

Salary Study FAQs

May 2025

General Questions

What was the purpose of the salary study?

The purpose of the salary study was to better understand how UCA compares to peer institutions for faculty and staff pay, and to give UCA administration the data needed to inform discussions for the next three budget cycles.

What technical assistance was provided to UCA?

Gallagher Consulting was selected through a competitive RFP process to gather the market data and advise the UCA team. Gallagher is a national leader in this work and employed a replicable process that has been used with hundreds of other higher education clients and follows industry standards for a market salary analysis.

What positions were included in the study?

All full-time staff and full-time continuing faculty were included in the salary study. Athletic coaches; visiting professors; 10-month, 11-month, and 12-month faculty positions; provisional positions; and part time positions were not included in the study. The study only included positions and personnel that were in place as of November 1, 2024.

Future updates of the data will reflect changes to personnel and positions after the November 1, 2024 date.

What UCA constituent groups were involved in the study?

A working group was formed in June 2024 and included representation from Staff Senate, Staff Senate Compensation Committee, Faculty Senate, Faculty Salary Review Committee, Institutional Research, Human Resources and Risk Management, and the Office of the President.

Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Cabinet, Council of Deans, and the Faculty Salary Review Committee were also consulted and updated at various points in the process.

What was the timeline of the study?

Initial meetings started in late June 2024 to determine Gallagher's data needs and establish the meeting schedule for the salary study working group. Data sharing and formal meetings commenced in July 2024. Data collection and analysis concluded in March 2025. Market salary information will be shared with supervisor and employees in June 2025. Discussions will be ongoing through fall 2025, and over the next three budget cycles, regarding budget implications relative to the market data.

What peer institutions were used in the study and how were they selected?

We used the university's [peer institution list](#) selected by the Strategic Planning Committee in April 2024, plus the following institutions:

1. Western Carolina University
2. University of Central Oklahoma
3. Northern Kentucky University
4. University of Houston - Clear Lake

These four additional peer institutions were added to ensure there was a robust data set for all positions included in the study. The factors used to select these additional peer institutions included: similar Carnegie classification, sector of institutions, region, institution size, total expense targeting range, and total core revenue targeting range.

The same peer institution list was used for both faculty and staff and we did not substitute or supplement data sets for various disciplines.

Will department chairs, division directors, deans and vice presidents have access to the market salary data for their specific areas?

Yes, Institutional Research will provide this information to leadership in June 2025.

How will the results of the study be used by administration?

The data will be used to inform budgeting discussions and the allocation of funding for employee compensation, likely in the coming three cycles. Any budget dollars earmarked for employee salaries will be used for a mix of faculty advancement in the promotion and tenure process, cost of living increases, career service or longevity bonuses, and market and equity adjustments. Gallagher advises that to remain competitive with peers UCA should keep employee salaries within 10% of market salaries, and for us to be highly competitive, we need to be within 5% of the market salaries. Below 90% of target represents possible misalignment and below 85% represents significant misalignment.

Administration has set a goal of all employees being to at least 90 percent of their market salary (within 10 points of their market) in order to remain competitive with the market, and some level of funding will be dedicated toward salary adjustments over the next several budget cycles in service of this goal. This will ensure that any position that currently has possible or significant misalignment to the market will be in an acceptable target range as soon as enrollment and budgets allow.

Staff Specific Questions

What information was gathered on staff positions as part of the study?

The salary study working group collected 'time in position' data and position descriptions for all full-time staff positions. In addition, information on the university's structure and organizational chart were also used to inform the analysis. This information formed the basis of matching staff positions to benchmark positions.

What is a benchmark position?

Benchmark positions are roles used as reference points in salary studies to compare and analyze compensation across various positions within a company or industry. They serve as standardized positions with well-defined responsibilities and requirements that make them ideal for comparison.

Were all positions matched to a benchmark position?

552 of 684 staff positions were matched to a benchmark position. If no benchmark position was available, Gallagher and the UCA team looked at positions within the institution to see where we could slot them within the organizational structure. We discussed the following things when we were trying to slot a position.

- Understanding the position
- Job relationships
- Market considerations
- Internal equity

As an additional level of oversight to the process, vice presidents and deans reviewed and provided input on the benchmark positions for their areas.

What data sources were used for the staff analysis?

In addition to CUPA-HR data, proprietary data was also used from the following data sources: Willis Towers, Mercer, and ERI.

Once data was pulled for all positions, salary ranges were established for each position. The median salary within the range is reflective of what a person should earn after 7-10 years in the position at our institution.

Once Gallagher provided the data for each position, there were several rounds of review conducted by the salary study working group, vice presidents, and deans.

How was a staff member's "years in position" factored into each person's individualized market salary?

Each position has a pay range and market salary. As a person's years in position increases, that person should progress through the salary range for their position at a rate of 1.5% per year until they reach the position's salary median. Therefore, each employee has an individualized market salary based on their years in position (YIP).

For the purposes of this study, once an employee reaches their market salary they will no longer be considered eligible for market salary adjustments, but would continue to be eligible for other types of additional compensation, including COLAs, career service bonuses, etc.

Was a compression analysis completed as part of the salary study?

By analyzing each employee based on their years in position, the study was able to account for compression issues.

What did the data reveal about staff salaries relevant to the market?

- 483 staff members (70.61%) are at or above 100 percent of market salary
- 160 staff members (23.39%) are at 90-99 percent of market salary
- 41 staff members (5.99%) are below 90 percent of market salary

How will the staff data be updated over time?

