

Frequently asked questions related to Points Based Remuneration (PBR) (reviewed July 2011)

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What is Points Based Remuneration (PBR)?

Points based remuneration or PBR was initially a means of assigning a relative value to the various academic activities carried out by members of the Department of Anesthesia and Perioperative Medicine. As its name implies, this process also involves payment based on the level of academic

productivity in a particular year (points). Research and subsequent publication, education and administrative functions are all considered to be of equal value to the department. Some might question this position, but in terms of PBR points there is equal weighting across these 3 areas by total PBR points. In its current form, PBR is an inventory of all academic activity in all of these areas by members who submit a PBR document. It also is a comparative tool to be utilized in assessing the productivity of an individual member.

What is the role of the Academics Affairs Committee (AAC) in PBR?

The AAC is responsible for overseeing all activities related to academia within the department. In broader terms this includes 1) mentoring, 2) promotions and 3) PBR. With respect to PBR, the AAC is responsible to the members of the department to maintain the academic inventory including changes that are made periodically to the document; to interpret the data within this inventory; to ensure its accuracy; and to determine remuneration based on both “point” production and granted non job related academic time.

Why is PBR important?

PBR is currently the best metric available for academic activity (administrative, educational and research) within the department. This information is useful to the departmental chair and to the members. It allows for comparison both within and external to the department. How does the department compare to other departments in terms of academic activity? In addition this tool has potential to aid in how and where resources should be directed.

Who should submit a PBR?

All members are encouraged to submit a PBR document. It is a requirement of those with academic time and those with limited term appointments.

What is included in a PBR report?

The yearly PBR includes a number of parameters. This includes various columns related to PBR points, academic days, monetary values, percentages and productivity indices. With respect to PBR these include, points submitted, the number of allocated PBR points, percentage change of points submitted, allocated points eligible for remuneration, and monetary value of a PBR point. Parameters related to academic days include, job and non job related academic days, the relative number of these days as a percentage of the total, the monetary value of these days, and the value of non job related academic activity as PBR points.

What is a PBR point?

A PBR point is a value assigned to an activity or a portion of an academic activity. When this was conceived, the general concept was that 1 hour of work was equivalent to 1 PBR point. For many activities this works well. For others, establishing the value or the equivalency of an activity or role is problematic. As such the AAC continually reviews and updates the value of an activity or role. Much of this is driven by feedback from the members of the department whose activity is not clearly captured in the PBR.

What is Academic Time?

Academic time is a resource that is made available to members of the department so that individuals will have time to accomplish academic production in the areas of leadership, education, research and administration. This resource is allocated in 2 distinct areas, “job related” and “non job related”. Job related academic time is granted for members to achieve their administrative roles for the department the university, provincial and/or national bodies. These include site chiefs, program directors, coordinators, also members and chairs of some committees. Non job related academic time is granted to some members for them to achieve academic work that is not administrative in nature, such as grant submissions, research and publications. A lack of clarity can occur because the same PBR recorded activity may be part of a job and thus not eligible for allocated PBR points, while another similar activity may be PBR eligible. An example is the role of Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. This role has job related academic time. As a result AAC membership is not eligible for allocated PBR points. However, the chair of AAC is a member of the Departmental Council for which PBR points are allocated. In its current form each member of the department has access to Education Days (up to 6 in a calendar year). These are considered non job related academic time. It is an expectation that academic activity takes place on these Education Days which is funded through the AFP academic funding. It is not remunerated to the same degree as departmental academic days.

What is Job Related Academic Time?

Job related academic time is assigned to those individuals with identified administrative roles in the department. The amount of time assigned was and is based on the expected time their duties would require. It has been long acknowledged that many job related activities occur outside of traditional hours (0730-1500h). Some of these positions are appointed, while others are elected positions. Are all administrative posts equal? Despite an assigned equal number of academic days the requirements of time and effort may not. The AAC over the coming years will endeavour to apply a metric to this formula.

What is Non Job related academic time?

As with job related activities, much work is done outside the academic day (0730h-1500h). Academic time is made available to those individuals who have 1) demonstrated ability or 2) show potential in

this realm. Successfully gaining funds to perform independent work is a legitimate case for academic time. Similarly, consistent productivity, as measured by a productivity index, will likewise provide evidence that an investment in that individual (academic time) is potentially worthwhile. Persons interested in having non job related academic time would approach the Departmental chair with a request for time. The departmental chair would ask the AAC for an opinion regarding the request. All members have some academic time at the time of writing (Education Days), and all members have the opportunity to submit a PBR. In looking for objective evidence to support the addition of non job related academic time, the AAC will review past performance based on their PBR, and productivity indices. The AAC will then make a recommendation to the Chair to support or not support such a request.

