

Compensation Project Overview

Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES)

University of Colorado – Boulder

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September 2024



Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER and NOAA



Things to know...

➤ **Accessibility**

- Please turn on your *closed captions* option as needed.

➤ **Recording session:**

- Session is being recorded. Recording and slides will be made available after presentation on new compensation webpage.

➤ **Compensation Resources webpage:**

- CIREs HR built a webpage to include FAQs, Compensation Philosophy, past blog posts, etc. Shared at end of session.

➤ **Q&A logistics**

- Questions answered at end of presentation.
- Submitted questions go directly to presenters. Once a written or verbal response is received, question is shared out with audience via Q&A feature.

Why did CIRES HR launch this project?

- **CIRES HR began its pay equity work in 2020.**
- **CIRES did not have compensation structure** to determine compensation decisions for **Associate and Research Scientist** positions.
 - Despite good faith effort, lack of an existing structure, and varying approaches to pay institute-wide, made it challenging to ensure competitive and equitable pay decisions.
 - Due to institute growth, university, and State requirements, CIRES HR initiated this project with support of CIRES leadership to responsibly manage compensation needs.
- **Compensation management and compliance for researcher salaries delegated to CIRES by CU Boulder HR**
 - CIRES HR lacked the CU support and internal expertise to establish a new compensation structure.
 - CIRES leadership supported our ability to seek outside expertise to help manage a project that sought to establish a compensation structure and compare CIRES jobs to their market value.

Why did CIRES HR launch this project, cont'd?

➤ CIRES chose to enlist help from Employer's Council due to:

- Expertise in Compensation (founded 1939) - compensation design and practice is a very specific skill set
- Assistance in aligning pay practices with current market and competitive best practices
- Objective, third-party

➤ CIRES HR Compensation Analyst

- CIRES hired its first in-house Compensation Analyst, to help manage and support CIRES compensation efforts long-term.

➤ The new institute-wide pay structure for *Associate and Research Scientist* positions will:

- Ensure compliance with CU protocols and the 2021 State Law, Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (CEPEWA)
- Ensure alignment with our new competitive pay practices, labor market changes
- Maintain salary equity and consistency in all pay-related decisions
- Allow for greater transparency in pay ranges and decisions at all levels

CIRES Compensation Project Overview

➤ Phase 1 - Internal Equity Examination

- Jan 2021 - Oct 2022: Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work adjustments
 - Internal - peer to peer equity adjustments for AS and RS positions.

➤ Phase 2 - Audit of CIRES researcher positions and Labor Market Review

- Fall 2021: Position Description project for AS and RS positions
- January 2022: Engaged Employers Council
 - to establish compensation structure, establish functional areas of work and market pay
- April 2023: Functional titles launched and assigned

➤ Phase 3 - Cost Analysis, Budget Plan, & Implementation

- Fall 2023/Spring 2024: Budget impacts determined and financial support plan finalized
- Summer 2024: Unit leadership overview - 7 meetings held w/ CIRES HR & Finance
- Fall 2024: Implementation

Which employee groups are excluded and why?

- **University staff, Temporary Staff, Retirees** (largely in CIRES administrative units): Managed by CU Boulder HR
- **Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty**: Managed by respective college or school with oversight from Office of Faculty Affairs
- **Students**: Managed by Office of Student Employment and The Graduate School
- **Researchers in Academic Faculty Research Groups**: Pay tends to be aligned with academic unit.
- **Postdocs**:
 - Managed at the unit or research group level, and differ across the CU Boulder and CIRES.
 - CIRES HR aspires to have more cohesive postdoc salary ranges.
 - Recognizes our units have differing budget availability and pay practices, and in some cases need to align with a separate campus academic unit.
 - CIRES HR will review related compensation in 2025-2026 to consider additional recommendations for this employee group.
- **Administrative Professional Research Assistant appointments**: Salary for these positions are most closely aligned with their university staff peers. CIRES HR works with the hiring manager in these cases to determine an equitable and competitive salary.

