PROCEDURE STATEMENT

Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) employs individuals in every region of the state to accomplish a diverse set of tasks in an ever-changing environment. For this reason, flexibility in the establishment of the starting pay rate is essential. However, to assure a general uniformity of titles, positions will be established based on a grouping of titles that represent selected duties and responsibilities requiring similar abilities and skills. Titles will be taken from the listing of classified and non-classified titles and title codes for components of The Texas A&M University System (System). Use of standardized titles will ensure uniformity in budgets, payrolls, and other official records, and afford a basis for uniform salary treatment of employees engaged in comparable work at their respective locations.

REASON FOR PROCEDURE

This procedure is required by System Regulation 31.01.01, Compensation Administration.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.0 PAY POLICY

1.1 TVMDL will pay salaries and wages at a competitive rate in each labor market where it operates to attract and retain outstanding employees within available funds and consistent with the value of the position to the organization. In this context, the determination of pay rates will be dependent upon such factors as availability of funds, qualifications of employees, local or regional market conditions, internal equity, and performance. However, in no event will a rate be established that is less than the minimum wage prescribed by state or federal regulations.

1.2 All decisions with respect to pay rates will be made without consideration of an individual's race, sex, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, or veteran status.

2.0 PAY PROCEDURES

2.1 Pay Plan—TVMDL sections will use the class and pay ranges in the pay plan established for sections located away from College Station for the purpose of assigning title and pay rates.

2.2 Pay Rates for New Employees

A. The starting pay for new employees—either in a budgeted or wage position—shall be the minimum rate established for the position in the pay plan. However, section heads may pay a new salary below the minimum amount of the assigned salary range for a budgeted position during a training period not to exceed six months. This rate must never be less than the federally established minimum wage, and at the end of six months if the individual is still employed, the salary must be brought to the minimum of the pay range.
B. Section heads have the flexibility to hire new employees up to the midpoint of the pay range when necessary to attract a candidate who possesses qualifications beyond the minimum required. This does not require approval by the Director or designee—even if the budgeted rate for the position is less than the midpoint of the pay range—provided funds are available in the section’s budget.

C. In determining the level of pay above the minimum of the range, consideration should be given to the current rate of pay of employees who are in the same job classification and/or pay range to ensure that no internal inconsistencies among positions are created without a valid and legally defensible explanation. It is also prudent to examine the pay rates of employees who are in positions where a series of titles exist (e.g. Technician I and Technician II), or in positions where a logical progression is understood (e.g. Technical Assistant II to Technician I) to ensure that a person in a position with a lower pay range does not earn more than someone who holds a position in a higher pay range, unless there is a valid and legally defensible reason.

D. Approval to hire a new employee at a rate 1) above the midpoint of the pay range for a newly approved position, or 2) at a rate of more than 10% above the last budgeted amount for an existing vacant position (unless new salary is still within the approved pay range), must be requested in writing and approved by the Director or designee prior to the offer being made. This situation may occur when the hiring section wants to make an offer to a specific candidate with outstanding qualifications and experience. These requests for approval should be accompanied by the candidate’s employment application and/or resume. No offer of employment at a rate that exceeds the midpoint of the pay range for a newly approved position, or at a rate of more than 10% above the last budgeted amount for an existing vacant position (unless new salary is still within the approved pay range), will be considered valid without written approval from the Director or designee before the offer is made.

2.3 Administrative Stipends – in order for the salaries of administrators, upon their return to their staff position, to be equitable in relation to their staff peers, the following procedures will be used in making appointments to the positions of Branch Chief, Section Head and Assistant Section Head.

A. Documentation of all appointments of a current or newly hired staff member to a title as listed in 2.3 shall include specifications of the: 1) staff member’s base monthly salary, 2) staff member’s administrative stipend.

B. The administrative stipend is effective only during the time the appointee holds the administrative position. When duties are relinquished, the stipend will be removed.

C. The amount of the administrative stipend shall be a flat rate, based on the duties and responsibilities of the position, as determined by the Director or Designee.

D. All salary increases awarded to an individual in the positions of Branch Chief, Section Head and Assistant Section Head shall be based on the individual’s base salary + stipend and will be retained in the individual’s base monthly salary when relinquishing the administrative position. Salary increases may include merit salary increases, equity adjustments, promotions, state-mandated increases or other actions that are applied to staff salaries.

E. Section 2.3 of this procedure shall apply to all relevant appointments made after January 1, 2016.

3.0 TYPES OF PAY INCREASES

3.1 It is the practice of TVMDL to award salary increases through the regular budget cycle. However, some flexibility is needed to respond to exceptional circumstances, and there are several ways in which support staff salaries can be increased during the fiscal year. All requests for pay increases must be submitted in writing for approval by the Director or designee prior to any commitment to the individual or preparation of any budget or payroll documents.

