



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: REGARDING PAY FOR PERFORMANCE

Question: My performance evaluations indicate that I am meeting the standards on the job; why am I not getting a merit raise?

Answer: Employees receive an annual performance review. To be considered for a merit increase, an employee must meet specific performance objectives based upon the job description and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely) goals documented on the performance evaluation. Managers determine an individual's merit award type and level based upon the employee's performance over the performance period and the amount of budgetary dollars available for merit awards during the fiscal year. When budget dollars are limited, only the highest performers in an area may be eligible to receive a merit award, as determined by the entity leader. High performance doesn't mean showing up for work and putting in your time; high performance means working at your peak, working with high productivity and exhibiting the right attitude, core values, and behaviors.

Question: I have been here a long time and know my job really well. Why are my raises not keeping up with others in my area?

Answer: Your compensation package includes longevity pay to reward you for your length of service. These pay rates are established by the State of Texas. Longevity pay rewards you for your value in loyalty, institutional memory, and your ability to be very helpful to others if you choose to be. Having been at UTMB a long time doesn't necessarily result in an employee who is committed to the success of the organization. Employees shouldn't expect raises year after year for doing the same thing, the same way, for ten years (as an example), just on the basis that they have been doing it for ten years. Committed employees always try to perform at their best and always help others when they are able.

Question: How does UTMB determine what my job is worth?

Answer: Job values are assessed based upon the job knowledge, accountability, and level of problem solving required to do the job. Human Resources monitors the value of jobs on an annual basis with respect to the market value of similar jobs throughout the greater Houston area, the state, and national markets where applicable. Since 2001, the overall position of UTMB's A&P and classified salaries has remained between 97% and 102% of their midpoints. UTMB management is committed to paying our employees competitively, and we base our salary decisions on the midpoints of the salary ranges, which represents the market value of the jobs. Additionally, UTMB provides career paths for employees to move upward within a certain job family or similar type of work with increasing level of difficulty and responsibility.

Question: I seem to get the biggest salary increases when the state mandates an Across-the-Board (ATB) increase. Why can't UTMB do this without a mandate?

Answer: When the state mandates an ATB raise for employees, the state does not provide the funding to support the salary increases. Generally, UTMB has to provide 70-80% of the funding to support state mandates. This can present a budget challenge for UTMB if revenues are lagging. These increases come straight from the bottom line, and as a result, we need to perform even better in an effort to increase our revenues, which results in more dollars available to support the institutional missions of education, research, and healthcare.

In years when legislative ATB increases are not mandated, UTMB management assesses the market movement of salaries for comparable positions to determine the appropriate merit and salary administration guidelines for the fiscal year. In those non-mandated years, we encourage managers to allocate merit dollars to the employees who contribute the most to our success through high performance

Question: Why is there so much money for buildings and not enough for people and salary increases?

Answer: A substantial portion of the funding for buildings and capital projects comes from restricted sources including grants, contracts, long-term debt, gifts, and other funding sources. The external restrictions on these funds do not allow UTMB to use these funds to support operating expenses including salaries. Completion of these projects is critical to UTMB's long-term growth and success.

Question: Everything costs more, and my salary is not keeping up. In effect, I'm working for less.

Answer: We recognize the increases in medical insurance and other cost of living items. With rising medical costs, medical insurance rates are increasing, but most employers are also limiting their plan benefits to control costs. We are committed to providing the best total rewards (compensation, benefits, training, and other) package we can for our employees. We acknowledge the difficult situation of rising costs and are doing everything we can to keep our salary ranges and employee salaries competitive with the market. And we strive to create an environment that is safe, positive, and nurturing. UTMB management is doing everything we can to make good business decisions to support our mission and the employees who help us attain success.

Question: What can I do to get a merit raise?