Total Rewards Philosophy

Principles that guide how rewards are designed and administered

Melissa Aalders, CIREs Compensation Analyst

Total Compensation Model



CIRES Mission and Vision

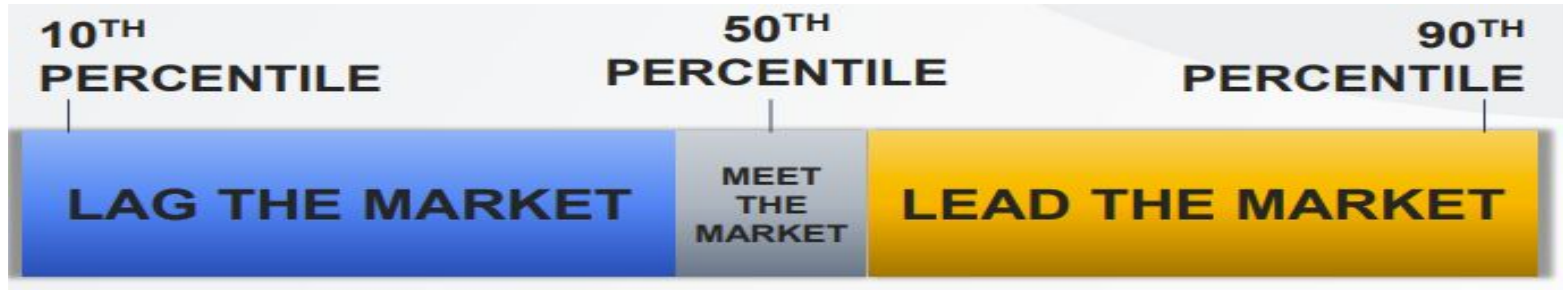
Our mission: Conduct innovative research that advances our understanding of the global, regional, and local environments and the human relationship with those environments, for the benefit of society.

Our vision: CIRES is an international leader in conducting cross-cutting environmental research of the highest quality while bridging fundamental science and service to society. We build leaders, scientists, communicators, and teams dedicated to developing sound and trusted information to address environmental challenges. We embrace a positive and inclusive culture, recognizing that CIRES thrives when our people do.

How this Compensation Structure Helps CIRES & Its Employees Thrive:

- It aligns compensation with CIRES' **mission, vision, and values**.
 - CIRES **values** its employees and wants to pay them competitively.
- Defines **HOW** CIRES plans to **pay competitively** based on **market data**, and **ability to pay**.
- Ensures jobs are priced competitively (using market data) so the **annual merit review process** can be used to focus on its purpose of recognizing and rewarding individuals based on their performance and achievement of goals.

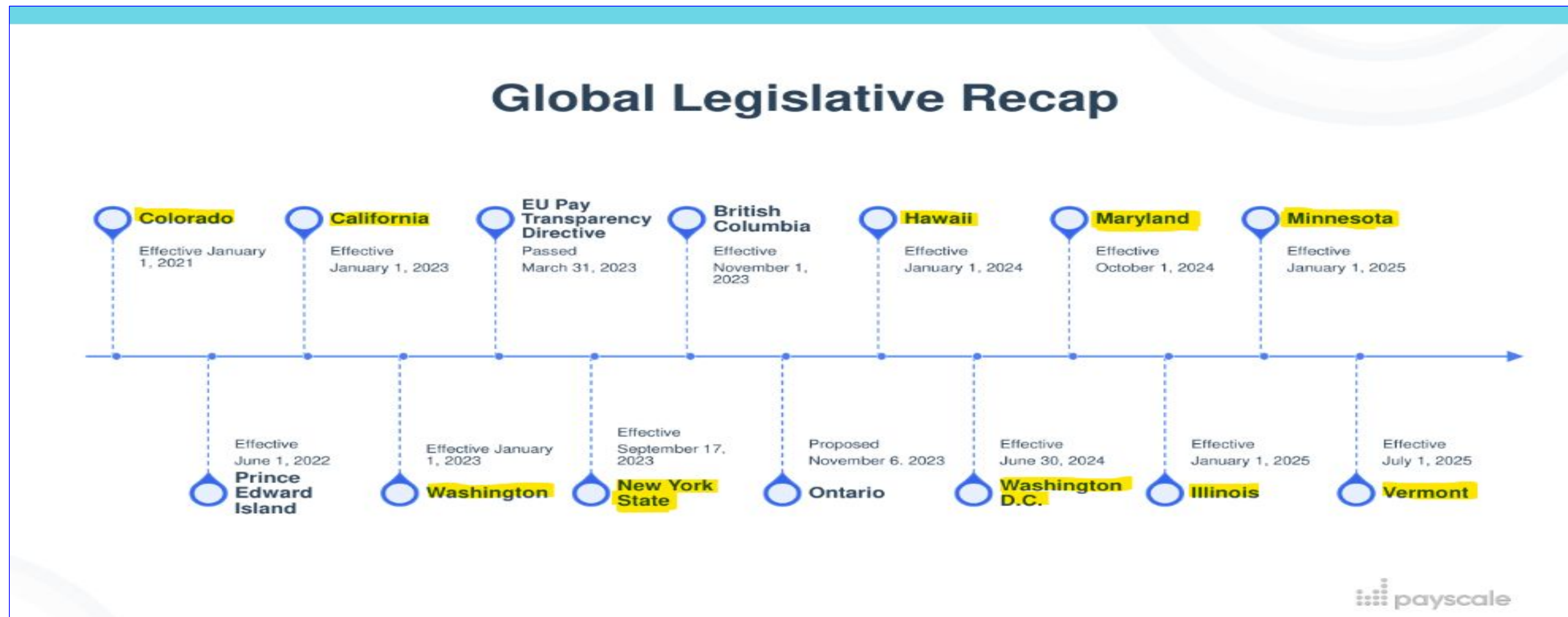
➤ Guides CIREs in determining a competitive **market position** (for base pay).



