

USC Wage and Salary Guidelines

Revised February 2017

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STAFF WAGE AND SALARY GUIDELINES

Preface

These procedures apply to staff employed by USC. In the event of a discrepancy between these procedures and guidelines and a collective bargaining agreement, the terms of the collective bargaining agreement will govern. Direct questions to the [HR Service Center](#).

Principles [\(back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Minimum Pay

All departments must comply with federal, state and local wage and hour law including minimum wage and salary rates, time and record keeping, overtime pay requirements and pay periods (see Staff Wage and Hour Policies in the [Employment and Workplace section](#) of the USC Policy website).

Accountability

The authority, responsibility and accountability for staff compensation administration lies with managers, who are required to execute employment actions in accordance with the policies, practices and guidelines established by the university and additional requirements that may be established by their schools and divisions. Managers are required to consult with the person to whom they report on all employment decisions and transactions affecting the employees who report directly to them. This requirement for “one level up” review and support applies to issues including, but not limited to, all forms of compensation (e.g., salary and wage rates, bonus compensation, overload compensation, allowances), perquisites, budget allocation, job postings, employment offers, terms and conditions of employment, hiring, promotions, reclassifications, demotions, reorganizations, and terminations.

Pay Practices

Managers are accountable for establishing and maintaining pay in accordance with these staff wage and salary guidelines and any additional requirements prescribed by the President, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Senior Vice President for Administration. Managers must consider factors such as marketplace comparisons, education and experience of the individual, fair and equitable distribution among employees in the same or similar position classifications, individual performance, and available funding when determining annual salary base, other compensation, perquisites, or non-standard benefits. Hourly wage rates, on the other hand, are based on federal, state, or local requirements. Schools and departments should initiate pay increases in Workday and approvals must be completed within Workday prior to any commitments being made to the employee. The **university’s compensation philosophy** strives to target compensation at or between the 50th and 75th external market percentiles for well to extraordinarily qualified candidates who

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possess additional work experience, education, skills and knowledge beyond the minimum requirements of the position.

Pay Comparisons

The Compensation office is available to assist departments in reviewing compensation on a case-by-case basis. Compensation staff will provide salary averages by position, university-wide comparative data and/or external market data, if available, and/or make arrangements for custom surveys. Departments should use the recommended guidelines from the Staff Compensation Benchmarking Report, distributed quarterly to HR Partners by the Compensation office and available on the HRA website (<http://hrdivd.usc.edu/hra/>), to establish the starting salary for newly hired, rehired, transferred, reclassified, or promoted staff. These data are also helpful for reviewing existing rates salaries and ensuring equitable pay amongst employees.

Funding

Funding for staff compensation is allocated during the budget approval process each fiscal year. Changes to this allocation may only be made during the annual budget approval process or through a specific mid-year budget amendment or modification request, which has been approved by the appropriate administrator, the Office of Budget and Planning, and Financial Administration and Performance. Any commitment of compensation in excess of the amount specifically budgeted for the current fiscal year or which increases the budget commitment in future years is subject to this amendment/modification approval. Department managers should consult with their senior business officer for guidance on allocations.

Annual Pay Increases

Departments must follow the annual staff pay increase review and approval requirements and limitations described in these guidelines. Annual staff pay increases are merit-based and should vary according to individual performance and amount of funding available.

Performance evaluations should be based on performance sustained over time and documented in Workday's Performance Review module. Via Workday, employees are given the opportunity to comment on evaluation documentation. Guidance for completing performance evaluations in Workday is located at <https://trojanlearn.csod.com>.

The following department employees are excluded from the merit pay increase rule, but not the review/approval requirements:

- Employees of the Department of Public Safety who are included in a specified Step Pay Plan,
- Employees in Facilities Management Services who are included in a specified Pay for Skills program, and
- Employees covered under collective bargaining agreements whose pay increases are subject to the compensation guidelines specified in those agreements.

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No across-the-board increases, uniform cost of living increases or commitments for future increases may be determined prior to the regular annual budget development process. Typically, only one merit increase is allowed during each fiscal year.

