that job.

7. Is Career Tracks a system-wide initiative?

Yes. All locations (Office of the President, campuses and medical centers) will implement the Career Tracks structure for their locations. This will provide greater career mobility and transparency within and across all UC locations.

8. Will working titles change as a result of Career Tracks?

No. Career Tracks only changes payroll titles. Employees may still use the current working titles of coordinator, assistant director, director, etc., as appropriate. However, any working titles that contain Vice President (VP) requires special approval - please consult with your HR Support.

9. Will job duties change as a result of Career Tracks?

No. Actual job duties and expectations will not change. Employees will be assigned a job title in the new Career Tracks structure that best fits the current job/role performed.

10. Will my pay change as a result of Career Tracks?

No, there will be no immediate impact to pay (either upward or downward), although the new classification system will provide a better foundation for determining appropriate market-based salaries in the future. Ongoing reviews will occur for those employees whose compensation is outside the salary range.

11. Will staff be able to review the classification change before it goes into effect, and how will they be informed?

Employees will receive individual notices delivered by their supervisor or manager informing them of their new title codes, job standards and pay grades, prior to implementation in the payroll system. Managers will be notified prior to general employee communications.

12. Will employees receive new updated job descriptions?

Not initially. New job descriptions are not required to transition to the Career Tracks job structure, although managers and employees can begin to use the new job database to create customized new job descriptions as needed.

13. Many individuals wear multiple hats. How will positions be handled that incorporate duties from multiple job functions?

The major duties of a given job, (i.e. the reason the position exists), determine how to map it to a new job function. Positions that are multi-functional should be mapped to the job function that constitutes more than 50 percent of the job. If no one component of the job is 50 percent or more, the job function that has the greatest percentage of duties, or the function that would be emphasized during recruiting should be used. Or, in some cases a multi-functional job, such as administrative operations within the General Administration family, can be selected for mapping.

14. Is there detailed information individuals can review to compare their job duties to the job function they are mapped to?

Each location is considering how best to publish job function descriptions and career level definitions for their location to support the mapping efforts to new job titles. Job standards for each new Career Tracks job title are also available, which represent templates or generic descriptions of a Career Tracks job title. They can be customized to describe an individual employee's job description.

15. Is there an overview describing each job level in the new job structure?

For a description of each professional, supervisory and managerial job level, see the categories and levels document.

16. What happens if someone's new job level is "lower" than the old one?

Some of the new job series have fewer levels than the current job series. Therefore, having a different number in the title does not indicate that the new classification is "lower." For example, a current Programmer Analyst III might be comparable to an Information Systems Analyst 2. In any case, when the new classifications are implemented, an employee's salary will not be affected.

17. What happens if an employee was mapped to a job level that does not correspond with their own personal level of experience or educational background?

Employees have been mapped to job titles by their managers to reflect the demands of the unit and the work required to support the organization for that function. Even though an employee may possess skills, experience or educational degrees beyond those required for their new job title, they have been mapped to the new structure based on the responsibilities, scope, knowledge and skills, etc. required by the position. For example, an employee may have a law degree, but the salary range and job title of their new Career Tracks position are reflective of their current responsibilities, not their law degree.

18. I think an employee should be a Professional Level 3 Experienced (P3) but the job title assigned in the new structure is a Professional Level 2 Intermediate (P2). What is the difference?

The generic scope for a P3 describes a position requiring full understanding of the professional field, the ability to apply theory and put it into practice resolving problems of diverse scope and complexity, and broad job knowledge. A P2 position typically applies acquired professional knowledge and skills to complete tasks of moderate scope and complexity; exercises judgment within defined guidelines or practices to determine appropriate action. If the job description used to assign the new job title did not reflect the scope and requirements of the P3 then the incumbent is appropriately mapped to the P2.

19. Why did a long-service, key employee who was recommended for a Professional Level 4 Advanced (P4) job get mapped to a Professional Level 3 Experienced (P3)?

The generic scope for a P4 describes a position that regularly serves as a technical leader to their department or broader community, performs duties requiring specialized expertise, and frequently analyzes or resolves issues that are unique and without precedent. If the job description provided no or very limited content that aligned with professional level 4 key responsibilities or scope, we couldn't in good faith assume the employee was performing a P4 position. Length of service, while providing employees and the organization with a wealth of institutional knowledge, does not by itself determine the level of responsibility required for the position. Length of service, as well as experience on committees or special projects outside of the scope of the primary job responsibilities, are helpful for preparing the individual for future career opportunities but also do not define the scope or level of the current position.

20. Why did a position that was submitted as a Professional Level 5 Expert (P5) get moved to a Professional Level 4 Advanced (P4)?

