

UCU MRC consultative pay ballot

Background

The conclusion of the 2015 pay award also marked the start of pay negotiations on the 2016 pay round. In considering its negotiating position, the national trade union side (NTUS) reviewed the outcomes of the 2015 pay award; the breakdown of pay bands by age, sex, ethnicity, disability and contract type; the operation of the special award scheme (SAS); and the likely impact of the civil service pay guidance 2016/17.

National Trade Union Side Pay Claim 2016/17

Following consultation across the national trade unions, the following pay claim was submitted to the MRC:

● Incremental Progression

NTUS called for the re-introduction of annual incremental progression, thereby allowing employees to progress through their pay band in recognition of increased levels of competency. An incremental pay structure without the accompanying incremental progression provides intrinsic problems regarding the provision of equal pay.

● General Pay Increase

Inflation has averaged 3% *per annum* over the last five years whilst MRC pay has increased by a *total* of 3% during this time. The NTUS asked that the annual pay increase take account of this. We requested that the MRC underpin lower paid bands with a minimum payment.

● Living Wage

The MRC has in previous years made a commitment to honour the Living Wage as set by the *Living Wage Foundation*, the NTUS request that this is continued in 2015-16.

● Allowances

NTUS request that the MRC also consider the impact of inflation over the last five years on the various allowances currently in payment.

● Non-consolidated Performance Related Pay

The NTUS called for a full review of the SAS and SAS Lite schemes to be conducted ahead of 2016 implementation.

● S-Zone

The NTUS asked for a review of the progress of the S-zone implementation.

MRC Management Pay Remit

MRC management submitted its pay remit to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS now BEIS) taking into account Civil Service Pay Guidance and government restrictions for 2016/17 restricting pay increase to an average of 1%. The MRC proposes a total 1% average pay increase across the pay scales. Also in line with the Chancellors 2015 Budget statement, the MRC will be introduce some flexibility for research employees in Units and Institutes which will be applicable only for the 2016-17 pay year. The additional flexibility is only available to employees in Units and Institutes and reflects the stated government aim of supporting front line science.

MRC management's pay offer has been approved by BEIS but is now subject to ballot by the MRC National Trade Union Side.

MRC Pay Award Offer 2016

Further to Staff Bulletin 538, this Staff Bulletin sets out the MRC Pay Award Offer for 2016. Please read it thoroughly including the FAQ towards the end of the bulletin.

The MRC has worked closely with the National Trade Union Side throughout the development of the remit and has now formally responded to the NTUS 2016 pay claim with details of the 2016 pay offer.

The offer has been approved by BEIS but is subject to ballot by the MRC Trade Union Side.

Subject to the outcome of the ballot, payment of the basic award is planned to be made in February 2017 salaries, with arrears backdated to 1st April 2016.

MRC Pay Award Offer 2016 overview

In line with 2016/17 Civil Service Pay Guidance and government restrictions, the MRC is offering a total 1% average pay increase across the pay scales and, in line with the Chancellors 2015 Budget statement, will be utilising some flexibility for employees in Units and Institutes which are applicable for the 2016-17 pay year only.

In the context of all the developments in MRC pay over the past few years, the MRC believes that this is the best outcome that can be made within the restraints imposed by Treasury. The additional flexibility is only available to employees in Units and Institutes and reflects the stated government aim of supporting front line science.

Summary of MRC 2016 pay award offer – effective 1st April 2016

1. Increase all steps in MRC bands 5 to 1 by 1%, with the exception of the top step of Band 1;
2. Increase all steps in MRC bands 6 and 7 by an underpinning £250 (exceeds a 1% increase);
3. Employees on Career Development Fellow and Post-Doctoral Training contracts will increase to **either** a minimum of Band 4, point 4 **or** will receive a one step increase;
4. Directors will, **subject to local budget**, be able to use up to 1% of their outturn salary costs to have a targeted approach to some salary increases within their unit/institute. This will not apply to administrative employees, including Head Office and the Cambridge Centre;
5. Units and institutes will, **subject to local budget**, be able to increase the number of End of Year Special Awards made to up to 2% of their outturn

salary costs;

6. Increase relevant allowances/hourly rates by 1%;
7. Continuation of both the Special Awards and Recognition Awards Scheme;
8. The existing suite of MRC employee benefits will continue.

