



Foothill-De Anza Community College District

CLASSIFICATION STUDY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Classification Study Process Overview

Step 1. Data Collection: Position Description Questionnaire Completion

Employees complete Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) forms, reporting information such as duties performed and time spent on duties, supervision received and exercised, knowledge and abilities required of the position, physical requirements, and job complexity.

Supervisors and next-level management will review and validate their employees' PDQ forms by providing responses in a section specifically for supervisor and next-level management comment. Supervisors and next-level management should not change the content provided by the employees.

Step 2. Data Collection: Interview employees, supervisors, and next-level management

After collecting and reviewing the PDQ forms, Gallagher will conduct interviews with employees to provide clarification regarding specific duties and other information reviewed in the PDQ forms. Supervisors and management will also be interviewed to validate collected information in addition to clarifying overall organizational structure.

Step 3. Data Analysis: Draft classification concepts and specifications and position allocations

With the position data collected, Gallagher will work on creating and/or revising classification concepts, develop new and/or revise existing classification specifications, and recommend each position to be allocated to a classification (see Position Analysis and Outcomes below for additional information).

Step 4. Review: Review the proposed classification plan

As a final measure before implementation, study stakeholders will have the opportunity to review the new or revised classification specifications. This process serves as a method of quality control and provides an opportunity for employees, supervisors, and management to suggest final adjustments.

Position Analysis and Outcomes

When positions are classified, the focus is on assigned job duties and the job-related requirements for successful performance, not on individual employee capabilities or amount of work performed. Positions are evaluated based on allocation factors. Allocation factors are standards that are used to measure job requirements of individual positions. These factors can be compared to measure the similarities and differences among positions. The common allocation factors used to evaluate study positions are:



- **Decision-Making:** Consists of [a] the decision-making responsibility and degree of independence or latitude that is inherent in the position, and [b] the impact of the decisions.
- **Problem-Solving:** Involves analyzing, evaluating, reasoning, and creative thinking requirements. In a work environment, not only the breadth and variety of problems are considered, but also guidelines, such as supervision, policies, procedures, laws, regulations, and standards available to the employee.
- **Budget and Resource Management:** Responsibility for budget development and administration and allocating staff and budget resources among competing demands.
- **Scope and Complexity:** Defines the breadth and difficulty of the assigned function or responsibility inherent in the classification.
- **Contact with Others Required by the Job:** Measures [a] the types of contacts, and [b] the purpose of the contacts.
- **Supervision Received and Exercised:** Describes the level of supervision received from others and the nature of supervision provided to other workers. It relates to the independence of action inherent in a position.
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:** Defines the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform assigned responsibilities.

Each incumbent may experience one of several possible outcomes as a result of a classification study, including:

- Recommendation for a change to an existing classification;
- Recommendation for a change to new classification;
- Recommendation for a change in title to better reflect the work performed and/or to be in alignment with market practices; or
- No change, meaning the current classification (and title) accurately reflects the work performed.

Classification Study Frequently Asked Questions

What is a classification plan?

A classification plan is a systematic framework for grouping jobs into common classifications based on similarities in duties, responsibilities, and requirements.

The purpose of a classification plan is to provide an appropriate basis for making a variety of human resources decisions such as the:

- Development of job-related recruitment and selection procedures;
- Clear and objective appraisal of employee performance;
- Development of career paths, training plans, and succession planning;



- Design of an equitable and competitive salary structure;
- Organizational development and change management; and
- Provision of an equitable basis for discipline and other employee actions.

In addition to providing this basis for various human resources management and process decisions, a classification plan can also effectively support systems of administrative and fiscal control. Grouping of positions into an orderly classification system supports planning, budget analysis and preparation, and various other administrative functions.

Why are studies conducted?

Classification studies are conducted in order to assess changes in job functions over time, create new jobs, and accurately represent the full scope of duties during recruitment and performance evaluation. They are also useful in creating a solid foundation by which to compare positions within an organization to other, similar positions within a market.

What is the difference between a classification specification and position (or job) description?

“Position” and “Classification” are two terms that are often used interchangeably but have very different meanings.

- A position is an assigned group of duties and responsibilities performed by one person. Often the word “job” is used in place of the word “position.”
- A classification may contain only one position or may consist of a number of positions. When you have several positions assigned to one classification, it means that the same classification title is appropriate for each position; that the scope, level, duties, and responsibilities of each position assigned to the classification are sufficiently similar (but not identical), and that the same core knowledge, skills, and other requirements are appropriate for all positions in the classification.

A position or job description, often known as a “desk manual”, generally lists each duty an employee performs and may also have information about how to perform that duty. A classification specification normally reflects several positions and is a summary document that does not list each duty performed by every employee. The classification specification, which is intended to be broader, more general and informational, indicates the general scope and level of responsibilities, plus the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other requirements, not detail-specific position responsibilities.

What is the relationship between classification and compensation?

Classification is the description of and the requirements to perform the work. Compensation is the monetary value of the work, often influenced by two factors:

- The external labor market; and



- Internal relationships within the organization.

Why are some classifications recommended for a series (such as a I, II, etc.) and other classifications not recommended for a series?

Classifications may consist of multiple levels called a classification series or consist of a single level. The recommendation of multiple levels or a single level classification series depends on the allocation factors described previously, as well as the availability of work, the training requirements to become fully competent in the work, and the District's needs and priorities.

Establishing Minimum Qualifications

The education and/or experience listed in the classification specification are minimum requirements; and placing higher levels of education or experience which are not required for the work performed places barriers for applicants who would otherwise qualify for the job. The minimum qualifications provide a "typical way to obtain the required qualifications," in recognition of the fact that there are other ways of qualifying for the work.

The minimum qualifications:

- Should not be so restrictive that they exclude candidates who might reasonably have the ability to do the work.
- Should not present artificial barriers to employment;
- Need to be practical in the sense that they are obtainable in the general labor market;
- Should address Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs), however, KSAs that can be obtained on the job should not be factored into the requirements; and
- Need to be tied directly to the job duties.
- A classification may contain only one position or may consist of a number of positions. When you have several positions assigned to one classification, it means that the same classification title is appropriate for each position; that the scope, level, duties, and responsibilities of each position assigned to the class are sufficiently similar (but not identical); and that the same core knowledge, skills, and other requirements are appropriate for all positions in the classification.