

## **FILING A POSITION CLASSIFICATION OR EQUITY REVIEW INFORMATION FOR PSU MEMBERS**

This packet is intended to help PSU members understand the Professional Staff Salary Administration Program (SAP) and explain the processes for undergoing a position classification or equity review. These enclosed materials will assist you in deciding if and how to file a review:

- **Determining the Nature of the Case** will help you decide what kind of action to take
- The **Flowchart for Position Classification and Equity Reviews** will clarify these two processes for you
- The basis for any position classification appeal is an accurate position description
  - If you feel that your position description is not accurate, the position description worksheet should be used to help you identify your duties and responsibilities. This form and others needed for these reviews can be found on the PSU website (All Documents) and in the SAP Appendices of the PSU contract.
  - In collaboration with your supervisor, you should formulate an accurate position description on which to base your position evaluation. Once you have a newly revised position description, you should complete the appropriate forms, get the signatures, and forward to your unit's HR director to submit the paperwork for an off-cycle review. Please contact the SAP Chair if you anticipate any issues with getting signatures or timely submission of the paperwork. Any change in position grade or salary will take effect as of the date that the paperwork is submitted to central HR. Also, forward a copy of your completed forms to the Chair of the SAP committee so PSU/MTA can keep track of your paperwork and date in case there is a dispute.
  - Human Resources total compensation staff evaluates your position description's duties and responsibilities according to 13 elements, with increasing levels of complexity or responsibility in each element assigned more points. Your SAP Steward can help you understand the point system; however, it is somewhat subjective and open to interpretation.
- **Tips for Interpreting Specific Elements in the Classification System** offers some helpful suggestions based on our past experience with position classification reviews
- **Documentation Requirements for SAP Processes** provides guidance about the documents needed for position classification and equity reviews

Involve your SAP Steward as a resource, as they can provide informed and valuable assistance to you.

