Print

Human Resources: Benchmarking FAQs

Q. Where is salary data obtained from?
A. It is not our practice to utilize survey data from sources for which we are unable to validate survey methodology. Whenever possible, we try to obtain survey data from at least three reputable sources when pricing a job.

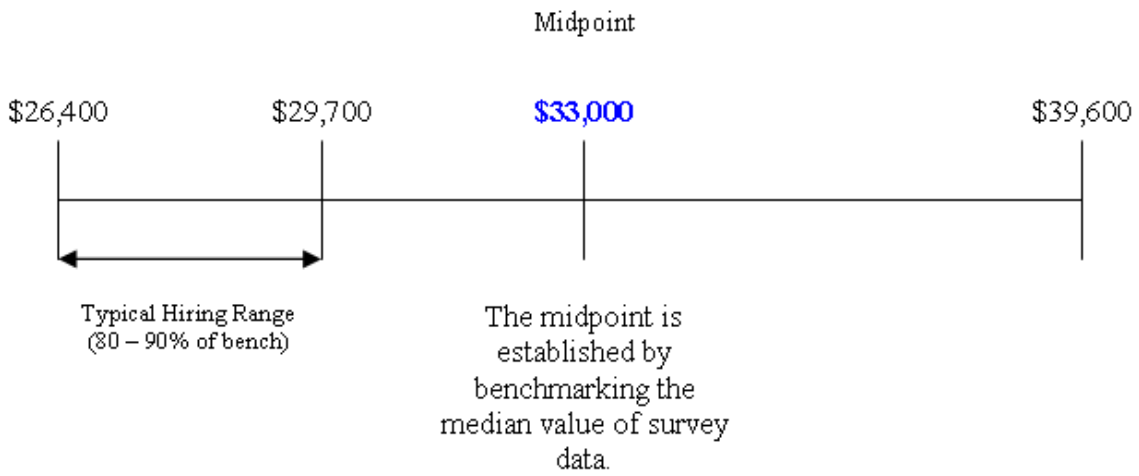
Q. Surveys can often include many different salary figures, such as those in the 25th through 75th percentiles, average, etc. Which figure does WHOI use?
A. When benchmarking our positions, we focus on the median value reported. The median value represents the figure for which 50% of reported salaries are lower and 50% are higher. We use the median rather than the mean (average) because the median is not impacted by extreme high or low values.

After identifying the median value for a job, we establish a low and high value to illustrate an employee's earning potential, using accepted compensation principles.

Q. How is geographic and industry information considered when determining labor markets?
A. As an employer, it is important for us to know our relevant labor market when selecting surveys. Relevant labor markets are those from which we draw employees.For some of our jobs, regional market data is appropriate. For others, the market may be broader, possibly even national/international.Below is a table which shows the market data we commonly use:

Employee Group	Industry	Geography
Scientific Staff	Private and public universities	National/international
Technical Staff	Industrial research labs, university-associated labs, high-tech	Regional; national for more senior positions
Exempt Administrative Staff	Private and public universities, general	Regional; national for more senior positions
Non-Exempt Department Assistants	Industrial research labs, university-associated labs, high-tech, general	Regional; national for more senior positions
Non-Exempt Administrative Staff	General	Regional
Skilled Trades	General	Regional
Marine Crew	Research Institutions	National

Q. So what does it look like when all is said and done?
A. Below is an example of what an employee's earning potential might look like after a position has been benchmarked:



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