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Human Resources: Salary Structure

The Institution does not have a traditional salary structure. In an effort to remain competitive, we regularly monitor the outside labor market to ensure our jobs are priced accordingly. The act of pricing jobs is also referred to as 'benchmarking.' The results of these efforts are used to articulate an employee's earning potential within a job, which is further defined by a range.

Pricing Jobs and Establishing Earning Potential Ranges

As part of the benchmarking process, salary data is obtained from reputable surveys covering both higher education and other organizations in the general industry. After data is compiled and analyzed, benchmark figures are identified. The benchmark figure represents the midpoint of an employee's earning potential within a particular position. From this benchmark, Human Resources is then able to calculate a low and high value of the earning range, as well as highlight a hiring range which is typically used for determining starting salaries of new employees.

It is important to note that although the outside labor market is routinely monitored to assist with benchmarking initiatives, WHOI may:

- Adjust benchmark figures to address factors such as compression between jobs. (Compression occurs when the pay differential between successive jobs or between supervisors and subordinates is too small to be considered equitable.)
- Adjust benchmark figures to address factors about the WHOI position that do not match the surveyed position. For example, if there is a noticeable function that is detailed in the WHOI job description that was not included in the survey description that we used to match the job, we might add a premium to the benchmark figure to account for the added scope of the WHOI job. Similarly, we might discount a benchmark figure if the survey description of the job includes functions that are not in the WHOI job description.
- Adjust benchmark figures to address hybrid positions (when one position is made up of two or more distinct functions that are typically defined as separate jobs in the labor market).
- Adjust benchmark figures to address changes in the market that may be impacting our recruitment efforts.
- Link non-benchmark positions to benchmark positions. Because some jobs are unique to WHOI or are generally difficult to price or obtain market data on, these jobs may be linked to jobs in which we have been able to benchmark and for which we feel are comparable in duties and/or level of skills, knowledge, and expertise needed to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job.

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