**FOOTHILL-DE ANZA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**

**CLASSIFICATION STUDY  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Classification Study Process Overview**

Step 1. Collect data

Each position included in a classification study was thoroughly analyzed using available documentation and information. Incumbents completed 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. Employee PDQ responses were then reviewed and augmented by supervisors and next-level management to provide additional perspective.

Step 2. Interview employees

After collecting preliminary job data through questionnaires from employees and supervisors, interviews were conducted to provide additional clarification regarding specific duties. Supervisors and management were also interviewed to confirm collected information in addition to clarifying overall organizational structure.

Step 3. Draft classification specifications

With all updated position data, the development of new or revisions of existing classification specifications was completed with the incorporation of the updated position data. Each position was recommended to be allocated to a classification.

Step 4. Review the proposed classification plan

As a final measure before implementation, stakeholders at several levels within the organization reviewed 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 were:

* 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: reclassification to an existing class, reclassification to a new class, or receiving a new title for an existing classification. In some cases, an incumbent’s current classification may accurately reflect their daily work, resulting in no change to the classification.

**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. A position can be full-time, part-time, regular, temporary, filled, or vacant. Often the word “job” is used in place of the word “position.”
* A classification or class may contain only one position or may consist of a number of positions. When you have several positions assigned to one class, 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 class.

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 description, 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 for successful performance, 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 were 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 (such as Administrative Assistant I and Administrative Assistant II) or consist of a single level (such as Program Coordinator). 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.

**What are the general definitions of levels?**

| **Level of Work** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| Entry-level | Work assignments are generally going to fit a routine and established pattern with supervisors overseeing and checking work on a consistent basis until the employee has attained a level of competency to independently perform the range of duties and where the level of supervision would be eased.  For both one-of-a-kind and repetitive tasks, the supervisor makes specific assignments that are accompanied by clear, detailed, and specific instructions.  The employee works as instructed and consults with the supervisor, as needed, on all matters not specifically covered in the original instructions or guidelines.  For professional positions, based on the level of education required to perform the work, there is an expectation that the employee would have the necessary framework to make judgments in applying guidelines, processes, and policies and procedures and take action based on the standards the profession adheres to. Supervisory oversight would be more limited to monitoring unusual assignments which would require an interpretation and application of standards. |
| Journey-level | Work assignments involve performing the full range of duties assigned to the classification; at this level, supervisory controls are eased to the extent that the employees are expected to use judgment in applying guidelines, processes, and policies and procedures when performing tasks and making decisions. Supervisory oversight would be more limited to monitoring unusual assignments which fall outside normal operating procedures.  The employee uses initiative in independently carrying out recurring assignments without specific instructions, but refers deviations, problems, and unfamiliar situations not covered by instructions to the supervisor for decision or help.  The supervisor assures that finished work and methods used are technically accurate and in compliance with instructions or established procedures. Review of the work increases with more difficult assignments if the employee has not previously performed similar assignments.  Professional positions work on tasks that are varied and complex, requiring the use of considerable discretion and independent judgment in performing assigned work, or ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of an assigned program or operational area. Assignments are given with general guidelines and incumbents are responsible for establishing objectives, timelines, and methods to deliver work products or services. Work is typically reviewed upon completion for soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements. |
| Advanced journey-level | Work assignments involve working on tasks that are varied and complex, requiring the use of considerable discretion and independent judgment in performing assigned work, or ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of an assigned program or operational area. Assignments are given with general guidelines and incumbents are responsible for establishing objectives, timelines, and methods to deliver work products or services. Work is typically reviewed upon completion for soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements.  The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and assists the employee with unusual situations that do not have clear precedents.  The employee plans and carries out the successive steps and handles problems and deviations in the work assignments in accordance with instructions, policies, previous training, or accepted practices in the occupation.  For professional positions, the supervisor sets the overall objectives and resources available. The employee and supervisor, in consultation, develop deadlines, projects, and work to be done.  The employee, having developed expertise in the line of work, is responsible for planning and carrying out the assignment, resolving most of the conflicts that arise, coordinating the work with others as necessary, and interpreting policy on own initiative in terms of established objectives. In some assignments, the employee also determines the approach to be taken and the methodology to be used. The employee keeps the supervisor informed of progress and potential controversial matters. Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, or effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results. |

**Establishing Minimum Qualifications**

While we recognize the institutional culture and value placed on education, the education and/or experience listed in the classification specification are minimum requirements; 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 in the classification specification 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 or class may contain only one position or may consist of a number of positions. When you have several positions assigned to one class, 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 class.