

Memo

Date July 2006

To

From Cliff Vidgeon
Senior Personnel Officer
Personnel Services

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT – BULLETIN 2 (Academic, Academic Related, Clerical, Technical, Research, Other Related and Security staff)

1. Introduction

1.1 Last August I wrote to all members of staff to provide details of the implications of the National Framework Agreement for the modernisation of pay structures. The purpose of this memorandum is to give you details of the way in which that part of the Agreement relating to the development of a new pay grading structure is to be implemented at Aston, to notify you of how your current grade is to be assimilated to new scales and to provide details of the effect of the recently agreed National Pay Award.

2. Background

2.1 The National Framework Agreement provides a new national pay spine within which Higher Education Institutions are to develop their own grading structures in partnership with local trade union representatives. Posts are to be mapped on to the grading structure following the application of an institution-wide method of job evaluation.

3. A New Pay Grading Structure for Aston

3.1 Following discussions with the campus unions a new grading structure and a method of assimilation to them has been agreed in principle. A copy of the overall structure can be found at Appendix 1. This structure will replace all existing grades except those currently applicable for professorial staff.

3.2 Some 50 different grades will be replaced by just 10. All grades will feature a 'contribution threshold' (this is illustrated by a dotted line). Staff appointed to a grade should have a normal expectation to receive annual increments up to the contribution threshold for that grade. A salary rate above the contribution point may in the future be paid to individuals who are assessed as making an exceptional contribution in accordance with a criteria that is currently being developed by a joint working group, chaired by the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

4. Assimilation to the New Grading Structure and the 2006 National Pay Settlement

- 4.1 Ultimately staff will be mapped on to the new grading structure via the application of the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) process. As the HERA process is likely to take some time to conclude it is intended to initially transfer staff on to the new grade that best fits the grade to which they currently belong. It is intended to assimilate staff to the new grades with effect from 1 August 2006
- 4.2 The initial assimilation will be undertaken in a way that ensures that no member of staff will be mapped on to a salary rate that is less than their current rate of pay.
- 4.3 Measures have been taken to ensure that staff, who are not on the top point of their incremental table, will receive future incremental increases paid at rates no worse than their current expectations (subject to the outcome of the initial HERA exercise). Information about the way in which your grade will be assimilated to the new grading structure is attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.4 Staff who are assimilated to scales where the contribution threshold on the new grade is higher than the maximum (non-discretionary) increment point of the current grade, will ultimately progress to a point immediately below the contribution threshold. The rate of progression will be based on the former grade where it is beneficial for the staff member. Again, this will be explained in Appendix 2 if it applies to your grade.
- 4.5 Your current salary rate (expressed as an equivalent full-time rate if you work part-time) is £ pa. The information at Appendix 2 includes details of the effect of the 2006 Pay Award and shows how your current salary rate has been assimilated. It should also help you determine your future salary rates up to 2008.

5. Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA)

- 5.1 Role analysis (or job evaluation as it is more commonly called) will be applied to all posts over the next year or so. This will ultimately determine the appropriate pay grade for each post. Although a recent trial of the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) suggested that in most cases posts will remain on the grades to which they are assimilated, some posts may, following the application of HERA, be placed on a different salary grade. The means by which staff will receive salary and/or grade protection or payment in the event of role analysis producing a result that places them on a higher or lower grade are currently being finalised in discussions with the Unions. Further details of this will be provided in a later bulletin.
- 5.2 A joint working group, comprising University and trade union representatives will be looking at the application of national academic benchmarks, that have been drawn up for certain categories of staff, including academic staff. The national benchmarks have been developed to be used in conjunction with role analysis to ensure consistency in the overall process.

6. Changes to Conditions of Service and Pensions

- 6.1 In some cases movement onto a new grade may result in changes to conditions of service (e.g. annual leave entitlement) or the possibility of changing pension schemes. It is not intended to change conditions of service or pension scheme eligibility directly as a result of assimilating staff to the new scales. Such changes will not be applied until the HERA role analysis exercise is completed and staff will be consulted on an individual basis about the implications of either the confirmation of their grade or any changes to their grade.
- 6.2 The University does not intend compel any member of staff to move from one pension scheme to another as a result of the adoption of the new grading structure. Options to change schemes will be given to eligible staff, on a once only basis, after the initial HERA exercise is complete.

7. Further Information and Assistance

- 7.1 Information about Pay Modernisation (which will include details of pay scales and assimilation to the new grading structure) and HERA can be found at the Human Resources website, www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/.
- 7.2 Arrangements have been made for staff to be available to assist with enquires that may follow following the receipt of pay advices issued for the first month that new scales are put into operation. If you are in any doubt about your rate of payment following the receipt of this bulletin you may either contact extension 4612 or attend the Personnel Services offices on the ground floor, Main Building.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cliff Taylor', is positioned at the bottom of the page.