MRC Pay Award 2016 – detailed proposal

1. Increase all steps in MRC bands 5 to 1 by 1%, with the exception of the top step of Band 1;

All steps on bands 5 to 1 to be revalorised by 1%, i.e. the steps increase by 1%. This excludes the top of band 1. Those employees on the top step of band 1 will receive a 1% pay award and their salaries will increase so that they sit just above the band 1 maximum.

2. Increase all steps in MRC bands 6 and 7 by an underpinning £250 (exceeds a 1% increase);

At the National Trade Union Side request, all pay points in the band 6 and 7 scale will be subject to a £250 increase, therefore providing more than a 1% increase for employees in these bands.

3. All employees on Post-doctoral Training Contracts or Career Development Fellows to move to a minimum salary point of Band 4, point 4 or receive a one step increase on the scale;

The MRC Remuneration Committee requested this staff group was reviewed as they are unable to receive A to B promotions that apply to all other staff groups. The pay remit has been approved to allow a new minimum salary point on the scale. For those employees already on this point or higher they will receive a one step increase on the pay scale.

N.B. this is a one off increase applicable within the 2016-17 remit year.

4. Directors will have flexibility to use up to 1% of the salary outturn for targeted discretionary pay increases subject to local budget;

The pay guidance does not allow for incremental progression for all MRC employees and prohibits the reintroduction of this for any future pay awards. However, the pay remit has agreed that Directors can utilise some of their existing budget where it is available to reward a limited number of Science, Science Support and Technical employees with a consolidated increase on the pay scale. This does not apply to administrative employees, including Head Office and the Cambridge Centre, and is subject to the Director's opinion on affordability within the unit/institute's devolved budget.

N.B. this is a one off increase applicable within the 2016-17 remit year.

5. Units and institutes will, subject to local budget, be able to increase the number of End of Year Special Awards made to up to 2% of their outturn salary costs;

The pay guidance prohibits increasing the End of Year Special Award Scheme pot. The pay remit has agreed that units and institutes can increase this to up to 2% or up to 50% of employees for this award cycle, subject to the Director's opinion on affordability within the unit/institute's devolved budget. The amounts applicable to those receiving an award will remain standard across the MRC. This does not apply to Head Office and the Cambridge Centre.

N.B. this is a one off increase applicable within the 2016-17 remit year.

6. Increase relevant allowances/hourly rate by 1%:

A 1% increase will apply to all relevant allowances.

Location Allowances and Central London Supplement (per annum amounts)

Allowance type	Increase from:	Increase to:
Inner London Allowance	£3472	£3507
Intermediate London Allowance	£1737	£1755
Central London Supplement	£1305	£1319

Other flat-rate allowances

To be increased by 1%.

Animal Technicians Weekend and Public Holiday Allowances

Allowance type	Increase from:	Increase to:
All Bands	£78.49	£79.27

Clinical Recruitment and Retention Allowance

Band	Minimum	Maximum
Band 4	£1902	£9508
Band 3	£1811	£14485
Band 2	£4843	£19369

On-call Allowances

Allowance type	Rate
<i>On weekdays between the close of work in the evening and the start of work the following day</i>	
a) For each period of more than 12 hours	£8.74
<i>On Saturdays, Sundays and Privilege Holidays</i>	
a) For each 24 hour period	£24.84
b) For each period of 24 hours or less, a proportion	£24.84
<i>On Public and Bank Holidays</i>	
a) For each 24 hour period	£31.36
b) For each period of 24 hours or less, a proportion	£31.36

Allowances linked to Pay

Including Additional Duty Hours, Excess Over Conditioned Hours, Shift Disturbance Allowance - to be increased in line with an employee's base pay award.

7. Continuation of both the Special Awards and Recognition Awards Scheme;

We are pleased to announce that MRC management side and MRC National Trade Unions Side have again agreed the onward running of the Special Award Scheme (SAS) for In Year and End of Year 2016 awards. The details of the scheme will be launched by Staff Bulletin.