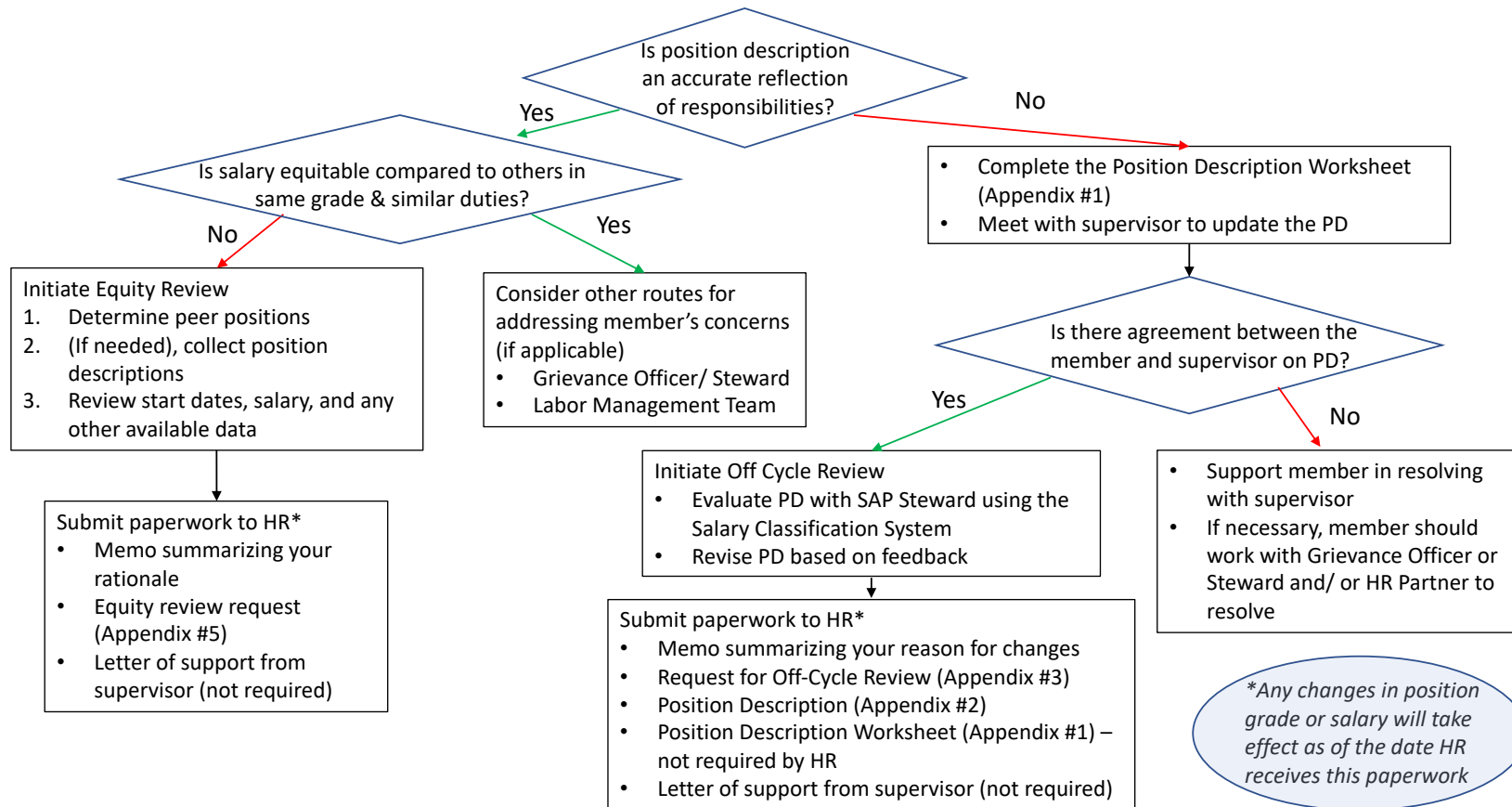
### **Other helpful resources**

- SAP page on the PSU website: <https://www.umass.edu/psumta/amherst-sap-committee>
- PSSAP Manual (Appendix B) of the PSU contract: <https://www.umass.edu/psumta/sites/default/files/PSU%20Unit%20A%202017-2020%20FINAL-signed.pdf>
- Salary roster: Contact a SAP Steward to get information about other PSU staff with similar positions, including salary amounts, grades, and position titles. This is needed for an equity review.
- Statewide Payroll Database: <https://www.macomptroller.org/cthru>. Use this database to look up payroll data for UMass and other state employees.

## DETERMINING THE NATURE OF THE CASE

It is a <b>work load issue</b> if...	It is a <b>position description issue</b> if...	It is a <b>position review case</b> if...	It is an <b>equity case</b> if...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The position description accurately reflects the nature of your duties.</li> <li>• You believe that the amount of work and/or extent of your responsibilities are unreasonable.</li> <li>• You feel generally overworked and underpaid.</li> <li>• The position is appropriately graded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The position description does not include the full range of duties you have been assigned.</li> <li>• The description of the duties underplays their complexity.</li> <li>• The qualifications identified for the position are inappropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You believe your position to be incorrectly graded, because it had been either improperly evaluated or your position has changed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Others in the same grade level with comparable duties are receiving a higher salary.</li> <li>• The position is graded appropriately.</li> </ul>
Considerations	Considerations	Considerations	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The classification system evaluates kind of duties, not the amount of work attached to them, so this problem is inappropriate for an off-cycle review</li> <li>• An equity review considers your salary compared with others in the same grade with comparable duties, so workload is only partially relevant, if at all.</li> <li>• If you have been assigned too many different duties, you position description may need renegotiating and rewriting.</li> <li>• If excess work is required to fulfill the duties as assigned, work may need to be redistributed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supervisor has final authority in determining the responsibilities of the position through you have every right to challenge or express disagreement with the way the position description is written</li> <li>• Your signature on the PD means you have seen it, not that you agree with it.</li> <li>• PDs should be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect changing responsibilities.</li> <li>• Having an accurate PD is a first step in an equity or position review process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature and complexity of the position, not your performance or qualifications, are being evaluated.</li> <li>• Position descriptions should be current and accurate.</li> <li>• The position is evaluated according to a point system. (Your SAP steward will have a copy.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature and complexity of your work is relevant only to the extent that it compares with the peer positions you have identified.</li> <li>• Other considerations that may play into comparisons will be seniority, experience in field, merit history, and labor market.</li> </ul>
Next Steps	Next Steps	Next Steps	Next Steps
Discuss with steward and supervisor; file grievance if dissatisfied with outcome.	Discuss with SAP steward and supervisor; file grievance if dissatisfied with outcome.	Consult SAP steward and submit request for position review.	Consult SAP steward and submit request for equity review.

