Career Tracks Project

What is Career Tracks?
Career Tracks is a new job classification structure that aligns jobs at the University into job families that more accurately reflect job duties, 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.

Who will be impacted by the Career Tracks project?
All non-represented staff at UCSB will be mapped to the Career Tracks structure, not including those who are represented by unions, the Senior Management Group (SMG) and Academic positions.

How will Career Tracks affect employees?
Each employee’s payroll title will change to a new title code under the Career Tracks standards. Current responsibilities, working or business title and compensation will not change.

How will Career Tracks benefit employees?
Career Tracks will make the classification of jobs more transparent and consistent, will make it easier to identify promotional opportunities by making clear specific types of positions across campus, will provide clear career planning tracks, and can be used as a resource for creating new and updating job descriptions.

Why is Career Tracks being implemented?
Our current classification system was built on UC systemwide classifications that have become outdated (40+ years old). 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. The implementation of Career Tracks payroll titles will also provide the organization with a fresh review of the current role and responsibilities for each employee.

How is Career Tracks being implemented?
Each position will be assigned a new payroll title that is part of a designated job family and function. Each payroll title will be assigned a personnel program (Manager & Senior Professionals {MSP} or Professional & Support Staff {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 payroll titles.

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 and Managerial. A job function can include more than one type of work, so within Purchasing, you could have jobs in professional, supervisory and managerial categories.

The career level reflects the amount of responsibility, impact, and scope of a job. 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 possible 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.

What if a Job Standard does not fully represent an individual’s job duties?
A job standard is designed to be a general description of the work that is typically found in the career level of a specific category. 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 organization’s 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.

Is Career Tracks a systemwide 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.

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.

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

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 any employees whose compensation is outside the salary range.

Will staff be able to review the classification change before it goes into effect, and how will they be informed?
Managers will receive final mapping notifications, and will distribute individual notices to employees informing them of their new title codes, job standards and pay grades, prior to implementation in the payroll system. Employees should discuss any mapping concerns with their Supervisor or Manager.
When the Manager deems appropriate, a reconsideration review can be submitted which will require the department head’s approval and endorsement for the VC prior to HR review. In some cases, we may also consult with the systemwide steering committee.

Will employees receive new updated job descriptions?
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 standards database to create customized new job descriptions as needed.

Job Mapping Questions - General

What does it mean to be “mapped” to the new job structure?
The process of moving a job from the current classification/payroll title into a new payroll title that is part of a designated job family and function is referred to as “mapping.”

If my job description has not been updated recently, and no longer reflects the work being performed, how will this be handled during the mapping process?
Preliminary mapping was based on current job descriptions in OACIS. During the mapping review process, departments will have the opportunity to submit a “Request for Change” form, and include an updated job description when the changes to the job are substantial and significant, but would not qualify for reclassification under the current system. These job descriptions will be considered under the Career Tracks implementation process.

Jobs that have experienced significant changes to warrant a reclassification review should be submitted under the ongoing reclassification process already in place. These will continue to be reviewed according to existing practices, and will be managed outside of the Career Tracks implementation.

Job descriptions that have changed, but the changes are not anticipated to affect the current or new classification level, should be submitted under the ongoing job description update process already in place. These will continue to be reviewed according to existing practices, and will be managed outside of the Career Tracks implementation.

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 multifunctional 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. In some cases a multifunctional job, such as administrative operations within the General Administration family, can be selected for mapping.

Is there detailed information that individuals can review to see actual job standards by family and function?
Job standards for each new Career Tracks payroll title are available on Sharepoint and are accessible to all UCSB employees with a NetID (select “Forms Authentication” from the drop down menu).

How did managers and supervisors participate in the mapping process?
Human Resources Compensation Analysts have completed preliminary job mapping recommendations based on a review of each employee’s existing job description. This preliminary work was done to assist unit leaders and managers with the task of reviewing and refining the recommended new payroll title for
each employee. Divisional Control Points were provided with all mapping recommendations for their areas to ensure consistency across the division, and allow for broader mapping issues to be resolved.

Managers and supervisors will work with their Control Points as well as Human Resources to review current job responsibilities and expectations for each employee in preparation for confirming his or her new payroll title in the Career Tracks structure. Managers may also collaborate with peer managers within the unit to ensure that all managers apply a consistent approach to reviewing and finalizing these recommendations.

Is there an overview describing each job level in the new job structure?
More information on the professional, supervisory and managerial job levels can be found on the Career Tracks portion of the Compensation website; please refer to the Career Tracks Structure accordion under General Information. (link provided)

Two employees are currently in the same payroll title. Their new Career Tracks payroll titles are different. Why might this be the case?
The Compensation Unit found when comparing job descriptions for employees in the same payroll titles that in some cases the responsibilities, scope, required knowledge and skills, staff size, or other key variables were different. In some cases job duties changed over time for a given employee but the job description on record was never updated to reflect assumption of additional responsibilities.