What is a Productivity Index?

A productivity index is a calculation performed on PBR data that looks at academic productivity in the context of non job related academic time provided to a member. One such index may be the total number of allocated PBR points divided by the number of non job related academic days (Productivity Index 2). Another PI is derived by considering 1) allocated PBR points and 2) academic days (non job related) as percentages of both the total PBR points and total academic time (see how relative PI is calculated, below). These indices can then be used to compare one member's academic productivity with another (PI2).

Who are members of the Academic Affairs Committee?

As of July 2011 the Academic Affairs Committee was made up of Kevin Armstrong (chair), Neal Badner, Daniel Bainbridge, and Jim Watson. Geoff Bellingham and Sandra Katsiris are the newest members of the AAC. The most recent past members are Richard Cherry and Jeff Granton. Davy Cheng, as Chair of the department also attends committee meetings. Additionally, Lois Hayter provides great support to the committee as she has been a consistent contributor since the inception of the PBR. The following is the terms of reference for AAC membership:

The academic affairs of the Department shall be managed by an Academic Affairs Committee consisting of the Department Chair, three (3) Faculty Members elected by a majority of the Faculty Members and three (3) Faculty Members appointed by the Department Chair. The Finance Management Committee may appoint an observer to attend Academic Affairs Committee meetings as appropriate. The Department Chair shall appoint the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. Elections shall be held prior to May 1 of each year. The non-physician manager or administrator of the Points Based Remuneration system shall be a non-voting Member of the Academic Affairs Committee.

How are academic activities supported?

The total value of monies to support academic activity was roughly 2.8 million dollars in 2009. This includes money for job related activity (department chair, site chiefs, directors, coordinators, some committee membership, etc). There is also money directed to academic time that is not job related (i.e. time to do research). Currently, each member has the choice to access Education Days (3-6 in any calendar year). It is true that the monetary support is not equal to that of an academic day, but these are considered non job related academic time. The money distributed through PBR is an attempt to provide monetary recognition for productivity over that supported through non job related paid academic days, which numbered 1278 for 2009 and Education Days.

How is academic time funded?

A general misperception is that academic time is funded by clinical activities. The funding for these academic days comes from a number of non clinical sources such as UWO Department Operating Funds, AMOSO Opportunity and Innovation Funds, hospital envelope funding, hospital and university stipends for a variety of leadership roles, Specialty Review Funds from MOHLTC, AFP Academic Funds, the Department of National Defence and other sources of research funding support. Funds generated by clinical services are not used to pay for academic time.

How are Productivity Indices calculated?

Productivity Index 1 (PI1)

For 2009 going forward the relative productivity index is calculated with the following considerations. This index allows comparison between all members who submit a PBR. The non job related academic time made available to a member (including education days) is calculated as a percentage of the total number of non job related academic days in the department. This is then divided into the value of allocated points as a percentage of the total PBR points. The result is a unit-less measure, with the following properties: a value of 1 suggests perfectly matched productivity; a value of < 1 suggests insufficient productivity and > 1 excess productivity. It can also be used to compare the magnitude of productivity because it is proportional and linear (e.g. 0.5 is half as productive as 1, 3 is twice as productive as 1.5). It is recognized that productivity varies from year to year.

Productivity Index 2 (PI2)

This is a more fundamental calculation of productivity. It is simply the accredited PBR points divided by the number of non job related academic days. This is most useful when comparing those individuals who have been granted significant non job related academic time (greater than 0.5 days per year/20 days per year). When comparing individuals with varying degrees of non job related academic time, true comparison can be lost when the denominator is small. That is a low absolute PBR score can result in a high PI2. As the number of academic days increases, which is necessary to produce good quality valued academic work, the returns (measured by PI2) are diminished.

How is PBR distribution calculated?

Non job related academic time is granted to some members with the expectation that they will produce academically relevant and valued work. PBR is the vehicle through which this activity is credited a certain number of “points”. Given that an individual is paid in advance for their work, a calculation is made to account for this “advance”, based on the amount of non job related academic time they have been granted. As a result some members may have a large number of PBR points but do not receive PBR monies. The actual calculation of money to be distributed is somewhat complex. To avoid double payment, all PBR points are converted to dollars based on what the value of an allocated PBR point is worth (total money in non job related academic time divided by the total number of PBR points allocated). This value is then offset against money to support academic time (number of academic days times the day rate for an academic day). If there is a positive difference between the two (value of PBR points minus value of academic time taken), this value is converted back to “unpaid” PBR points, which are then eligible for PBR distribution. For those without non job related academic time the allocated points are unchanged by this conversion. The sum available for distribution is then divided by the total “unpaid” PBR points. This is the value of a PBR point for distribution.