3.2 Increase Types

A. Promotion Increases—Increases that occur when an employee moves from their current position
to a higher paid position, or increases that occur when job duties, responsibilities, and required qualifications of a position are reevaluated and the position is assigned a new title that warrants a higher rate of pay.

Pay increases will usually be considered and granted prior to the beginning of the fiscal year in accordance with the budget guidelines approved by the Board of Regents. However, increases as a result of promotion or reclassification may be considered at the time of such action if the funds are available.

Salary rates of promoted employees will be at least the minimum amount of the salary range to which the position is assigned. Increases above the minimum amount will not exceed 10% of the promoted employee’s current salary. If, for internal consistency reasons, a promotion increase is greater than the minimum rate, it will not exceed the midpoint of the new pay range, and the same considerations outlined in paragraph 2.2 will be applied.

B. Mandated Increases—Sometimes known as "across-the-board-increases" where uniform salary increases are granted in accordance with prescribed guidelines, usually established by legislative action, without regard to meritorious performance.

C. Merit Increases—Increases granted to employees in recognition of meritorious performance with no change in title. There are two methods for granting a merit payment.

1. A merit salary increase is granted to a budgeted employee’s salary in recognition of superior performance that advances the purpose of TVMDL. This salary increase is added to the employee’s base salary.

2. A one-time merit salary payment is a lump-sum payment that is granted in recognition of superior performance or achievement that advances the purpose of TVMDL. This type of merit salary increase is not added to the employee’s base salary.

In both instances, six months must have elapsed since the employee’s last merit salary increase, and the merit salary increase will occur during the annual budget cycle, in accordance with budget guidelines. In cases of clearly exceptional job performance, merit salary increases may be granted in March, and strong evidence must be shown as to why the merit increase can not be made during the annual budget cycle. Merit increases will be requested in writing for approval by the Director or designee prior to any commitment to the individual or preparation of any budget or payroll documents. The written justification will clearly state the reasons for the increase and source of funds. A current performance evaluation form must be on file in GreatJobs.

D. Equity Increases—Increases granted to employees who perform similar duties and responsibilities, possess comparable qualifications, and have a comparable amount of time in their current position as other support staff in the same title.

As with merit increases, salary adjustments should be made during the regular budget cycle whenever possible. Any request for an out-of-cycle salary adjustment should be supported by strong evidence of need and a compelling argument as to why the adjustment cannot be accomplished during the next regular budget cycle.

E. Change in Pay Range—Increases that occur when market conditions dictate the adjustment of the pay range for a particular title.

Requests for other out-of-cycle pay increases, including increases to retain key employees, must be submitted in writing, and supported by strong evidence of need and a compelling argument as to why the adjustment can not be made during the next regular budget cycle. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and out-of-cycle pay increases will be effective on or after the final date of approval.

4.0 BENEFIT REPLACEMENT PAY (BRP)
4.1 System Regulation 31.01.01 defines the parameters in which employees are eligible for BRP.

4.2 Individuals employed by TVMDL on or before August 31, 1995 became eligible for BRP.

4.3 All eligible employees began receiving BRP on January 1, 1996.

4.4 BRP is not a separate portion of an eligible employee’s pay that must be added to every subsequent salary adjustment. BRP is a one–time adjustment to an eligible employee’s salary, and additional BRP is not added to an employee’s salary upon receiving a promotion. It is considered to be included in the new salary.

4.5 This procedure governing BRP administration for TVMDL employees applies to all employees.

4.6 For more information see System Regulation 31.01.01, section 3.3.

4.7 Questions related to BRP should be directed to Texas A&M AgriLife (AgriLife) Human Resources at 979-845-2423.

5.0 POSITION MANAGEMENT

All faculty and non–faculty positions will be established or reclassified by using the GreatJobs system.

6.0 TRANSFERS

6.1 Lateral Transfer

A lateral transfer is a transfer to another position within the same pay range. If an employee transfers laterally to a position at the same location, the rate of pay will not change. Exceptions may be requested by the section head and approved by the Director or designee when duties of the vacant position are clearly more responsible or complex than the position the person is transferring from, even if the titles are the same. However, this should be the exception and not routinely requested. The fact that a vacant position is budgeted at a higher rate is not justification to give an employee a raise when a lateral transfer occurs.

6.2 Transfer to a Position With a Lower Pay Range

If an employee transfers to a position in a lower pay range, the new rate of pay will be the minimum amount of the assigned pay range of the lower position to which the employee transferred. Upon approval by the Director or designee, a rate of pay above the minimum amount for the assigned range, but not greater than the employee’s present rate of pay, may be approved for this type of transfer.

RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, OR REQUIREMENTS

System Policy 31.01, Compensation

System Regulation 31.01.01, Compensation Administration

System Regulation 31.01.08, Merit Salary Increases

TVMDL Rule 31.01.01.V1, Compensation Administration

TVMDL Rule 31.01.08.V1, Merit Salary Increases

CONTACT OFFICE

Questions concerning this procedure should be directed to AgriLife Human Resources at 979-845-2423.