The current data set is aged to January 1, 2025. The staff data will continue to be aged using a 'cost of labor' adjustment based on nationwide trends. As new staff members are hired, their position will be reviewed and added into future analyses. Future data sets will also reflect changes to positions and changes to years in position.

Faculty Specific Questions

How were faculty positions analyzed?

Faculty positions were analyzed using a standardized CIP code, rank, and tenure group. The [Classification of Instructional Programs](#) (CIP) provides a taxonomic scheme that supports the accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completion activity. CIP codes were originally developed by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Why were faculty positions analyzed at the four-digit CIP code level instead of the six-digit CIP code level?

There was only a 27.2% match at the 6-digit CIP code level for our faculty, so data was very limited at the 6-digit level. For the 4-digit CIP code level, we could get a 73.6% match of our

CIP codes, ranks, and tenure groups. Using the 4-digit CIP code level gave us a much richer data set.

Why were faculty pay groups formed and what was the process for forming the groups?

Faculty pay groups were formed to provide a framework for determining an appropriate salary range for all CIP codes because data is not available for all CIP codes, ranks, and tenure groups. Data from CUPA is market data and creating structures helps us counter the limitations of the salary data. This is a standard practice in a faculty salary analysis and was recommended and guided by Gallagher, with input from UCA.

To form the pay groups, Gallagher used the rank that provided the most data from our peer group, which was the Associate Professor rank. These groups were formed using CUPA data from our salary study peer institution list.

We then examined the market salary (i.e., median salary) for each CIP Code at that rank and created initial groupings of CIP Codes based on the proximity of those market salaries. This resulted in the formation of four pay groups.

Once the groups were formed, they were further refined using a mathematical analysis of the average and standard deviation of the market salaries in each group. The standard deviation tells us how close or far apart the market salaries are in the group and can be used as a standard measure of how far a certain market salary is from the average (e.g., +1.69 standard deviations above the average).

We then looked at the market salaries that were the farthest from their group average and moved those CIP Codes to the next closest group. If that move resulted in a smaller standard deviation for each group, the move was retained. If not, the CIP Code was moved back to the initial group.

After several iterations, we settled on groups of CIP codes that minimized the standard deviations of each group; in other words, the CIP Codes in each group were more similar in market salaries to each other than to the CIP Codes in other groups.

What data sources were included in the faculty analysis?

When data was not available for the 4-digit CIP code, data was pulled from CUPA using other data cuts and/or CompData to help UCA classify CIP codes into the proper pay group structure. All faculty ranks were slotted within the pay groups.

Were additional data sources/sets included beyond the data sources stated above?

No additional data sources were used.

How did a faculty member's 'years in position' impact their individualized market salary?

Each position has a pay range and market salary. As a person's years in position increases, that person should progress through the salary range for their position at a rate of 1.5% per year until they reach the position's salary median. Therefore, each employee has an individualized market salary based on their years in position (YIP).

For the purposes of this study, once an employee reaches their market salary they will no longer be considered eligible for market salary adjustments, but would continue to be eligible for other types of additional compensation, including COLAs, career service bonuses, etc.

Was a compression analysis completed as part of the salary study?

By analyzing each employee based on their years in position, the study was able account for compression issues.

How were the Lecturer II/Clinical Instructor II & Senior Lecturer/Senior Clinical Instructor salaries determined?

The Instructor/Lecturer Non-Tenure Track CUPA data was used to create the Lecturer I/Clinical Instructor I rank median. The current structure is built assuming a 1.5% annual COLA increase (recommended by Gallagher) in conjunction with the current promotion raises (\$2,500 for Lecturer II/Clinical Instructor II, \$4,000 for Senior Lecturer/Senior Clinical Instructor). The 1.5% annual increase is over six years, which is used to create the midpoint for that rank.

Example for Pay Group A:

Lecturer I - Midpoint	\$50,389
Lecturer II - Minimum (YIR = 0)	$\$50,389 + \$2,500 = \$52,889$
Lecturer II - Midpoint (YIR = 6)	\$57,831

How were 10-month, 11-month, and 12-month faculty positions analyzed within the study?

We are currently collecting information from the deans with the help of many department chairs on each non-9 month faculty position and how their salary is structured to determine if the methodology recommended by Gallagher was appropriate.

How were department chairs analyzed within the study?

Updated on 4/29/25

For the purposes of this study, department chairs were included in the study at their faculty rank, and their administrative responsibilities were not considered. Moving forward, we will have further conversations about how to determine appropriate salaries for department chair or school director positions.

How were library faculty positions analyzed within the study?

Following discussions with the Director of the Library, we looked at 15 positions that the director recommended to use as comparisons, but data was only available for 6 of those positions. The data for those positions were used to create a pay structure for the Library faculty. More specific information on this process can be found in Appendix B of the [Faculty Salary Review Committee annual report](#).

What did the data reveal about faculty salaries relevant to the market?

- 146 faculty members (30.54%) are at 100% or above market salary
- 197 faculty members (41.21%) are at 90-99 percent of market salary
- 135 faculty members (28.24%) are less than 90 percent of market salary

How will the faculty data be updated over time?

Salary data will be pulled from CUPA-HR each year and a new faculty salary pay structure will be built. Peer institutions will also be reviewed to ensure the peer list is still appropriate for our analysis. Future data sets will also reflect changes to positions and changes to Years in Position since the original analysis.