

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON THE MODERNISING OF PAY STRUCTURES

Frequently asked questions update, 25 April 2008

Will academic staff who are green circled need to go through further assessments before they are allocated to the new grades?

In the first open meeting there was some confusion about precisely what was being asked and therefore a definitive answer was not given.

It is confirmed that ALL staff, including academic staff, who are green circled will be moved onto their new grade without further assessment.

When will I be told about precisely which new grade my role is being allocated to?

It is intended to write to all staff individually before the end of June 2008 to tell them to which grade their job, and any new jobs they have held since 1 August 2006, is allocated.

We will first prepare a full listing for Heads of Department of all the jobs and staff in their department, with details of the gradings that apply to each person. In a few days thereafter we will send individual letters to staff to tell them of their new grading.

Will you tell us our individual HERA scores as well?

This question came up at an open meeting on 24 April 2008. Initially it was not planned to issue full individual HERA scorings in great detail to all staff. It was agreed however that we would review this decision following the meeting.

Although this will be an onerous administrative task, we will inform all staff of the following:

- Their total HERA score
- The individual element scores that have been allocated to their job
- The grade to which the post has been allocated as a result of the HERA score

We do hope this will allay concerns that one or two staff have raised.

When will the work on hourly paid staff be completed?

Data collection and research work has begun already to allow us to take discussions forward as quickly as possible. We do have the objective of trying to complete this by the end of June. It may be that the very significant workload in implementing the agreement will cause some delay but we will do our very best to complete negotiations at the very latest in time for the new session.

How has the interest on backpay been calculated?

The interest is based on the Bank of England base rate over the relevant period. It is a weighted average calculation which takes account of the number of days at a particular rate of interest.

Will departments have to suffer the extra cost arising from the Agreement – it may push them into deficit?

The departmental financial analysis model is calculated using the true cost of each activity so when pay costs rise the costs in the model also rise. In principle the cost of HERA is no different from the cost of pension increases, annual salary awards and promotions. These costs are included in the model as a matter of routine. Our forecast of the model include an estimate of the actual cost of the implementation of HERA but in reality the actual cost will be different and the charge in some departments will be above the average for the College and in others it will be below average for the College. It is therefore difficult to forecast the impact of HERA at departmental level prior to knowing the full outcome of the exercise. By the time we complete our financial accounts we will know the actual costs of HERA by department and this will be factored into the final version of the model for 2007/08 and included in the calculation of individual surpluses and deficits.

The way in which HERA is accounted for will mean that departments will not be charged for two years of back pay. Only back pay for this year will be included.

Why are the holiday entitlements for grades 6 to 10 higher than for grades 1 to 5?

It is quite normal and usual in most organisations to have higher holiday entitlements in more senior posts, in the same way as they have higher salaries. That is already the situation now. What we have done in the agreement is firstly to ensure that all staff on the same new grades receive the same entitlement regardless of the job they are doing. We have in the lower part of the scale ensured that staff receive 27 days' basic holiday after 5 years rather than 7 years as applies to most at present. We have also ensured that staff who are on the same grades as academic staff in the new structure receive the same holiday entitlement.

You will note again that our entitlements are as good as or better than many in the higher education sector and much better than other employers in general. Current legislation will mean that, from October, employers have to give 28 days' paid holiday. This includes bank holidays. The minimum in Goldsmiths will be 36 days, including bank holidays and College closure days and for many their actual entitlement will be 41 or 42 days.

Is the ballot about just the pay scales or about all the parts of the agreement?

The offer to staff is the whole package, including all the elements described in the agreement.

Can we have a chart to work out where we move from the old scales and onto the new scales?

As promised, all staff who are green circled will move up to the lowest point of their new grade with effect from 1 August 2006. All staff who are white circled or red circled will move to a pay point that either exactly matches their salary at 1 August 2006; if no such point exists, they will move up to the nearest point above their salary at 1 August 2006.

Charts are being prepared and will be placed on the website as soon as they are ready.

HERA Project Team
Human Resources
hera@gold.ac.uk