The Recognition Awards Scheme will also continue.

8. MRC Benefits.

All existing MRC Benefits including Benenden, My Family Care and the discount voucher scheme will continue this year.

Additional comments

Normal Advancement

As per the [MRC Pay and Grading Policy](#), Normal Advancement will take place when an employee has reached the top of the A section of the band. At the next pay award the employee will, subject to satisfactory performance, automatically be entitled to move into the B section of the band at the time of the next pay review.

Where an employee has been mapped to the top point of the A section of their band (but has not already received an A to B promotion) they will advance to the B section of their band as part of the 2016 pay award.

Unacceptable Performance Assessment ratings

In line with the MRC PDR policy, employees in Bands 3 to 7 who received an 'Unacceptable' rating in the 2016 PDR round will receive the revalorisation element of any pay award with an improvement plan put in place.

Employees in Band 2 who received an 'Unacceptable' rating will have their pay frozen until such time as their performance reaches a satisfactory standard; this will be supported by an improvement plan.

Senior Contract Pay employees

BEIS have informed MRC that we are permitted a 1% average pay increase for our most senior staff. This covers all MRC employed staff earning £100k and above.

The MRC Remuneration Committee met on 12th May 2016 and decided to apply this as 1% base salary increase across all Senior Contract Pay, thereby aligning with the basic pay award for all staff. This will be paid at the same time as the all staff pay award.

MRC Pay Award 2016 – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why can't MRC set its own pay increases each year?

As a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), funded predominantly by the tax payer, each year the MRC has to gain approval from the government to make changes to the basic pay arrangements of staff (the annual pay remit). Each year the framework for pay awards is set out in the [Civil Service Pay Guidance](#).

All increases to basic salaries, progression steps and increases to allowances need to be approved through the annual pay remit (excluding promotions).

2. When is the MRC Pay Award date?

The MRC's annual pay award date is 1st April; however, because of the set BEIS timeframe for reviewing and agreeing pay remits, the MRC pay remit is not normally agreed by BEIS until summer/autumn.

Any pay increases due are backdated to the 1st April each year.

3. Have BEIS approved our pay remit for 2016?

Yes. We now have approval to proceed with our pay remit and make a formal offer to the MRC Trade Union Side and its members.

4. How will the 1% pay remit be used?

The 1% pay remit will be used to "revalorise" the MRC payscales. This basically means that most points on the MRC payscales will increase by 1% or the underpinning £250 in bands 6/7. Please refer to the detailed offer for more information.

5. What does revalorise mean?

Revalorisation is a change in the value of the points on the pay structure. This is typically an increase in the value of all the points on the spine, by the same percentage.

6. I am over the maximum for my band; will I get a 1% award?

No. The MRC policy is not to provide base pay increases for those over band maximum. Employees in this position will not receive a base pay increase until the MRC salary scales catch up with their over max salary. These staff are still eligible for Special Awards.

7. Will I also go up a step on the pay structure?

The MRC does not have automatic progression (increments) in its employment contracts. Government is currently taking action to cease all contractual incremental schemes.

Employees on Career Development Fellowships and Post-Doctoral Training Contracts will receive either one step increase or move to the new minimum of Band 4, point 4.

Some employees may also receive a consolidated step on the pay structure based on the Directors targeted discretionary consolidated awards.

8. Will all staff be able to get something from this pay award?

All Employees will receive at least a 1% pay increase in line with the standard Civil Service Pay Guidance. As each of the MRC Units and Institutes have different employee complements the approach to flexibility will vary; however, the MRC are committed to utilising the flexibilities that have been granted as much as is practical within the budget constraints.

9. What happens next?

In line with the MRC Trade Unions Policy, the next step is for the MRC Trade Unions to ballot their members on the pay remit for 2016 which has been put forward by the MRC Management.

If agreed, the standard uplift and increase to CDF and Post-Doctoral Training Fellows will be paid in February salaries. The other elements are expected to be paid in April.

10. Where can I go to find more information?

For more information please speak to your local HR team.

16th January 2017