Every employee should be informed, in writing, of his or her annual merit increase and new rate of pay, if applicable, before the first pay cycle of the new fiscal year.

Pay for Transfers/Rehires/Reclassifications/Promotions

Employees who are transferred, rehired, reclassified, or promoted are eligible to receive compensation appropriate to the new position, their experience and qualifications, and available funding as described above. A reclassification may be accompanied by an increase in pay, but an increase is not mandatory. A promotion is typically accompanied by an increase in pay. Schools and departments should consider the internal and external market to determine the new pay rate for newly reclassified/promoted employees without bias toward their current rate of pay. The Compensation office is available to consult with departments on any change in position or to provide compensation benchmarking data.

Standard Guidelines

Federal and State Wage and Hour Compliances ([back to Table of Contents](#))

Minimum Hourly Wage Rate

The California state minimum wage rate for non-exempt employees is \$10.50 per hour effective January 1, 2017.

The city of Los Angeles also maintains a minimum wage ordinance applicable to USC. As of July 1, 2017, the city of Los Angeles minimum wage rate for non-exempt employees is \$12.00 per hour.

University policy requires that designated employees earn at least the city of Los Angeles living wage. Effective 7/1/2017, this city of Los Angeles living wage rate is \$11.48 per hour for those with benefits, or \$12.73 per hour for those without benefits (e.g., resource worker, per-diem, part-time faculty), excluding students.

Because the wages of union-represented employees are subject to collective bargaining agreements and/or a duty to bargain before making changes (whether or not the employees are union members), the living wage policy does not apply to these employees.

The Compensation office audits hourly wage rates to ensure compliance with all applicable minimum wages.

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Minimum Salary

The Compensation office audits exempt salaries to ensure compliance with all applicable minimum wages.

California state law requires all exempt staff, regardless of percentage of time worked, to earn a monthly salary equivalent of no less than two times the state hourly minimum wage for full-time employment. Full-time employment is defined in Labor Code Section 515(c) as 40 hours per week.

Thus, the current minimum salary for exempt staff is \$3,640 per month (\$43,680 per year) effective January 1, 2017. Note: outside any pending regulation (see below), the minimum salary for exempt employees moves when the California state minimum wage moves.

Overtime Payment

Non-exempt employees who work more than eight hours in a workday or 40 hours in a work week must receive overtime compensation. Only those employees working under an alternative work schedule set up in accordance with state regulations and approved and filed with the state by Human Resources Administration may be exempt from this overtime requirement. (See the [Overtime](#) and [Work Schedule](#) policies.)

If a non-exempt employee is paid extra compensation for additional duties performed within the regularly scheduled work hours, the extra compensation (“overload”) is considered part of the regular rate when determining an hourly overtime rate.

Meal Periods

The state of California requires that all non-exempt employees (faculty, staff and students) receive an unpaid meal period of at least 30 minutes, during which they are relieved of all duties.

Please review the Meal Periods policy for a complete meal periods schedule. [Meal Periods Policy Link](#)

Please contact your HR Business Partner for instructions on properly recording meal periods.

Rest Periods

The State of California requires rest periods for all non-exempt employees. University policy provides a 15-minute paid rest period for every 3.5 hour period worked. Rest periods for hospital employees may differ.

Please review the Rest Periods policy for complete details. [Rest Periods Policy](#)

Please contact your HR Business Partner for instructions on properly recording rest periods.

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Off-Cycle Compensation Increases

Departments are encouraged to review the compensation provided to their staff employees throughout the year and, when appropriate, make adjustments (e.g., market pay adjustment). During review, departments should establish and maintain total compensation (base pay and any additional compensation such as allowances and bonuses) that is competitive in the marketplace based on the work performed and the employee's qualifications and performance. Individuals who satisfy only the minimum requirements of a position and/or are lower performing should be appropriately targeted on the lower end of the benchmarking range (below the 50th percentile of market data). Well performing and qualified individuals who possess additional skills, education and knowledge and middle range years of related work experience would typically be paid in the middle of the benchmarking range (around the 50th percentile of market data). The top of the benchmarking range is available for situations warranting a rate of pay above market, such as exceptional experience, skill and performance. Higher performing and extraordinarily qualified individuals whose particular work experience, education, skills, and knowledge exceed the position requirements, which is rare, justify targeting higher in the benchmarking range.

