

UNIVERSITY RULE

31.01.08.M1 Merit Salary Increases

Approved April 14, 2021

Revised June 16, 2022

Next Scheduled review: June 16, 2027

Rule Statement

This rule is set forth to provide guidance on Merit Salary Increases. A Merit Salary Increase may be either a Merit Raise or Merit Payment as defined below. A Merit Salary Increase is an increase that may be granted to an individual in recognition of meritorious job performance.

The responsible Human Resources unit is based on the type of position: The Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) is responsible for staff positions. The Division of Research is responsible for non-faculty research positions (including TAMUG). Faculty Affairs is responsible for faculty positions. The Graduate and Professional School is responsible for graduate assistant positions. The Student Employment Office within Scholarships & Financial Aid is responsible for student positions (excluding graduate assistants). Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG) Human Resources is responsible for TAMUG staff and student positions.

Definitions

Merit Raise: A merit salary raise that is added to the employee's base salary.

One-Time Merit Payment: A one-time, lump-sum payment that is not added to the employee's base salary. A One-Time Merit Payment is subject to the standard payroll deductions.

Rule and Responsibilities

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 Merit Salary Increases are governed by [System Regulation 31.01.08, Merit Salary Increases](#).

- 1.2 Merit Salary Increases may not be funded every fiscal year, due to fiscal constraints or other budget considerations. Merit programs are authorized by the system member CEO and approved by the Board of Regents in the budget approval process.
- 1.3 Merit Salary Increases within each division of the University are based on the annual budget guidelines and are not considered to be entitlements. Budget guidelines and merit process instructions are communicated by the appropriate Budget Office. Departments are required to keep approval documentation for record keeping purposes.
- 1.4 Temporary/Casual employees are typically not eligible to receive Merit Salary Increases through the budget process. If an increase is approved outside of the budget process, departments shall maintain approval documentation for any performance-based pay increases to confirm the criteria in section 2 is met. For guidance, contact the appropriate Human Resources unit.
- 1.5 Texas A&M, Division of Research, Faculty and Galveston Positions:
 - 1.5.1 One-Time Merit Payment:
 - 1.5.1.1 If the criteria of this University Rule are met, a One-Time Merit Payment up to \$10,000 (cannot be grossed up) may be awarded to an employee. The payment may be paid from any source of funds if the funding is available in departmental budgets.
 - 1.5.2 A Merit Salary Increase may include the combination of a Merit Raise and a One-Time Merit Payment with the same effective date.
 - 1.5.2.1 In the case of staff positions and non-faculty research employees in System-wide Pay Plan (SWPP) titles, who are paid close to or above the SWPP title pay grade maximum, it is strongly encouraged to provide a One-Time Merit Payment to such employees in lieu of a Merit Raise. Merit Raises provided to employees that are above the SWPP title pay grade maximum will be reviewed annually by HROE and may be subject to additional justification and approval.
 - 1.5.3 A One-Time Merit Payment may be awarded to an employee (excluding positions that require student status) who has successfully completed a special project of significant importance to warrant special recognition (criteria outlined in section 2 must be met), or in accordance with section 1.5.2.1.

- 1.5.4 Exception: The President may approve a One-Time Merit Payment if six (6) months has not elapsed since the last Merit Salary Increase if the One-Time Merit Payment is given for the employee's performance during a natural disaster or other extraordinary circumstance. The employee must meet criteria as stated in [System Regulation 31.01.08, Merit Salary Increases](#).

1.6 Student Positions:

- 1.6.1 For guidance on student positions (including graduate assistants), refer to section 5.

2. CRITERIA

2.1 Merit Salary Increase - Regular Budget Cycle:

- 2.1.1 An employee receiving a Merit Salary Increase must have demonstrated meritorious performance evidenced by the following:

2.1.1.1 Texas A&M, Division of Research and Galveston Positions: a "meets expectations" or higher overall rating on the most recent Performance Review. For guidance, refer to [Standard Administrative Procedure 33.99.03.M0.01, Performance Management and Review Procedure for Non-faculty Employees](#).

2.1.1.2 Faculty Positions: a current performance review documenting meritorious performance as per department and/or college faculty evaluation guidelines.

- 2.1.2 Employee completion of required training courses may be used as additional criteria for Merit Salary Increase eligibility.

- 2.1.3 The employee has been employed by Texas A&M University for at least six (6) continuous months prior to the effective date of the Merit Salary Increase and

- 2.1.4 the employee must not have received a Merit Salary Increase (Merit Raise and/or One-Time Merit Payment) within the past six (6) months prior to the effective date of the Merit Salary Increase.

2.1.4.1 Effective dates of Merit Salary Increases are typically established by approved programs as described in section 1. No pay increase may be retroactive, in accordance with [Article III, Section 53 of the Texas Constitution](#) which prohibits the payment of retroactive increases to State employees.

2.1.4.2 Note: In any instance where an employee received a Merit Salary Increase effective September 1st, the first opportunity for that employee to be awarded another Merit Salary Increase would be March 1st. A Merit Salary Increase awarded after March 1st will make the employee ineligible to receive a Merit Salary Increase the following September 1st.

