Navigating the Implementation

What to do and say during implementation of Phase I

Beginning Nov. 6, employees will have access to the new compensation structures. Individual job placements will be communicated on Nov. 18.

This is a supervisor's guide to phase I, stage by stage, from launch on Nov. 6 to the first paycheck on Dec. 31: what your team sees, what to say and what to avoid. Read the overview summary first for the three phases and key dates. For conversation skills, use *Talking About Compensation*.

Prior to Nov. 18, focus conversations on understanding the new framework and encourage employees to explore the structures without speculating about individual placement outcomes. After Nov. 18, focus on being available for questions and helping employees navigate changes.

Nov. 6 to 12: no one knows placements yet

Everyone can see the new titles, grades, ranges and FLSA designations. No one, including you, knows an individual placement. Expect people to look up jobs like theirs, guess where they'll land and compare notes. A guess repeated often enough starts to sound like a fact, so steady answers matter most this week.

Holding statements

- "The new structures are posted so everyone can see how jobs are organized. Each of us gets our own placement from our unit HR manager on Nov. 18."
- "I don't know anyone's placement yet, including mine. We should wait for the real answer instead of guessing."
- "Our work isn't changing. Phase I is about positions: making sure every position is paid within its market range."
- "There's an all-employee session on Nov. 12. I hope you'll join; it will be recorded if you can't."
- "That's a good question. I don't know, but I'll find out."

Don't

- Help someone "find themselves" in the structure or guess their title, grade or range.
- Confirm or deny what someone thinks their outcome will be.
- Speculate about pay increases, FLSA changes or phases 2 and 3.
- Share anything beyond what's been posted.

What helps

- Be available to your team if they have questions, encourage them to attend the Nov. 12 session.
- Point people to the employee FAQ.
- Write down questions you can't answer and send them through the question form or to your unit's HR manager.

Nov. 13 to 17: supervisors know, employees don't

Supervisors receive their direct reports' new title, grade, FLSA status (if changing) and any pay increase, with its amount, on Friday, Nov. 13. That leaves three working days before employees receive notifications and what is shared during this time helps shape whether Nov. 18 feels fair.

- ☐ Store placement information securely. Don't print, forward or discuss it with peers.
- ☐ Don't hint, preview or reassure, even with "you'll be fine." A hint to one person becomes a rumor for the team.
- ☐ Take specific questions to your own manager and your unit's HR manager, or general questions to Compensation office hours on Monday, Nov. 16.
- ☐ Prepare: fill in the planning worksheet in *Talking About Compensation* for each direct report.

If asked: "Everyone receives their notification on Nov. 18, and I'll be available after that to talk it through. I want you to hear it the same way and at the same time as everyone else."

Nov. 18 and after: be available

Each unit's HR manager sends each employee a memo and copies supervisors. Supervisors receive their own notifications the same day. Conversations aren't required, but supervisors are encouraged to be available.

- ☐ Read each direct report's memo, so you know exactly what they received.
- ☐ Take a moment with your own memo first. It's fine to say "I just got mine too."
- ☐ Send your whole team the same note saying how and when you're available.
- ☐ If you reach out to someone individually, keep it to an offer: "I know you got your memo today. I'm around if you'd like to talk it through."

When you talk, follow the five steps in *Talking About Compensation*. Every conversation should leave the employee knowing four things:

1. **The work isn't changing.** Their duties, team and value are the same.
2. **Phase I measured jobs, not people.** Titles, grades and ranges come from market data, not performance.
3. **Where they sit in the range comes later,** in phases 2 and 3.
4. **Where to go next:** supervisors and their unit HR manager to explore any options.

Phase I language for the first two steps:

- **Confirm the facts:** "Your new title is *[title]* in grade *[grade]*, *[your position is now non-exempt,]* and *[you'll receive an increase to bring your pay into the range / your pay is already within the range]*."
- **Explain the why:** "Your job was matched to *[comparable jobs]* in the market. That sets the grade and its range. Phase I makes sure your pay is within that range; phases 2 and 3 will look at individual factors like education, experience and other credentials."