- CIREs approach to compensation is a *market to midpoint* philosophy that provides competitive base pay (*CIREs jobs are matched with market data of like jobs, then we calculate the average of those jobs, at the 50th percentile, and use that to guide where CIREs establishes the midpoint and ultimately the salary range for a job*). This method is one of the most common used by organizations and is backed by market data.

Compliance with State and Federal Laws

This new structure guides and supports CIRES **HR** and **hiring managers** in executing a fair, equitable, and consistent approach to compensation for all employees. Helps ensure compliance with state and federal labor laws, such as the *Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963* and Colorado's *Equal Pay for Equal Work Act*.



Phase 2 Project Overview

Employers Council audit of CIRES researcher positions and labor market review.

Cyndie Meisner, Consultant, Employers Council

Objectives:

- Develop Compensation/Total Rewards Philosophy
- Formalize Job Family Framework
- Market Study – External Value (market data)
- Develop Pay Structures
- Establish consistent approach to pay decisions

Project Methodology

Steps and Sequencing

- Reviewed Position Description Templates
 - ✓ Charted job content/attributes
 - ✓ Identified **functional job titles** for market pricing
 - 43 titles created to represent CIRES jobs.
 - ✓ Solicited and vetted functional job title assignments with incumbents, supervisors and unit heads.

- Conducted Market Study
 - ✓ Compared CU-CIRES Positions to relevant Salary Surveys
 - ✓ Identified Appropriate Salary Surveys and Data Lines
 - ✓ Adjusted Salary Survey Data

Project Methodology

Steps and Sequencing

- Developed Grade Ranges for Functional Pay Groups
 - Pay Ranges by Career Track Level (I, II, III, SR)
- Evaluated Current Pay in Newly Proposed Pay Structures
 - Pay Metrics (Compa-Ratio, Place in Range/Range Penetration, Time in Position, Years Since Degree)
 - Calculate Costs
 - Bring-to-minimum
 - Adjustments for equity and/or compression

Job Family Framework

Grouping of jobs where the nature and purpose of the work are similar, but the work is carried out at different levels of responsibility, knowledge, skill or competence.

**Job Function
Research Services**

Positions directly involved in or supporting CIRES research activities, including conducting research and the administration of related processes. May include associate scientists, research scientists, or those positions involved in grant support and administration.

CIRES Unit

Administrative, Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences, Biology & Ecosystems, Chemistry, Cryosphere, Hydrology, Social Sciences, Solid Earth, Space Weather

Job Family

CSL Chemical Sciences Lab	GSL Global Systems Lab	GML Global Monitoring Lab	NCEI National Centers for Environmental Information	PSL Physical Sciences Lab	SWPC Space Weather Prediction Center	WPC Weather Prediction Center	Administration (Information Technology)	Earth Lab	E&O Education & Outreach	ESOC Earth Science Observation Ctr	NSIDC National Snow & Ice Data Ctr	WWA Western Water Assessment
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Job Category/Career Track

Associate Scientist

Research Scientist

Supervisor

Job Level

Associate Scientist I
Associate Scientist II
Associate Scientist III
Senior Associate Scientist

Research Scientist I
Research Scientist II
Research Scientist III
Senior Research Scientist