The implementation of Career Tracks payroll titles provides the organization with a fresh review of the current role and responsibilities for each employee. New titles were assigned in consultation with managers to ensure that the most current information for each job was taken into account for assigning a payroll title in the new structure.

Two employees are currently in different payroll titles and/or personnel programs. Their new Career Tracks payroll title is the same. Why might this be the case?
The new Career Tracks job architecture has been built to align with the labor market for comparable jobs at other organizations. In a few cases we found that we had more levels of a given function here at UCSB than existed elsewhere. It is possible that employees previously in different job levels were mapped to a new, consolidated payroll title that now has external comparators in the labor market. Given that each payroll title has been assigned a broad salary range, previous differences in experience, performance or responsibilities should still fit within the new salary grade and range for affected employees.

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 Analyst 3 might be comparable to a Research Administrator 2. Remember, when the new classifications are implemented, an employee's salary will not be affected.

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 payroll 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 payroll title, he/she has 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 payroll title of their new Career Tracks position are reflective of their current responsibilities, not their law degree.
Will there be a cutoff date after which current title codes can no longer be used?

Upon implementation of Career Tracks, the previous Series Concepts and title codes will be retired and no longer available for use. Certain title codes from the Series Concepts will stay available in limited capacity, and for a limited timeframe; OP is still developing standards and there will be circumstances where we will use the existing title codes until the Career Tracks structure has been fully developed.

Job Mapping Questions - Professional Payroll titles

I don’t agree with the Professional level that a position was mapped to. What factors were taken into account in determining the level of the Professional positions?

It is important to remember that mapping is based on a position, and not a person. All Career Tracks mapping takes into account the size, scope and impact of all positions, not only across the campus, but also across the UC system as a whole. The Generic and Custom Scope indicators on each standard provides a guideline to address these broader considerations in mapping. While a position may provide an important service for a department, how the positions responsibility for resources, complexity, consequence of error, scope, communications, and freedom to act compares to others in similar roles across the UC can affect the overall mapping of the position.

See below for some examples of leveling:

I think a position should be a Professional Level 3 Experienced (P3) but the payroll 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 payroll title did not reflect the scope and requirements of the P3 then the incumbent is appropriately mapped to the P2.

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 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 do not define the scope or level of the current position.

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. Few positions were mapped to a P5. In contrast, P4 positions regularly serve as technical leaders, 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.

I supervise employees, but it does not represent the majority of my work, and my position is not mapped to a Career Tracks Supervisory payroll title. Am I still a supervisor?
If you meet the supervisory definition under the California Higher Education Employer-Employee Rights Act (HEERA), you will still be a supervisor. You will have a supervisory designation in the payroll system and may use a supervisor working title. You just will not have “Supervisor” in your payroll title.

Salary Questions

Will my pay change with my new payroll title?
Employee pay will not change, but a new salary structure provides better pay guidance for your manager to make future pay decisions. Career Tracks is not a salary program.

What will the salary grade ranges represent?
Salary grade ranges will be a proxy for competitive pay levels in the marketplace for your job. Understand that the market is different for different types of positions.

How will this program affect future salary decisions?
Current salary programs are driven by policy (PPSM 30, Compensation). The Compensation Unit 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. While Career Tracks implementation will not have any direct impact on these programs, it will provide the campus with better resources for making data driven decisions regarding salary actions.

Why is matching jobs to market so important?
Understanding market pay practices is an important part of attracting and retaining the best employees. By more clearly defining our classification structure and aligning our positions with market comparisons, we will be better equipped for data driven decision making, ensuring our compensation programs remain competitive.

How can higher education professions be compared to the outside market?
The UC utilizes a number of reputable third-party market salary surveys to link our jobs to the market, including two well-known surveys that specialize in educational institutions. Because we also compete with public and private organizations for employees, our survey data also includes market salary information gathered from local companies.

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 payroll title, and this applies even if you are paid above the new salary range maximum. Your salary will be frozen until such a time as it falls within the range, or you transfer out of your current position.
When I compare my current salary to my new salary range, my pay now falls lower in my range. What does that mean?

Each job family, function and level aligns to a unique market with specific pay data. Compensation programs look to group positions with similar pay structures to create salary ranges that accommodate a number of titles where pay practices overlap. Because these groupings are new, and differ from our previous internally focused classification system, there will be adjustments to where employees fall within the new range. This is in no way a reflection of the overall value of each individual position, but rather a minor shift based on the way positions have been grouped when compared to market indicators.

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 farther into their salary range; 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.

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

As in our current state, 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.

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.

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.

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

Each salary range in the new structure is intended to reflect prevailing pay rates for all of the payroll titles that have been assigned that range. Some ranges have 50-75 payroll 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.