Compensation Changes Reviews and Approvals

All increases in compensation, regardless of reason (e.g., merit, market pay adjustment), percentage, dollar amount, or type of compensation (e.g., base, bonus, overload) require review and support by "one level up" (see the accountability section, [above](#)). Support and review of compensation changes are created and approved via [Workday's Request Compensation Change](#).

In addition to "one level up" review and support, certain increases in compensation, noted below, require additional review and approvals via Workday by higher levels of authority and/or the Compensation office. Reports of these increases will be shared with the university's senior leadership.

- **Merit increases and market pay adjustments over 5%** - see approval requirements in merit increase section, below.
- **Salaries of \$200,000 or above for staff under the auspices of the Provost's Office** must be reviewed at time of hire and annually, and authorized and approved by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs including divisions reporting to the Senior Vice President for USC Health. Staff under the auspices of the Senior Vice President for Administration do not need to obtain approval for staff with salaries of \$200,000 or above.
- **Pay increases based on market comparisons** require support by the Compensation office. Schools and divisions must forward documentation supporting the pay increase to Compensation prior to notifying the employee. To ensure timely approvals during

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mass pay updates for new fiscal years, departments should submit these requests to Compensation via the HR Service Center by April 10 for data in the current planning year. Later requests will be accepted, but early review is encouraged and will avoid delays during the Workday approval process.

Establishing Wages/Salaries

When determining wage or salary offers, departments should consider the candidate's applicable education and experience, comparison to market, compensation of existing staff (peers and subordinates) within the appropriate work unit, university-wide staff within the same classification, and available funding (see pay practices section, [above](#)). The "one level up" review and recommendation applies to all wage and salary offers.

New Hires

Departments are encouraged to offer compensation for new hires that is comparable to compensation provided to similarly qualified, experienced staff in like positions in the department, university and external market. Departments should consult the benchmarking data provided by the Compensation office and/or consult with the Compensation office directly to obtain appropriate compensation benchmarking data and analyses for both the university and external market.

The university discourages fiscal year merit increases that usually take effect July 1 for employees hired after March 31 of that year, since there has not been sufficient opportunity to assess performance.

Rehires

The rate of pay for employees who terminate and are rehired is determined on the same basis as any candidate newly hired into an open position, as described above. Although prior, relevant university experience would typically be an important factor, employees are not guaranteed the rate of pay associated with their previous position, or any increase in pay.

For instructions on how to initiate the Workday process for new hires or rehires see the [Quick Reference Guide – Hire Staff](#).

Transfers

A transfer occurs when an employee voluntarily leaves one position within the university and is hired into another position at the same or lower level of responsibility. The new rate of pay is determined on the same basis as any candidate newly hired into a position.

Competitive Promotions

A "competitive hire" promotion occurs when a current university employee applies for an open **posted** position at a higher level with increased duties and responsibilities that may also include

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greater authority, is interviewed along with other qualified candidates, is selected as the final candidate, is offered and accepts the position.

For instruction on how to initiate the Workday process for transfers or competitive promotions see the [Quick Reference Guide – Change Job](#).

Demotions

A demotion occurs when an employee is **involuntarily** moved from the current position to a position at a lower level of responsibility as part of a disciplinary action. A demotion must have the approval of Human Resources Administration prior to the employee being notified.

Employees who are demoted are not guaranteed the rate of pay associated with their previous position; their rate of pay is determined on the same basis as any candidate newly hired into a position. An employee's **voluntary** election to accept a different position at a lower level is considered a transfer, not a demotion.

Reclassifications and Internal Promotions

Refer to the **Staffing and Classification Procedures** at <http://hrdivd.usc.edu/hra/> for instructions prior to initiating the business process in Workday.

Federal and State Wage and Hour Compliances ([back to Table of Contents](#))

Department

Department administrators, senior business officers, HR partners, HR payroll analysts and managers are responsible for ensuring their department's compliance with staff wage and salary guidelines and staffing and classification procedures, including approval and recordkeeping requirements.

