

Career Ladder/Progression Update

What is the career ladder/progression initiative?

- To establish structured pathways for staff advancement based on competencies, experience, and performance within specific job families. It provides clarity for employees about how they can grow within UofL while ensuring equity and consistency across units.

How are career ladders/progression different from traditional promotion?

- **Career ladders** define progressive levels within a job family (i.e., Coordinator I → Coordinator II → Coordinator III). Advancement occurs through demonstration of skills, experience, and performance—not through competitive job postings.
- **Promotions**, by contrast, generally involve moving into a different role with expanded or managerial responsibility.

WHAT PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS MEASURE

- Achievement of goals
- Competencies
- Behaviors reflecting values
- Readiness for expanded tasks
- Learning and development

HOW EVALUATIONS CONNECT TO CAREER LADDERS (PROGRESSION)

- Documented evidence
- Competency mastery
- Validation of performance
- Record for HR review

WE ARE NOT WHERE WE NEED TO BE!

- We do not have 100% participation in performance evaluation
- Our employees have disclosed that they do not feel as if the evaluations are valued and lack confidence that managers are applying ratings equitably.
 - Evaluations will be different from one employee to the next
 - Applying the same rating scale to high (and lower) performing staff may lead to morale issue (inflated ratings).
 - Unit inconsistencies
 - Surprise feedback

WE ARE NOT WHERE WE NEED TO BE!

- Training is needed to ensure both employees and managers/supervisors understand and trust the evaluative process
 - This improves transparency
 - Leaders who prioritize career progression across the university help build a workforce that is motivated, loyal, and aligned with organizational goals.

Manager's Role

- Set expectations
- Give feedback
- Coach development
- Ensure fairness
- Rate accurately

Employee's Role

- Set development goals
- Request feedback
- Build skills
- Demonstrate next-level behavior

Progression/Ladders Workflow

- Employee interest and manager nomination
- Evaluation review
- Competency Validation
- HR Review
- Budget alignment
- Final approval

Difference between GWI, Career Progression (Ladders), and Merit Increases

	Merit Increase	Career Ladder Move
Purpose	Reward performance in current role	Recognizing growth into higher-level role
Basis	Annual performance evaluation	Demonstrated mastery and readiness for next level
Pay Impact	Typically, 2-5%	Often 5-10%+ or pay range change
Effect on Career	Builds case for promotion	Reclassify role; advances career path

	General Wage Increase (GWI)	Career Ladder Move
Purpose	Adjust all salaries for inflation/market	Advance employees to higher level/role
Basis	Institutional decision; not performance-based	Individual readiness and demonstrated competency
Timing	Occurs on a set schedule (i.e., annually)	Occurs when employee meets criteria (can be set to the evaluation schedule)
Effect on Pay	Same % increase for all	Larger, role-based pay adjustment
Relationship	Keeps all levels current and equitable	Promotes individuals within those levels

Impact Career Progression (Ladders) have on Performance Evaluatons

	Before Career Ladders	After Career Ladders
Evaluation Focus	General, subjective	Competency-based and level-specific
Employee Motivation	Limited link to advancement	Clear link between performance and progression
Equity & Consistency	Varies by department	Standardized across units
Supervisor Guidance	Minimal tools for coaching	Clear frameworks for feedback and growth
Use of Data	Limited or manual	Integrated, Workday-driven analytics
Connection to Pay	Weak link	Structured tie to merit and career progression

Road Map

- Pilot Program (“lift and shift”) from paper to Workday
 - Participating units are Delphi, HR, IT, Public Health, and Social Work
 - Launched December 2025 and completed on March 15, 2026
- Second Pilot with Athletics is slated for Summer 2026
 - Will explore updating rating scale to coincide with Provost/Faculty rating review
- Launch go-live for all staff in December 2026

Goals

- Move evaluation from paper to digital (Workday)
- Ensure 100% compliance with evaluation completion and submission
 - Also, improve the quality and meaningfulness of the evaluations submitted
- Mandatory manager/supervisor training
- Employee training
- Implementation of Career Progression (Ladders)

Closing

- Evaluations enable career progression
- Documentation ensures equity
- Competencies drive advancement
- Leaders develop talent

Current Process will remain in place

- Intake & Alignment
- Position & Structure Review
- Market & Internal Equity Review
- HR Recommendation
- Leadership Approval
- Implementation