The generic scope for a P5 describes a position that is a recognized expert with significant impact and influence on system-wide policy and program development. Professional positions at this level regularly lead projects of critical importance to the overall organization. Limited positions were mapped to a P5. In contrast, P4 positions regularly serves as a technical leader, perform duties requiring specialized expertise, and frequently analyze or resolve issues that are unique and without precedent. If an employee's job duties as currently described provide no or very limited content that aligns with the P5, the employee was mapped to a P4 position.

Additional review and calibration was conducted across all units for P5 positions to ensure fairness and consistency in applying the definition of this level.

21. How will this program affect future salary decisions?

HR Compensation is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to the policies and procedures that affect staff salaries. All updated policies will be posted on the HR website prior to implementation.

After the new Career Tracks structure is implemented, factors that affect pay will include the employee's position within their new salary range and their performance. Salary increases will also depend on the personnel policy that covers the position and available funding. Additional information will be provided to supervisors and managers at a later date regarding compensation administration policies and procedures.

22. Why is matching jobs to market so important?

University pay programs must be more sensitive to the market because we compete against other employers (both private and public) for the best talent. Therefore, our jobs must be linked to similar jobs in the market and tied to salary ranges based on market pay. Once jobs are more clearly defined within salary ranges appropriate to the market, the job and compensation structures will be easier to understand and administer.

23. How can higher education professions be compared to the outside market?

We are using a number of reputable third-party market salary surveys to link our jobs to the Southern California market, including well-known surveys that specialize in educational institutions. Because we also compete with public and private organizations for employees, our survey data will also include market salary information gathered from local companies.

24. What do the salary grade ranges represent?

Salary grade ranges are a proxy for competitive pay levels in the marketplace for your job.

25. Will my pay change with my new job title?

Employee pay will not change, but a new salary structure provides better pay guidance for your manager to make future pay decisions.

26. What happens if my pay is above my new salary range maximum?

Employee pay will not change as a result of being mapped to a new job title, and this applies even if you are paid above the new salary range maximum. Your salary will be "grandfathered" until such a time as it falls within the range, or you transfer out of your current position.

27. When I compare my current salary to my new salary range, my pay now falls higher in my range. What does that mean?

Now that we have changed salary ranges for each job to reflect competitive pay practices at other employers in our labor market, it is possible that your new salary range might be lower than under the old structure, which was not market based and reflective of generic job titles/categories. Your position in your new range is more reflective of your position within the labor market in general. Career Tracks ranges are maintained and analyzed on an ongoing basis to ensure we remain competitive with the labor market going forward.

28. When I compare my current salary to my new salary range, my pay now falls lower in my range. What does that mean?

Now that we have changed salary ranges for each job to reflect competitive pay practices at other employers in our labor market, your salary range might be higher than under the old structure, which was not market based. This should not be interpreted as a devaluation of your position. Now you have more salary growth potential than you did previously.

29. Is my position within my salary range supposed to reflect my level of experience? In a perfect world, employees with extensive experience and a proven track record of outstanding performance are typically paid in the upper half of their salary range, and employees with less experience, who have been recently promoted, or who do not consistently demonstrate outstanding performance are paid in the lower portion of their range. It is difficult to apply these principles to UC at this time because we are just now transitioning from a salary range structure that was not always based on the current market. We expect the new salary structure to provide better guidance for administering salaries over time.

30. How often will the salary ranges be reviewed and possibly changed?

Competitive pay information that we gather from third-party professional salary surveys is generally collected and reviewed every one-to-two years. We will review our salary ranges each year and make updates, as appropriate, to ensure our salary ranges are aligned with labor market pay levels.

31. What other employers are considered part of our “labor market?”

We consider all types of employers – private, public and higher education – to be part of our labor market depending on the particular job. Generally, our market is defined by the organizations with whom we compete for employee talent. We pay special attention to those employers that are in our local labor market since our cost of labor here is significantly different than in other parts of the country.

32. How do you gather pay information from other employers?

Pay data is collected in different ways. A primary source is salary surveys. UC, as well as many other public and private organizations participate in third-party salary surveys. Each participating organization reports pay data for its employees anonymously for the jobs described in the survey and the results are then consolidated and reported in a manner that keeps each organization’s data confidential.

33. The new salary range is quite broad. Should I expect to be paid at or near the range maximum for my Career Tracks job title over time?

Each salary range in the new structure is intended to reflect prevailing pay rates for all of the job titles that have been assigned that range. Some ranges have 50-75 job titles. Each range has therefore been designed to be broad enough to allow managers across the UC system to administer pay for their jobs. Where an individual is paid within a range is further reflective of experience, contribution, peer pay levels within the unit or related units, and the department’s budget or ability to pay. Employees who are paid at the upper portion of their salary range are the exception rather than the rule, as is the case at many employers.