

New Administrative and Staff Pay Structure Q&A



The Q&As are intended to help answer common questions aligned with the University's Compensation Philosophy for how we reward our workforce. The answers will help you understand the pay structure updates, communicate basic information about the impact to Administrative and Staff employees and ensure our workforce receives consistent messages.

General

Q: What is happening to pay at USD?

A: To achieve Envisioning 2024 and reward the unique knowledge, expertise and skills of our talented workforce, the University designed a single, streamlined pay structure for Administrative and Staff jobs that accomplishes five goals:

- Establishes transparent parameters for fairly determining and managing pay
- Anticipates required increases to minimum wage
- Links pay to the competitive market while accounting for internal pay variances
- Recognizes differences in levels of work and responsibility
- Supports our efforts to recruit, reward and retain top talent

Q: Why is USD making updates to our current pay structure?

A: While we take great pride in how we currently reward our people for their efforts, the job classification and compensation systems for both Administrative and Staff jobs at USD have been well-maintained for more than 10 years, consistent with industry best practices. We reviewed these systems—and made updates—to ensure we can continue fully supporting our hiring and retention needs.

Q: What methodology did USD use to make decisions about Administrative jobs?

A: With support from a third-party HR consulting firm, the University conducted a competitive market analysis of Administrative and Staff jobs. For Administrative jobs, USD developed a comparison group of similar higher education institutions to compare pay at the University based on the scope, size and complexity of each comparator institution and, in some cases, similar jobs found in general industries outside of higher education.

Q: What methodology did USD use to make decisions about Staff jobs?

A: With support from a third-party HR consulting firm, the University conducted a competitive market analysis of Administrative and Staff jobs. For Staff jobs, the University measured and compared pay in areas where we compete for local talent. Staff jobs are compared to a group of comparable higher education institutions and the local labor market in San Diego, including industries both in and outside of higher education, as appropriate.

Q: Who approved this new pay structure?

A: The Administrative and Staff Compensation Task Force and University leadership, including department stakeholders, reviewed and approved the placement of jobs in the pay structure to ensure accuracy. The overall grade assignments were then reviewed to ensure consistency across the organization.

Q: Are these changes connected to other University initiatives?

A: Yes. The new pay structure is aligned with Envisioning 2024. As part of Envisioning 2024, we are taking a strategic approach to institutional effectiveness—reaching or reimagining certain goals to ensure we fulfill our promise to our students, employees, alumni and community. Faculty compensation is also under review in a parallel compensation study project. Funds identified through the Stride to 2024 initiative will be used to fund approved pay adjustments to staff, administrative and faculty salaries.

People-Focused

Q: Is this all about eliminating jobs or paying people less?

A: No. The goal of the new pay structure is not to eliminate jobs or reduce pay for USD employees. In fact, no USD employees will receive a reduction in pay rate as a result of this study. Some employees will see pay increases based on the more modern market-based structure.

Q: Does this have an impact on my job?

A: No. This initiative does not have an impact on your day-to-day work responsibilities. With the new pay structure, each applicable job at the University is now assigned to a pay grade that best represents both its internal relationship to other similar jobs within the University and its external value in the job market. This practice establishes both equitable pay grades and grade ranges.

Q: Is the University committed to equitable pay?

A: Yes. However, equitable pay does not mean all employees in the same pay grade receive the same pay; it means pay is aligned to the internal job position, external job market factors and the jobholder's qualifications and performance.

Q: Was the high cost of living in San Diego taken into consideration?

A: Yes. Our new pay structure considers the cost of labor and cost of living in San Diego; both are higher than the national average. When determining pay ranges, the University added a premium to the market data to recognize these differences.

Q: Will I get a raise as a result of this study?

A: Not necessarily. Overall, the market analysis confirmed that base salaries at USD are competitive with individual variances based on factors related to performance, tenure at USD, and in some cases, differences in incumbent experience and skill sets.

Any approved salary adjustments will occur in a phased approach in line with Stride to 2024, as priorities and funding are identified. The first phase, in early 2020, will bring affected employees to the minimum of their pay grade range.

Q: Why aren't most people getting a raise?

A: The competitive job market analysis conducted with the assistance of a third-party HR consulting firm confirmed that USD jobs, in aggregate, are paid at the median—or middle—of the job markets in which we compete for talent. This aligns with the University's Compensation Philosophy. However, based on certain job categories, there are some variances in market competitiveness across the University.

Q: How will I know if I'm getting a raise or not?

A: Individual communications will be delivered in early 2020 to share the personal results of the competitive job market analysis with you—this will include your new pay grade and grade range for your position. Any approved salary adjustments will occur in a phased approach in line with Stride to 2024, as priorities and funding are identified. The first phase, in early 2020, will bring affected employees to the minimum of their pay grade range.