From time to time, these guidelines may be modified because of special circumstances that require additional restrictions, changes in procedure, or levels of approvals. Failure to comply with the requirements set forth in university and department policies and procedures will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Compensation Office

The Compensation office in Human Resources Administration is responsible for:

- establishing University compensation principles and determining salary/wage guidelines and staffing/classification procedures,
- reviewing and recommending all proposed pay increases based on market comparisons,
- reviewing, analyzing/evaluating and approving proposed reclassification and internal promotion requests,

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- creating job descriptions in accordance with University business practices that comply with state and federal law,
- determining suitable job classifications,
- determining the exemption status of job classifications,
- analyzing, evaluating and recommending approval of job requisition requests for posting new positions,
- ensuring departments use job descriptions that most appropriately match work performed,
- conducting job audits to confirm or determine appropriateness of a job description for a position,
- conducting and participating in compensation surveys on behalf of the university,
- advising departments on various compensation matters including market comparisons based on both internal and external benchmarking, and
- monitoring departmental compliance with staff wage/salary guidelines, staffing/classification procedures, and related federal and state law.

Compensation will provide reports to senior leadership as requested in order for senior leadership to understand the University-wide impact of pay increases, and ensure that compensation practices are equitable.

Review and Approval Requirements ([back to Table of Contents](#))

Appropriate approvals for transactions such as merit increases, market adjustments, bonuses and overloads are built into Workday business processes, and these processes must be fully and successfully completed before any commitments are made to an employee.

Separate guidelines outlining the annual increase review process including review and approval requirements for merit increases, market adjustments, bonuses and regular overloads will be distributed to schools/divisions before the beginning of each fiscal year and available on this website.

Schools and divisions must comply with the review and approval requirements described below for compensation transactions outside the annual planning system.

1. **“One Level Up” Support** – The employee’s manager, as well as the person to whom the manager reports, must both personally review justifications for all pay increases, bonuses and overloads through the appropriate Workday business process.
2. **School/Division Review and Support or Approval** – We recommend that the most senior position in the school or division (e.g., Dean, Vice President, Associate Senior Vice President, Vice Provost, etc.) be briefed regarding the proposed pay increases, bonuses

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and overloads noted below, **however, signatures on departmentally created, internal forms are not required or encouraged.**

3. **University Officer Review and Approval** – After review/approval by the school/division:

- Bonuses of \$1,000 or more,
- Market pay increases over 5%, and
- Exceptions to restrictions outlined in these guidelines

must all be reviewed and approved by:

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee for:

- schools/divisions reporting to the Provost, and
- divisions reporting to the Senior Vice President for USC Health

Or, the Senior Vice President for Administration (for all other divisions) or his/her designee.

Out-of-cycle (non-fiscal year) Compensation Transactions

Out-of-cycle (non-fiscal year) compensation transactions and on-cycle transactions not entered into the annual increase planning system such as merit increases, market adjustments, bonuses and regular and staff teaching overloads must all be entered via the Request Compensation Change in Workday and will require review and approval through Workday by the:

- establishing senior business officer
- manager
- manager's manager
- Compensation (if a market adjustment)
- HR executive (if a regular or staff teaching overload)
- Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/designee OR Senior Vice President for Administration/designee

For instruction on how to initiate the Workday process for pay increases see the [Quick Reference Guide – Request Compensation Change](#).

Market Adjustments

Schools and divisions are required to reference benchmarking data to justify market pay increase requests and provide employee's resume (uploaded into the employee's worker documents in Workday). The Compensation office will provide university and external benchmarking data, as well as assistance with analysis.

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Market pay adjustments may be facilitated at any time, but are often processed during the annual compensation review and budget approval process. All market adjustments require review and support from Compensation.

Approval Requirements

- Proposed adjustments and pay based solely on market comparisons **up to and including 5%** require review and support from:
 1. “One level up”
 2. School/division
 3. Compensation
- Market pay adjustments **over 5%** - see Review and Approval Requirements section [above](#) for appropriate market pay adjustment approvals.

