

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Market Survey Process

## Benchmarks

**Q1. What is a benchmark?** A benchmark title is one for which we can get reliable survey data and has a close relationship to an ACC staff title. For example, the title of Accountant is a common benchmark title. Accountants do very similar work, regardless of where they work. Groundskeeper, and Administrative Assistant are other benchmark titles.

**Q2. How are benchmarks determined?** HR Compensation matches job functions, not titles, to the functions of similar titles found in market survey sources. We follow the best practice of matching job functions that match at 80%-120% of the ACC job. Any match less than 80% or higher than 120% of the ACC job would be considered too different from our job for a solid match.

**Q3. How many benchmark titles are there?** In the last survey process, it was determined that there were too many benchmarks titles in some job families and not enough in others. The Administration decided that the goal would be to establish 2 benchmark titles in each job family, where possible. In the FY09 market survey, 39 anchor benchmark titles were established.

**Q4. My job family does not have an anchor benchmark. When will it?** HR Compensation will continue to gather survey data during the next two years to establish anchor benchmark titles for as many job families as possible. However, the review of job families should take place first.

**Q5. How are titles directly impacted by benchmark titles?** Titles within a job family maintain a relationship to other titles within that job family through the classification structure, or pay grades. If the market for a benchmark title changes, then the other titles in the job family may or may not be directly impacted. For example, if the market for Accountant goes up by 5%, then the Accountant title should move up one pay grade. There is a 5% difference between any pay grade midpoint and the next higher or lower pay grade. Therefore, if the Accountant moves too close to the Sr. Accountant pay grade, or passes it, the Sr. Accountant title would have to be adjusted to maintain the same or a similar relationship to the Accountant title.

**Q6. Who determines the job families?** The PLT will review the current job families to determine if they wish to change or combine them. Currently, we have several families with only one title in them. This job family review should be conducted before the data is collected to reach the goal of two anchor benchmarks per job family.

**Q7. Is the survey data collected from the survey sources adjusted for cost of living in Austin?** No additional cost of living adjustment is made on data collected. Remember,

however, that the majority of data collected is from the Austin geographic area. It includes salaries from the Austin metro area, including San Marcos and Round Rock.

**Q8. What data is used for titles that are not found in the Austin metro area in sufficient number to be reported on a salary survey?** Reliable salary surveys do not report back data on titles that have a certain number of organizations providing data for them. They may have a minimum number of five or more organizations reporting on the same title to be able to release the data on that title. Many of the student services titles at ACC fall into this category. Although UT may report data on the survey for a position ACC also has, the survey source would not include that data in their report. In such a case, we look at the other Texas metropolitan community colleges and UT Austin for data, so we can get enough data sources.

**Q9. Why do we use more than one Austin survey source?** Not all Austin organizations respond to the same salary survey. One might only report to the Texas Workforce Commission, while others may respond to the Texas Compensation survey.

**Q10. What were the major issues associated with this year's market study?** As initial benchmark position market data was analyzed, several issues were realized. Some job families:

- Should be merged. (Families should have more than one title in them).
- Did not have enough benchmarks in them.
- Had too many benchmarks in them.

The goal was established that each job family should have two benchmarks, where possible. All jobs are to be linked to these benchmarks either through job family, internal classification structure, job scope, or other factor to be determined. To reach this goal, HR Compensation will be working with the PLT in FY10 to:

- Review and analyze the job families to ensure they are structured with more than one title within a family, to consolidate similar functions, and to review the overall structure.
- Review and realign internal relationship (classification structure) within job families and pay grades, as needed.
- Establish two benchmarks per job family and link related titles to them.

A timeline will be established soon and posted to the web.