

KNOWING & USING YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Anomalies FAQ

What is the Anomalies Fund? [Article 26](#) of the UMFA Collective Agreement establishes a fund of \$150,000 per academic year to address anomalies in the base salaries of UMFA Members. The Fund is administered by a joint committee composed of two UMFA appointees, two UM administration appointees, and a mutually appointed Chair. The Anomalies Fund is designed to correct salary inequities by approving an increase to a Member's base salary retroactively to April 1 of the contract year in question. The Committee's decisions are final, and cannot be appealed.

This year the Committee will be assessing applications for **two contract years: 2024-2025, and 2025-2026. Those employed as of March 31, 2024 or before should apply for 2024 using 2024 data. Those hired after March 31, 2024 should apply for 2025 for using 2025 data.**

The current committee is chaired by Dr. Peter Blunden (Physics). The UMFA representatives are Dr. Sachin Katyal (Pharmacology and Therapeutics) and Dr. Rebecca-Simpson-Litke (Music). The administrations representatives are Dr. Kelley Main (Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies) and Mr. Dave Muir (Director, Total Compensation & HR Systems).

Who is eligible to apply? The joint committee considers applications from individual UMFA Members as well as applications sent on behalf of Members by their department Head or Dean/Director. Members as of March 31 prior to the contract year under consideration are considered eligible – i.e. UMFA bargaining unit members who started work on or before March 31, 2024 are eligible to apply for the 2024-2025 Fund).

What is an anomaly? Your salary will be considered anomalous if it is at variance with the salary ranges of colleagues in your department, faculty/school, or library who have comparable qualifications, experience, and rank. Anomaly adjustments are not intended to deal with academic performance or merit, general market conditions in a discipline, retention issues, altering past decisions to deny salary increments, or slower progress in promotion than a peer.

How can anomalies arise? Anomalies can arise for many different reasons. Some common examples include:

- Members in the same discipline with comparable qualifications, expertise, and previous experience who are hired at significantly different salaries (after accounting for differences in annual salary increments and adjustments to the salary scale).
- Members with previous relevant work experience or experience in comparable positions elsewhere which was not taken into account when they were hired.
- An inexplicable salary differential with relevant comparators that has developed over time.
- Inequities that have arisen due to changes in the salary structure (e.g. changes in the salary floors and thresholds may cause a new hire to have a higher salary than Members with more seniority).

How is an anomaly determined? The Committee will determine if your salary is anomalous by comparing it with the salaries of your colleagues in comparable positions, taking into account such things as discipline, annual salary increments, previous experience, and special qualifications. For most Members, this will mean comparing salaries with others at the same rank in their department or academic unit. For example, if an assistant professor in Chemistry makes an application, their salary will be compared to the salaries of other assistant professors in Chemistry.

In units where there are few comparators, or where you can provide compelling reasons to support your application using comparators outside your unit, salaries in cognate disciplines may be considered (e.g. an assistant professor in Chemistry might use comparators in other departments within the Faculty of Science).

What is the process for applying? The administration has shared base salary rates, qualifications, and related information with the Association, and the Association will give you a chance to review that data for your academic unit and rank so you can compare it with your own salary, qualifications, and experience. This information is confidential, so you will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement and confirm that you will use the information for nothing other than the anomalies process. Once you review the data, you will write an explanation describing why your salary should be the same or higher than your closest comparators, and submit it to the anomalies committee using the forms. You will then be required to delete the data you have received.

In addition to the material in the application, your Dean/Director is asked to provide the Committee with comments on the application and the comparators mentioned, and to provide any further information the committee may require. That information might include reference to other comparable peers, details of any inequity at hiring, relevant prior experience, and the process by which starting salaries are determined in the unit. Deans/Directors are also able to help the committee understand qualifications and market factors affecting different disciplines.

In arriving at a final decision, the Committee considers the information contained in the application, the comments of the Dean/Director, as well as its own independent analysis of salaries within a unit. The Committee sometimes also considers the salary of Members who have not applied, when it is relevant to do so because of information received in an application or variances that are revealed when looking at a rank within a unit as a whole. Each member of the committee makes their own assessment of the data and applications, and those assessments are discussed by the Committee as a whole. In some cases, the Committee will seek additional information from Deans/Directors, with the goal of gaining a broad understanding of the salary structure within a given unit.

The committee arrives at its own decisions regarding the merit of the case and the size of any salary adjustments. These amounts are sometimes higher than an amount recommended by the Dean/Director or requested by the Member, and are sometimes lower.

How can I find out if my salary is lower than that of others in comparable positions? Contact the UMFA office with the names of the relevant comparator academic unit and rank (e.g. Assistant Professors in Chemistry). You will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement, and then be permitted to review the relevant data. The following information is available on each Member: faculty, department/unit, salary, rank, highest degree, year of highest degree, years in current rank, and UMFA start date.

Is an anomaly awarded based on those variables alone? No. However, this is the information that UMFA has available on Members, so if this information indicates that your salary may be anomalous, we encourage you to

make an application. The committee will have access to additional information from the Dean/Director that will be taken into consideration. For example, an existing difference in salary may be justifiable if a comparator has higher qualifications, such as special skills, more relevant work experience for the position in which they were hired, postdoctoral fellowships, appointments at other institutions, professional certificates, competing job offers at the time of hire or since, and so on. Information received by the Committee from the Dean may indicate if factors such as these explain the differences. The committee will assess this information, looking not only at the justification, but also for consistency in how salaries are determined within a unit.

How much money is awarded to each Member? Each case is unique. Changes to base salary approved by the Committee can range from \$500 to several thousands of dollars. The committee has a total of \$150,000 available per contract year. Unallocated funds go to the Library for acquisitions.