Appeals of the Compensation office’s decision regarding an appropriate market adjustment must be addressed to the Executive Director, Human Resources Administration who will coordinate with the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or the Senior Vice President for Administration or their designee. Appeals must be routed through the Compensation office for tracking purposes.

For instruction on how to initiate the Workday process for market pay increases see the [Quick Reference Guide – Request Compensation Change](#).

Pay Increase Funding ([back to Table of Contents](#))

Each year during the budget development process, the university communicates to senior business officers the availability of either additional funding above and beyond current budget or the expectation that departments fund any increases in compensation from existing funds (including increases based on merit, bonuses, overloads, new positions and market pay adjustments). Units considering any merit pay increases, market adjustments or changes in staffing should address the requests during the budget approval process.

When completing the KBC process for the new fiscal year, merit-based pay increases for staff funded by grants must be included. To ensure adherence to federal regulations concerning institutional base compensation, the lack of grant funding prior to July cannot be used as the sole justification for delaying and providing an out-of-cycle pay increase until after the start of the fiscal year. Increased availability of funding (unrestricted, restricted, or contracts and grants) is not, in and of itself, a valid reason for requesting a mid-year pay increase.

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Discretionary Bonuses

Discretionary bonuses (e.g., annual bonus, spot bonus) provide a mechanism to reward staff employees for past performance and specific accomplishments above and beyond sustained meritorious performance recognized in base salary. They are provided solely at the discretion of management, are not guaranteed and may be withdrawn at any time. Payments are based on clearly demonstrated accomplishments such as extraordinary cost savings, generation of revenue, outstanding contributions to a project, etc. Discretionary bonuses are not measured by or dependent on hours worked or attendance. Payments are not tied to a formal variable pay plan or performance targets. Discretionary bonuses are not construed as wages and are not included in the regular rate of pay for overtime purposes. Payments are treated as supplemental compensation, paid in “lump sum,” and subject to withholding at the flat tax rate.

Schools and divisions may provide discretionary bonuses only if they have budgeted for them in advance; the availability of funding does not guarantee the awarding of discretionary bonuses. Typically, bonuses are approved during the budget approval process.

In all cases, justification for bonuses must be presented in the context of total compensation. Bonus payments and records may be audited. See Review and Approval Requirements [above](#) for appropriate bonus approval.

For instruction on how to initiate the Workday process for bonuses see the [Quick Reference Guide – Request One-Time Payment](#).

Overload Compensation ([back to Table of Contents](#))

A staff employee who temporarily performs duties unrelated to his/her normal responsibilities or who temporarily assumes additional responsibilities in his/her department may be eligible to receive extra compensation as an overload to provide a temporary pay equity adjustment. Examples include, but are not limited to, temporary assumption of extensive additional duties not usually performed due to the extended leave or resignation of an employee within the unit, or temporary assumption of additional more complex higher-level duties due to a short-term project or program. The appropriateness of an overload payment also should be gauged by an evaluation of the employee’s current pay benchmarked against the pay that would be appropriate for an employee performing similar work. Overload payments for the assignment of additional duties are not mandatory. The period for which an overload is paid may not exceed 12 months.

Overload pay must be included in regular biweekly or monthly pay reflecting the period in which work is performed, and is included in calculations that apply to base pay (e.g., overtime). Payment may not be paid retroactively or provided as lump sum payments. Overload

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compensation for non-exempt employees must be paid on an hourly basis, at the new, higher overload rate. Overloads (both teaching and non-teaching) for non-exempt staff must be established in a new, additional position within Workday, and hours worked must be applied to this position. The overload position's compensation for non-exempt employees includes the base rate plus the additional hourly rate. Non-teaching overloads for exempt staff can be executed by adding an overload compensation plan to the existing position. Teaching overloads for exempt staff must be completed by creating a new teaching overload position.

For instruction on how to initiate the Workday process for additional jobs and overloads see:

- [Quick Reference Guide – Add Additional Job](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide - Overload for Exempt Staff](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide - Overload for Nonexempt Employees](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide - Staff Teaching Overload for Exempt and Nonexempt](#)

Managers must discuss all overload specifics with the employee before the start of the assignment and before payment is initiated. The employee must agree to the terms, and both employee and manager must sign an agreement, which must indicate what temporary job duties are to be performed by the employee, the overload amount, and the agreed start and end date of the assignment. Review and approval (see below) must be completed before a commitment to provide overload compensation is made to the employee.