Dec. 6 and Dec. 31: changes take effect

- **Dec. 6:** new titles, grades, FLSA status and pay take effect.
- **FLSA changes:** For a change to nonexempt, all hours worked from Dec. 6 are recorded and the employee is eligible for overtime. For a change to exempt, hours worked are no longer recorded and the employee is no longer eligible for overtime. Complete the FLSA transition checklist with the employee before then.

- **Dec. 31:** employees increased to their new grade's minimum see the new amount in this paycheck.
- **Business titles:** updates go through your unit's HR manager, whose steps and timeline may vary by unit.

Questions supervisors may hear

They ask	You can say
"Where do I fit?" (before Nov. 18)	"Your memo on Nov. 18 will tell you. The structure shows how jobs are organized, but your placement depends on how your specific position was matched."
"Have you seen mine?"	Before Nov. 13: "Not yet." From Nov. 13 to 17: "Everyone hears on Nov. 18, and I'll be available then."
"Am I getting a raise?"	"Phase 1 brings positions below their new range minimum up to it. Your memo will say whether that applies to you. Increases take effect Dec. 6 and show up in the Dec. 31 paycheck."
"Is my job becoming hourly?"	"Some positions' FLSA status changes based on federal law. A change to nonexempt means being paid for every hour worked, including overtime. It isn't a ranking."
"Why is my job called that?"	"Titles follow the work being performed, so the same work has the same title across campus. If appropriate, we can talk about a business title."
"I'm low in my range, so I'm undervalued."	"Phase I only made sure every position is paid within its range. Where you sit in it is the focus of phases 2 and 3."
"I've been here 20 years, and a newer coworker now makes about what I do."	"I understand why that feels unfair. Phase I doesn't account for individual experience; phases 2 and 3 do. Starting in 2027, base salary increase requests can also address compression."
"Someone else got a bigger increase."	"Increases bring pay up to the range minimum, so their size depends on how far below the range a position was. They aren't a rating. I can't discuss someone else's pay, but I can explain yours."
"Does phase 3 mean I'll get a raise?"	"Phase 3 adjusts pay within the range based on compensable factors. The results and timing aren't set, so I can't promise an outcome."
"Can I appeal?"	"There isn't a reconsideration process for phase I. If your duties are described wrong, the quarterly reclassification cycles start in April 2027. For compression or equity, salary increase requests open in 2027. I'll share your concern with our HR manager."

If someone is upset, acknowledge it before anything else: "Not knowing is hard" or "I can hear this isn't what you expected." Don't argue with a guess or confirm one and share Employee Assistance Program information if the stress seems significant.

Where to take questions

Who	For
Your own supervisor or manager	First stop for how to handle your team, 2027 options
Your unit's HR manager	Placements, memos, business title updates, 2027 options, anything you can't answer
Compensation open office hours, Monday, Nov. 16	General questions about the study that your HR manager can't answer; questions about individual placements will not be addressed in the open session.
KSUCompStudy@ksu.edu	Anything else; answers go are added to the FAQ
Employee Assistance Program	Employees, or you, under significant stress https://sehp.healthbenefitsprogram.ks.gov/benefits/healthquest/eap/eap-services

Your checklist

- ☐ Week of Nov. 6: watch the three videos, and read the overview summary and this guide.
- ☐ Nov. 12: attend or watch the all-employee session.
- ☐ Nov. 13 to 17: keep placements confidential and prepare for each direct report.
- ☐ Nov. 18: read the memos you're copied on and tell your team you're available.
- ☐ Before Dec. 6: complete FLSA transition checklists for anyone moving to non-exempt.
- ☐ Within two weeks of Nov. 18: check in with anyone you haven't heard from.

Questions you can't answer? Check with your unit's HR manager.