Each approved change is applied to your base salary, so it will be included in your salary on an ongoing basis. It is not a one-time payment.

Do certain ranks tend to have more anomalous salaries than others? Yes. Anomalies are often created by inequitable starting salaries, so there are typically more cases in the lower ranks, and for those Members who are just starting their careers. As Members progress through the salary structure, increments and salary maxima for each rank will compress differences in salary, including differences between disciplines. This process tends to reduce anomalies over time, so that there tend to be fewer anomalies at the higher ranks and after several years in rank.

However, anomalies can still occur in any rank and in any unit. If you believe your salary may be anomalous, we encourage you to review the data and make an application.

Do I need to ask for a specific amount? Requesting a specific amount can help make your application clearer. Though not true in all cases, one of the clearest ways to compare your salary to those of your peers is in terms of salary increments for your rank. For example, if you have 3 more years' experience than a colleague of the same rank and qualifications, you might suggest your salary should be three increments higher than theirs.

If a peer with equal qualifications and experience has a salary \$1,000 higher than yours, you should request \$1,000.

If you are comparing your salary to several colleagues with varying qualifications and experience, you can suggest a range within which you think an adjustment should fall.

Are awards limited only to those who apply? No. The committee reserves the right to make salary adjustments where anomalies are identified through the course of its work, or where an award to one Member will create an anomaly for other Members who may not have applied. **However, the committee does not undertake a comprehensive review of all UMFA salaries, so it's important to apply if you think your salary is unjustifiably lower than that of your peers.**

I was hired at the same time as another person in my department, but they now make more than I do. Do I have grounds for a claim? Not necessarily. For example, a Dean may grant one Member an Extraordinary Salary Increase (ESI) for retention purposes. It could also be that they were promoted earlier than you were. In these instances, the salary difference is justifiable, and not grounds for an anomaly award.

What information should I include in my application?

Start from the presumption that your colleagues in the same discipline of the same rank, who were promoted at the same time, and who have the same qualifications and experience as you do, should have the same base salary that you do. In your application you should include all comparators in your rank and unit that unreasonably deviate from that baseline, and explain why your base salary should change to remediate that deviation. That might mean comparing your experience and salary to peers with less experience but higher salaries, or peers with fewer qualifications and higher salaries.

The Committee tends to use the date when a Member earned their highest academic degree as a proxy for experience. When assessing your salary in relation to that of others, you can use data on the 'date of last degree' to estimate academic work experience.

Where the data UMFA receives only includes reference to the highest degree you and your colleagues hold, if you have additional qualifications or specializations you should include this information in your application.

The Dean will then review your application and make comment on all aspects of it, including your formal qualifications, before sending it to the Anomalies Committee. The Committee will then review your application, the Dean's comments, and the relevant salary data. If the Committee is swayed by your argument that your qualifications, experience, and salary do not match when compared to your colleagues, they could award you a salary increase to remedy the difference.

One of the clearest ways to get your point across is to refer to the salary differences in terms of 'increment-years' – e.g. if you have five years' more experience than someone with the same qualifications, you might argue that your salary should be five increments higher than that of the individual in question. The current salary grid is at [Page 119 of the new Collective Agreement](#).

NOTE: The Committee does not assess academic merit or achievement. Your application should not include any such information. Applications that focus on time in rank and qualifications are most likely to be successful.

If you are comparing your salary with peers in other departments, be aware that some disciplines are paid higher than others for a variety of reasons, including national differences in salary rates and competition with the private sector. Comparing your salary to those in academic units that are on average paid more than your unit will not result in a successful salary adjustment.

My research and publication record since arriving at UM is stronger than my comparators. Can I apply to the Anomalies Fund on these grounds? No. The Anomalies Fund does not address questions of merit. In this case, you could apply for a Merit Award. A Merit Award is one-time only, and does not go into base salary.

I have had an anomalously low salary for several years. Is the Anomalies Fund able to make a retroactive award? No. The Anomalies Fund can only grant an award based on the year for which the application is made – i.e. April 1 of either 2024 or 2025.

I have earned more qualifications than I had when I was hired. Can I apply to the Anomalies Fund for a salary adjustment? No. The Anomalies Fund does not assess the value of increased qualifications, and only considers qualifications at the point of hire. For example, if you are an instructor I who has earned a PhD since your hire, this does not automatically guarantee you a salary increase – instead, talk to your Dean/Director about your prospects for promotion. Alternatively, the Collective Agreement permits the administration to adjust salaries in extraordinary circumstances: if your qualifications have drastically changed since your hire, you could speak to

your Dean/Director about the possibility of an Extraordinary Salary Increase (ESI).

Can I base my claim on salaries of people who are outside of my unit? Comparators should come from your discipline/unit only. You can request data from cognate disciplines, but you will need to justify why these comparators are appropriate. Avoid using comparators in disciplines where there is a market-driven differential, as that differential is not a valid basis for an anomalies adjustment.

Can I use information from the Public Sector Compensation Reports? Public sector compensation lists are not useful for comparing base salaries, as the salaries they report include a number of additional sources or forms of income. For example, they report the actual salary paid in a year, as opposed to base salary. Additional pay for 'over load' teaching, stipends associated with grants, taxable benefits that not everyone takes advantage of, and a number of other factors are also included as compensation in those reports. The data you will be provided is base salary only, which allows a clear comparison of members' basic compensation.

Can I appeal if I did not get an award, or if I disagree with the amount of the award? No, the decisions of the committee are final and binding, as per the UMFA Collective Agreement. However, you can apply again in a subsequent year.