Administrative
Technical

Job Functions

Functional Groups

	Research	Information Technology	Science Support				General Program/Project Support
	<i>Astrophysics Physics Environmental Studies Atmospheric Science Astronomy Mathematics Earth Sciences</i>	<i>Computer Science Information Management</i>	<i>Communications</i>	<i>Education & Outreach</i>	<i>Technical Science Research</i>	<i>Technical Science</i>	<i>Admin</i>
Functional Job Titles	Associate Scientist Research Scientist	Cloud Network Architect Data Analyst Data/User Support Specialist Data Manager Data Scientist Dev Ops Administrator GIS Analyst Modeler Security Engineer Software Developer-Engineer Systems Administrator Systems Engineer-Architect Web Designer Web Developer	Communications Specialist Technical Editor Technical Writer	E&O Specialist E&O Researcher/Evaluator	Instrument Dev	Technician Instrument Dev - IIDF	Scientific Coord
			Team Lead				
		IT Project Manager IT Technical Support Manager IT Manager IT Director	Communications Program Manager Communications Deputy Director Communications Director	E&O Program Manager E&O Deputy Director Education & Outreach Director			General/Non-Scientific Project Manager General/Non-Scientific Program Manager General/Non-Scientific Program Deputy Director
					Scientific Program Manager Lab Manager Scientific Program Deputy Director Scientific Program Director		

Market Study

External Market Pricing (Survey Data)

Market Pricing

Compare Functional Titles to Salary Surveys

- Compare functions and qualifications of CIRES jobs to survey title comparisons
- Identify match by responsibilities - not title
- Identify best match of duties and qualifications, per industry standard
- Obtain approvals and extract market data

Survey Sources

1. Employers Council Benchmark Compensation Survey
2. Employers Council Information Technology Compensation Survey
3. Payfactors Compensation Survey (used by CU)
4. Economic Research Institute (ERI) Compensation Survey
5. Mercer US SIRS Benchmark Standard Survey -High Technology - STEM Industry (used by LASP and other CU institutes)
6. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) (federal employee salary survey)

Were Specific Competitors Contacted for Salary Information (e.g., UCAR and NOAA)?

- ❖ Competitors were not contacted for salary information because there are U.S. antitrust laws, which apply to the labor market and govern how competitors compete for talent/employees.
 - As a result, we cannot and will not contact competitors to ask for salary information.
 - Reminder, OPM (federal data) was used as one of the survey sources.

The U.S. Department of Justice has published guidelines on how employers can exchange salary data and information legally.

- One way is that compensation surveys must be managed by a third party ([another good reason to use Employers Council](#)). HR professionals and/or employer representatives cannot conduct formal or informal salary surveys on their own.