How is the value of a PBR point calculated?

The value of a PBR point for redistribution of funds is the total sum of money available for distribution divided by the number of allocated and eligible PBR points. There is also a calculation performed on the total amount of money directed to all non job related academic time divided by the total number of allocated PBR points. This “PBR” value is used to convert allocated PBR points to a dollar value which is then used to offset money provided for non job related academic days (the “advance” described above).

What happens if I do not have supporting documentation for an activity?

The lack of supporting evidence is one of the items that consumes the greatest amount of time rectifying. Given, that there are more than 60 members who submit a PBR and literally hundreds of activities which require documentation, this means many emails and phone calls (often more than once on the same item) to get the situation satisfactorily rectified. It has been discussed at the level of the AAC that when documentation is missing, that the submission is considered to be incomplete. As a result those activities to which the missing documentation pertains, would not be considered for allocation of PBR points. This would greatly reduce the time dedicated to ensuring accuracy in the process. It would also greatly alter the capture of valuable activities and the number of points allocated. At some point, submitting complete and accurate documentation will be considered the member's full responsibility.

What happens when the points I have submitted are changed?

When there is significant variation in the number of points submitted and those allocated (25%) there is a requirement that the member be notified, with an explanation of the changes. This gives the member an opportunity to clarify their position. Though a 25% change triggers a required response to the member, clarification is often sought even if this trigger point has not been met. This is done to 1) ask for clarification; 2) enable the AAC to further understand an activity and; 3) improve the members' understanding of the submission and review process.

Is there adjudication of PBR points submitted and allocated?

Members may feel that PBR points are taken away or not awarded based on arbitrary decisions by the Chair of the AAC. For many activities, confirmation of an activity is straight forward and based on documentation provided or easily identified activities (ie top 20% teaching, scheduled teaching or committee membership). When there is missing documentation or the activity is non-traditional or it is not included in the PBR spreadsheet, the AAC chair or administrative officer, often seek clarification from the member. When there continues to be uncertainty or disagreement regarding a particular activity or the number of points to be awarded for an activity, the Chair of the AAC will seek the opinion of the AAC committee members. Final decisions are communicated back to the member.

Where do I enter my job related roles on the PBR document?

There are many roles that are seen as having academic value but are part of a job with paid academic time.. In the future, the AAC will be developing job descriptions for many roles in the Department, and creating a reporting template for job related annual reporting to capture the job related academic activity and to ensure that job descriptions are regularly updated to reflect the expectations of the Department.

Is there a productivity index for job related academic time?

As of the 2011 academic activity report there was no productivity index for job related academic time. Over the coming years the AAC will be developing job descriptions for each administrative role. This will allow for members with academic job related time to understand their role and responsibilities, and also allow for adjustment of academic time based on job responsibilities. The academic role categories (ARC) is in some way a "job description" for each consultant. Work in the area of teaching, research, administration and health care leadership may include job related activities.

How is academic time adjusted?

The AAC is often asked for an opinion as to whether or not academic time should be granted or adjusted (increased or decreased). To provide a fair opinion, objective evidence is helpful. In addition to a historical perspective, the productivity index described above is such objective evidence. It is realized that academic productivity is not consistent from year to year. There may be very productive years followed by less productive years, or vice versa. As a result 3 year averages are considered for these purposes. It is also recognized that when the number of non job related academic days is small the productivity index (PI2) may be very high. Conversely when the number of non job related academic days is high, significant work produced may not be reflected in a large productivity index.

How is Non job related academic time gained, granted or maintained?

Traditional academic time might be granted to a member on the decision by the departmental chair that the member is capable, has shown an aptitude and success in their academic career in publication and securing grant monies. Members with no or limited academic time may request an increase in academic time, based on their post graduate work, work done since joining the department and/or interest. Members with historical academic time are accountable to themselves and the department for production of academic work that is relevant and valued. There is however a limited amount of academic time available to members based on current resources and clinical commitment.. The productivity index is a measure that can be used to compare the work produced by various members based on the academic time available to them. Though imperfect, such an evaluation can be helpful in granting or adjusting academic time.

How does an un-established researcher “secure” academic time when they have not had the opportunity to work with academic time?

Un-established researchers with an interest in producing research and securing academic time have the opportunity to be involved in various academic projects. Many grant opportunities, including the internal research fund, are available to these new researchers to gain funds to produce academic work as a primary investigator. Similarly collaborative or greater roles are available with more established researchers in the department. Successfully gaining funds to perform independent work is a legitimate case for academic time. Similarly, consistent productivity, as measured by the productivity index, will likewise provide evidence that an investment in that individual (academic time) is potentially worthwhile.