Answer: First, discuss your salary with your immediate supervisor. Your supervisor can explain the overall entity merit plan for the current year. Sometimes budgets only allow for the highest performers to receive merit awards. In this case, employees may feel they have performed at a satisfactory level and need to understand the financial constraints driving the merit program for the current year. Employees who are seeking continued salary growth and increased opportunities at UTMB should take ownership of and personal responsibility for their performance and career development. Ask yourself, "What can I do to improve my performance, to contribute more within my department, and to improve my skill set for future opportunities and growth?"

Question: What are ways I can obtain career development opportunities at UTMB?

Answer: At UTMB and the surrounding community, there are many development opportunities, especially if you get creative. Realize that 85% to 90% of development comes from special assignments and on-the-job assignments as well as feedback on the work outcomes and methods. Only 10% to 15% come from formal learning (classroom, computer based training, etc.).

Below are some resources for formal learning opportunities:

- In-services
- Leadership development and other courses offered by UTMB Organizational Effectiveness, Training and Recognition
- The annual Office and Administrative Support Staff Conference
- Tuition reimbursement for college courses
- Degree from UTMB Schools
- Work/School Program for nursing and healthcare-related training
- Education courses or workshops through other local or on-line community colleges
- Computer-based training
- Conferences and education sessions from external professional groups
- Certification programs
- Support Staff Professionals Organization

On-the-job learning opportunities are also excellent ways to broaden and/or deepen skill sets, job knowledge, and content expertise. Employees are encouraged to consider opportunities such as these, which may be beneficial to their departments, and to discuss them with their supervisor or manager.

Question: What can I do if I approach my supervisor and there are no available budget dollars for training?

Answer: Again, research shows that that 85% to 90% of employee development comes from special assignments and on-the-job assignments as well as manager feedback on work outcomes and methods. Only 10% to 15% of development comes from formal learning (classroom, computer based training, etc.). When budgets are tight, the best approach is to volunteer for some of the on-the-job training opportunities identified above. Employees eager to learn and who show the initiative to take on additional assignments for the department typically become the highest performers. Employee initiative is the key to success. Take the initiative!

Question: What if I am unsure about my career goals?

Answer: Often, employees are not clear about what their career goals are beyond their current position. This may result from being in a position that is enjoyable and challenging where you are quite comfortable and excited about the work you are currently doing. In this case, you may not have even thought about the future beyond your current position. This is quite natural. At other times, an employee may begin questioning "what next"? The Personal Career Interest Worksheet is a tool that can help you discover your own interests and where you can continue to grow and add value to UTMB. Some common questions used are:

- “How can I add value to UTMB?”
- “What do I want to be doing in 1 year? 3 years? 5 years?”
- “What can I do to support my goals?”

You are encouraged to discuss your interests with your supervisor or manager during the performance appraisal process. The Personal Career Interest Worksheet follows.

Personal Career Interest Worksheet	
Employee Name:	Date:
<p>The purpose of this survey is to identify your personal career interests. Your open and objective exploration of career goals and desires will allow you and your leader to work together to establish a path that will address your career objectives in light of institutional needs. You and your leader will discuss these responses and if possible, incorporate action plans that will address your personal career goals and institutional SMART Goals where appropriate.</p>	
1. What do you like and dislike about your current position?	
2. What would you like to be doing in the next 1-3 years?	
3. What would you like to be doing in 3-5 years?	
4. What are you doing to achieve these goals?	
5. What can your immediate supervisor and UTMB do to help you achieve these goals?	
6. Please rate how meaningful your job is.	
Not at all Meaningful	Totally Meaningful
1	2
3	4
5	
What could we do to make the work more meaningful?	
7. Do you feel appreciated at work?	
Not at all Appreciated	Fully Appreciated
1	2
3	4
5	
What would make you feel more appreciated at work?	

8. Are you able to contribute to your department and UTMB in your current role?				
Don't contribute at All		Contributes Fully		
1	2	3	4	5
What do you suggest be changed to enable you to contribute?				
9. What are your career interests? Is there a job at UTMB that would allow you to work with those things that you have interests in?				
10. If you could design the perfect job for you, what would it look like?				
11. Other Comments:				