## FLOWCHART FOR POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND EQUITY REVIEWS



## TIPS FOR INTERPRETING SPECIFIC ELEMENTS IN THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Professional Staff Salary Administration Program (SAP) is an elaborate document filled with general terms open to widely varying interpretations. In the section below, you will find some hints about the general point ranges that members of our unit tend to fall within.

- **BASIC KNOWLEDGE:** Most PSU members will fall in the 24-60 point range in this description of required prior training and education. This is perhaps the most straightforward of the elements to interpret, since it usually is clearly laid out in the PD. The points are given for the minimum level of education required to do the job.
- **EXPERIENCE:** The general point range for this element would be 16-60, although few positions require over ten years of experience. According to the introductory paragraph "on-the-job training" is supposed to be included as part of this element; in practice it is not added to the years mentioned on the PD but subsumed within that requirement. It's much too difficult to determine because different incumbents vary widely in how much on-the-job training they actually require.
- **JUDGEMENT AND INITIATIVE:** The general unit range is 20-33. This element gauges the "intellectual demands" of the work. Keep in mind that the semi-colons in these paragraphs separate *alternative* descriptions. You do not have to meet all the criteria in the paragraph, but you must meet at least one as fully described in a clause separated by the semi-colon. Scope and degree of complexity play into this element. You are likely to receive higher points if your decisions and responsibilities are both intellectually demanding and cover a range of areas. If your influence is narrow but the intellectual demands unusually high (lawyers may be an example), then scope will play a less important role in assigning points.
- **INDEPENDENT ACTION:** The general unit range is 10-30. An essential issue here is the size of your department and your level of independence and authority within it. A program director, for instance, is likely to have "authority to establish policies determine allocation of resources," etc. If all employees within that department participate in collective decision-making at a department level, then the others could claim to work "independently and/or jointly as member of a small team in formulating plans," etc.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** The general unit range is 15-33. This element measures the likelihood of and effects of error. One of the debated issues related to Accountability arises with certain licensed practitioners (such as certain health care workers, lawyers, etc.) whose official professional code of ethics indicate they are individually liable for malpractice. An assumption underlying this element is that positions closely supervised are less likely to have errors go undetected. The language in this element also ties accountability to administrative level of the position to a certain degree. The revisions to the system did add some new language to include direct effects on people ("major deleterious effects on another person's academic, social, or emotional well-being") as well as on institutions.
- **INTERRELATIONSHIPS:** The general unit range is 9-37. This is a particularly complicated element because it attempts to gauge the qualitative nature of interactions in both political and human relations terms. *Who* you have interactions with is one part of the equation. Equally or more important is *what kind* of interactions you have and *what level of institutional authority* you bring to them. PSU negotiated language that took into account complex interactions geared toward a developmental or therapeutic end to expand the more institutionally oriented original language. An appellant may speak on the telephone frequently with state reps and community leaders, but she or he will not gain additional points unless the person has the authority to influence change or make substantive decisions for the University. A Vice

Chancellor speaking to a state legislator about a bill in the legislature would theoretically gain more points for this element than a contract administrator clarifying procedures and policies with a funding source.