2.2 Merit Salary Increase - Outside Regular Budget Cycle:

2.2.1 A Merit Salary Increase may be granted at times other than the beginning of the fiscal year. An employee receiving a Merit Salary Increase outside of the regular budget cycle must meet the criteria described in section 2.1.

Requests for these increases must be submitted through administrative channels to the appropriate approvers and approved in advance. The effective date will be on or after the beginning of the pay period in which the employee is paid and the request receives final approval from the appropriate Human Resources unit. For non-faculty research positions, the Vice President for Research or designee serves as the approver.

2.2.2 Normally, increases in base pay on the basis of merit will occur during the regular budget cycle. However, in rare cases, clearly demonstrated meritorious performance or completion of a special project of significant importance to warrant special recognition, may occur for which a Merit Salary Increase may be granted outside of the regular budget cycle.

2.2.2.1 Justification will outline very strong evidence as to why this increase cannot be made during the regular budget cycle and meet the performance criteria stated in section 2.1.1.

3. APPROVAL

3.1 One-Time Merit Payment:

3.1.1 Vice Presidents are authorized to approve a One-Time Merit Payment up to \$10,000 for employees of their respective divisions provided the criteria in section 2 are met.

3.1.1.1 Approval of a One-Time Merit Payment (Regular Budget Cycle or Outside Regular Budget Cycle) stated in the above section may be further delegated by a Vice President. Written confirmation of delegation to approve One-Time Merit Payments shall be forwarded to the office of the appropriate Human Resources unit.

3.1.1.2 Requests for exceptions to the \$10,000 limit for employees who meet the criteria stated in section 2, shall be sent through administrative channels to the President for approval.

3.1.2 Documentation: For guidance, refer to HROE's Compensation Resources page for Merit Process in Workday.

3.2 Merit Raise

3.2.1 Merit Salary Increase - Regular Budget Cycle

3.2.1.1 For guidance, refer to section 1.2 and 1.3.

3.2.2 Merit Salary Increase - Outside Regular Budget Cycle

3.2.2.1 For guidance, refer to section 2.2.

3.3 TAMUG Positions:

3.3.1 Staff Positions: Merit requests for staff positions must be approved by the TAMUG COO.

3.3.2 Faculty Positions: Merit requests for faculty positions must be approved by the TAMUG CAO.

4. PROCESSING

4.1 Merit Salary Increases, whether added to base salary or processed as a one-time payment, are implemented through one of the following methods:

4.1.1 Completion of the Merit sections in the regular budget cycle preparation template as determined by the annual budget guidelines, as a Request Compensation Change business process in Workday, and/or

4.1.2 a One-Time Merit Payment template as a Request One-Time Payment business process in Workday.

4.2 Approval documentation as stated in section 3 shall be submitted through administrative channels to the appropriate approvers.

4.3 A copy of the approved Merit Salary Increase shall be maintained at the department level as stated in section 1.3. It is recommended to keep a copy of the employee's Merit Salary Increase correspondence in the employee's personnel file.

5. STUDENT POSITIONS

5.1 For guidance on student positions (excluding graduate assistants), refer to [Standard Administrative Procedure 33.99.08.M0.01, Student Employment](#).

5.2 Graduate Assistant Positions:

5.2.1 Merit Raise: A Merit Raise may occur at any time after the initial six (6) months of employment in the graduate assistant position. It is recommended to follow effective dates of Merit Salary Increases established by approved programs as described in section 1.1. Documentation for recommendations of a Merit Salary Increase must clearly describe meritorious job performance and appropriately document justification for the increase. The Department Head is responsible for the review and approval of recommendations for a Merit Raise.

5.2.2 One-Time Merit Payment: Graduate assistant positions are not eligible to receive a One-Time Merit Payment.

Related Statutes, Policies

[System Regulation 31.01.08, Merit Salary Increases](#)

[System Regulation 33.99.03, Performance Evaluations for Nonfaculty Employees](#)

[University Rule 31.01.01.M7.01, Salary Increases not Awarded Through the Regular Budget Cycle](#)

[University Rule 31.01.01.M7, Employee Compensation Administration](#)

[Standard Administrative Procedure 33.99.08.M0.01, Student Employment](#)

[Standard Administrative Procedure 33.99.03.M0.01, Performance Management and Review Procedure for Non-Faculty Employees](#)

Contact Office

For information or clarification on this Rule, contact: [Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness, Classification & Compensation](#) at (979) 845-4170 or by email at hrcomp@tamu.edu.

For information on Research titles, refer to the [Research Titles and Staffing webpage](#) or contact: Division of Research at (979) 458-4956 or by email at ResearchStaffing@tamu.edu.

For information regarding Faculty titles, contact: Faculty Affairs at (979) 845-4274 or by email at facultyaffairs@tamu.edu.

For information regarding Graduate Assistant titles, contact: Graduate and Professional School at (979) 845-3631 or by email at ogaps@tamu.edu.

For information regarding Student titles, contact: Student Employment within Scholarships & Financial Aid at (979) 845-0686 or by email at jobsforaggies@tamu.edu.

For information regarding Texas A&M Health Science Center positions, contact: [Human Resources](#) by email at hschr@tamu.edu.

For information regarding Texas A&M at Galveston positions, contact: [Human Resources](#) at (409) 740-4532 or by email at hr@tamug.edu.

OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY: [Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness](#)