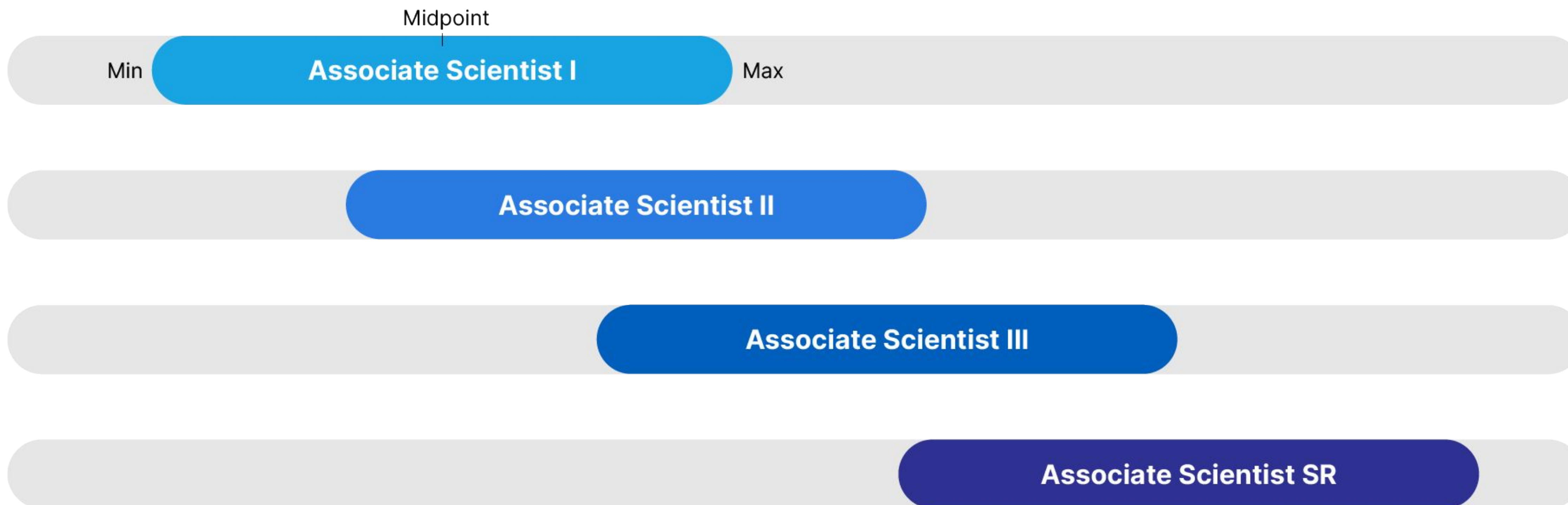
Compensation Structure

Grades & Salary Ranges

Functional Titles by Group

Melissa Aalders, CIRES Compensation Analyst

Salary ranges for different pay grades



Career Track	Functional Title	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum
AS I	Lab Manager I		\$	
	Scientific Program Manager I			
RS I	Lab Manager I		\$\$	
	Scientific Program Manager I			
AS II	Lab Manager II			
	Scientific Program Manager II			
RS II	Lab Manager II			
	Scientific Program Manager II			
AS III	Lab Manager III			
	Scientific Program Manager III			
RS III	Lab Manager III			
	Scientific Program Manager III			
AS SR	Lab Manager SR			
	Scientific Program Manager SR			
RS SR	Lab Manager SR			
	Scientific Program Manager SR			

Some functional titles may have an AS or RS career track option, in this instance there are 8 grades and corresponding salary ranges assigned (4 grades for AS and 4 grades for RS). The RS levels & salary ranges do reflect the PhD requirement.

Functional Titles by Functional Pay Group:

Science Support – Education & Outreach

- Education & Outreach Researcher/Evaluator
- Education & Outreach Specialist

Science Support - Communications

- Communications Specialist
- Technical Editor
- Technical Writer

Science Support – Technical Science

- Technician I
- Instrument Development – IIDF

Science Support – Technical Research

- Instrument Development – Research

Science Support – Administration

- Scientific Coordinator

Functional Titles by Functional Pay Group:

Information Technology – Tier 1

- Data/User Support Specialist
- GIS Analyst

Information Technology – Tier 2

- Data Analyst
- Data Manager
- Dev - Ops Administrator
- Systems Administrator
- Web Designer

Information Technology – Tier 3

- Cloud Network Architect
- Data Scientist
- Modeler
- Security Engineer
- Software Developer-Engineer
- Systems Engineer-Architect
- Web Developer

Functional Titles by Functional Pay Group:

Manager

- Education & Outreach Program Manager
- Communications Program Manager
- Scientific Program Manager
- General Program Manager
- General Project Manager
- IT Project Manager
- IT Technical Support Manager
- IT Manager

Director

- CEEE Director (CEEE Director only)
- Communications Director (CIRES Director level only)
- Information Technology Director (CIRES Director level only)

Budget Impacts

Annie Fudale, CIRES Finance Director

Budget Impact

CIRES will fund

- **100%** of the difference between old and new salary in Year 1
- **66%** in Year 2
- **33%** in Year 3

The total estimated support from CIRES will include fringe benefits and merit increases in each year on the increased salary amount.

Factors for Awareness

Angela Knight, CIRES HR Director

The new compensation structure:

- Will not reduce anyone's current salary.
- Adjusts current salaries to their appropriate place in the new range given time in current career track.
- Does not result in a pay increase for every employee. Many positions already competitively aligned.
 - Of approximately 500 eligible employees, 40% of employees will receive an increase.
- Does not currently consider supervisory or leadership duties for all positions.
 - Some functional titles have inherent leadership, program/project, and people management expectations.
 - Career track growth assumes increasing leadership, supervisory, and mentoring responsibilities.
- Does not consider past performance. This is a market driven exercise to align pay based on a position's required qualifications. Purposely separate from employee performance pay, managed through merit process.
- Does not consider employee work location and cost of living.

We anticipate subsequent phases of compensation work after initial implementation of any base pay adjustments. However, establishing this compensation structure does represent our most major milestone, and it will serve the institute now and into the future.

Next steps

➤ September 2024: Compensation Town Hall

- **Resources:** Compensation project webpage available with slides, FAQs, prior compensation posts, etc.
 - Inside CIRES A-Z under “**C**ompensation Analysis Project”
<https://insidecires.colorado.edu/hr/compensationAnalysisProject.php>

➤ October 2024 Implementation:

- Structure implemented as of October 1, 2024.
- Employees receiving an increase will see it in October 31 paycheck.

➤ Employee Communications (late October)

- Eligible employees will receive email notification detailing
 - if they will receive an increase, and the resulting amount, **or**
 - confirming that their salary was reviewed but found to be appropriate and competitive.
 - *Please wait for your email, and read through all FAQs before contacting CIRES HR.*

➤ TBD: Share salary ranges with unit leadership and employees.

Questions?

Cyndie Meisner, Consultant, Employers Council Compensation Services
Melissa Aalders, CIRES Compensation Analyst
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