- **MANUAL SKILLS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, PHYSICAL EFFORT, OCCUPATIONAL RISKS:** Point awards for these four elements range all up and down the scale defined for each, though most will fall toward the lower end. Professional positions, in general, involve office work requiring primarily mental effort in a relatively risk-free setting. That does not mean, however, that particular positions will not warrant much higher levels. Electrical engineers and nurses, for instance, face different levels of occupational risk than do academic advisers. You should look carefully at each of these elements to see if special circumstances apply. Below we've given you some conditions to consider for each.
  - **MANUAL SKILLS:** PSU and management have been battling about how expected computer use should be evaluated in this element. PSU members argue that computer use is expected if not explicitly required of most professional jobs and should receive at least four points, more if it is a major activity in your work. Though we haven't won on this position, we encourage you to argue on that basis. The language describing the elements clearly supports it. It helps if computer tasks are explicitly acknowledged in your PD rather than assumed.
  - **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS:** Keep in mind that this element describes the conditions required by the nature of your job, not the accidental circumstances of the setting you happen to work within. If you have wasps flying around your office, that's a health and safety matter, not a job evaluation issue. If you are a laboratory worker whose work necessarily involves being around very loud machines, then that condition is a job evaluation issue. Another tricky question concerns whether or not the "frequent distractions" or "dealing with irate or anxious individuals" applies to your position. The rule of thumb: assume that all professional positions involve annoying distractions and encounters with angry or anxious people. If your job goes way beyond that norm, then make that argument. Be sure to show why the job itself inevitably involves these conditions.
  - **PHYSICAL EFFORT:** Most professional positions involve little physical effort, but some require some lifting at least 30-60 pounds or standing or walking more than 60% of the time. All of us lift the occasional box or heavy computer monitor. Again, to claim higher points in this element, you need to show that your job requires this kind of frequent exertion. PSU continues to insist that "occasional light to moderate exertion" actually means just occasional, not frequent, but we don't necessarily prevail.
  - **OCCUPATIONAL RISKS:** The great majority of staff will earn 2 point for this level, but some positions will be awarded more for special risks associated with the work. For instance, PSU prevailed in asserting that nurses and some other health workers should receive 20 points for the serious hazards they face by regularly coming into contact with bodily fluids, especially when handling sharp instruments. On the other hand, electrical engineers who spend less time in the field would earn fewer points than an electrician who deals with electrical hazards during most of the working day. Frequency of contact and degree of risk, then, are both involved in this element. We continue to argue that these higher points apply in the presence of risk, even when all precautions are assumed to be taken.
- **SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY-A:** The general unit range is 0-21. This element acknowledges the supervisory role, not the numbers supervised, which are measured in the next element. Many of our members will receive no points for Supervision A or B if they play no formal or informal supervisory role. In this element, 6 or more points require a formal supervisory function assigned as part of the PD.

**Functional** or **technical** supervision (3 points) involves a task-specific relationship to other professional employees. You may supervise a temporary project, for instance, and so potentially gain 3 points for functional supervision. **Direct** supervision refers to the role of acting as someone's official immediate supervisor. **Indirect** supervision refers to a role played at one or more rungs higher up the ladder. You would have direct supervision over another employee whose PMPs you fill out and indirect supervision over the employees that employee supervises.

- **SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY-B:** This element gives points for the numbers of students or regular paid employees you supervise either directly or indirectly. A professional employee who plays no *formal* supervisory role will receive 0 points for this element (though the wording in that respect is confusing). The major point of contention in this element is related to certain categories of workers, such as professional interns and volunteers. At this point, they do not count in this element; only supervision of paid university employees counts.

## DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SAP PROCESSES

### Position Classification Review

**Relevant Section of the Contract:** Appendix B (PSSAP Manual) IIB-iii: Position Classification Review

#### Paperwork Requirements\*

1. Appendix #1: Position Description Worksheet – completed by member
  - Worksheet follows the 13 elements for classifying a position
  - Form gets attached in PageUp
  - According to Total Compensation, Appendix #1 is optional and not used when they grade the position
    - Strongly recommend that employees complete this
    - This information will help SAP Stewards to provide feedback about position and how it might be graded
    - Information in Appendix #1 could also help if the case were to go to an appeal
2. Appendix #2: Position Description – completed by member in collaboration with supervisor
  - Updated job description
  - Information on this form gets entered directly in PageUp
  - Should be agreed upon and signed by the employee, department head, and division-level HR
3. Appendix #3: Request for “Off-Cycle” Review
  - Request for Position Classification Review
  - Information gets entered directly in PageUp
  - Requires review by and signatures from employee’s supervisor, department head, and administrative officer
  - Requires incumbent’s existing position description
4. Other helpful materials:
  - Letter of support from supervisor highlighting increased responsibilities that have been added since original Position Description

*\*Required forms are available in the PSU Contract. PDF and Word versions of the forms can be downloaded from the SAP page on the PSU website: <https://www.umass.edu/psumta/amherst-sap-committee>*

## **Equity Review**

**Relevant Section of the Contract:** Appendix B (PSSAP Manual) IVH: Equity Increases

### **Paperwork Requirements\***

1. Appendix #5: Request for Equity Review
  - Must include salary sought
    - Consider salaries of others in similar positions across UMass
    - To the extent possible, staff salary sought should match the salary being recommended by department head
2. Job description
3. Justification for salary sought – SAP Steward can provide example template letters
  - Provide data from similar positions at UMass
  - Include any relevant history (e.g., member was promoted from another position at UMass, member has obtained additional degree(s) or certification while in position)
4. Organizational Chart for Unit
5. Memo of justification from Department Head

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