Managers may consider spot bonuses for those situations where overload payments are not appropriate, but it is appropriate to recognize an employee for outstanding contributions to a project or under particular circumstances.

The Compensation office will generate reports for senior leadership for overload compensation transactions, as requested.

Approval Requirements

Required approvals for regular overloads will be reflected in the Request Compensation Change business process in Workday. Within the comments section of that business process, requests must include:

- a justification explaining the business necessity for the payment
- time period of overload
- how the specific pay rate was determined
- funding account number

Special Overload Payments

1. **Overload payments by a second department to an employee in another school or division**

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In addition to the requirements noted above, the second (funding) department must notify the employee's current (primary) department of the overload assignment before the offer is finalized. This will allow the employee's manager to review the additional assignment to ensure it will be performed outside the employee's standard working hours and will not adversely affect the employee's primary assignment. The second department must communicate all pertinent arrangements associated with a job offer for a second assignment to the employee's HR/payroll analyst.

2. Overload compensation for teaching activities

Required approvals for staff engaged in teaching are reflected in the Request Compensation Change business process in Workday. Staff teaching approval is required before the beginning of the course. The staff employee should not be given a teaching assignment or notified of overload payment until approval is confirmed. Within the comments section of that business process, requests must include:

- a justification explaining why staff is teaching instead of faculty
- education of employee
- name of course and course number
- time period of overload
- funding account number

An individual who performs both staff functions and teaching activities is considered a full-time staff employee with a concurrent part-time faculty appointment and title. A staff employee may not teach more than one course per academic year. Departments should create a new position for the teaching overload and then add it as additional job.

For instruction on how to initiate the Workday process for additional jobs and overloads see:

- [Quick Reference Guide – Add Additional Job](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide - Staff Teaching Overload for Exempt and Nonexempt](#)

Requests For EIB Compensation/One-Time Payments ([back to Table of Contents](#))

Requests to establish or change compensation rates and/or one-time payments are initiated in Workday. Workday has been configured to route automatically through the required approval steps described in these guidelines. Prescribed layers of approval are designed to satisfy internal control requirements and to escalate approvals required extraordinary payments or increases in pay.

In order to maintain the clearest and most distinct audit trail, most transactions are initiated directly in Workday off the individual employee record. In certain cases, we support the mass loading of data ("EIB"). **Because the transaction has been approved for EIB does not eliminate**

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the need for appropriate approvals that are able to be demonstrated in Workday.

Requirements for EIB transactions are as follows:

1. A request to mass load transactions via EIB must first be made to and approved by HRIS. HRIS will make a determination based on an analysis of the volume and complexity of the transaction.
2. **Approval for a transaction to be processed as an EIB would not automatically bypass established approval requirements.** Typically, data would be loaded as the initiation step and all subsequent required approval steps would follow.
3. Any requests for exceptions to the prescribed requirements must be authorized/approved by the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, or a delegate. Simplified workflow may be considered, but must meet the following requirements:
 - a. At least 2 different people – not one person holding multiple roles – must be involved in entering and approving the transaction.
 - b. At least 1 of the 2 people involved must be an administrator with an appropriate level of authority (e.g., HR Partner, SBO, etc.).
 - c. The request must be made in writing (email is acceptable).
 - d. At least one approval should be processed in Workday to establish an audit trail in the system record.
4. Since only one comment can be entered on the EIB on mass load transactions, the comment must apply to all line items and include the following:
 - a. The department's comment explaining the reason for the transaction.
 - b. HRIS will include reference to the name of the EIB spreadsheet data entry person from the school/division and names of any additional reviewers/ approvers of the EIB spreadsheet at the school/division prior to loading into Workday.
 - c. The name of the individual authorizing the EIB process and/or any routing exceptions (e.g., Authorized by title/name) should be listed, including date authorized and reference to the date of the written authorization (e.g., email dated X).