



Alaska Department of Administration Personnel and Labor Relations Classification Services

Classification Review for Hiring Managers and Recruitment Staff

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Classification Factors

The following factors provide the basis for analyzing positions: making comparisons between a position and relevant job class specifications to assign it to a job class, and making comparisons between classes to set salary ranges for new job classes.

1. Nature, variety and complexity of work.

- “Nature” includes the kind of work performed as shown by such elements as the subject matter, profession or occupation involved.
- “Variety” as applied to a position includes the range of duties and the inherently different kinds of work included in the position. As applied to a class, it reflects the range of kinds of work and skills which are included in the class.
- “Complexity” includes the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done, and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

2. Nature of supervision received by the incumbent.

The nature and extent of deliberate, planned supervisory controls exercised over the incumbent of the position or, in relation to a job class, typically exercised over incumbents in a job class that limits the scope of work, the independence with which it is performed, and the nature and finality of decisions. Indications of the supervisory controls include the basis for selection of work assignments, the nature of direct instructions or advice from a supervisor the incumbent receives, and the extent and degree to which actions and decisions are limited by review of all cases, by spot checks, or review of the program for effectiveness or for conformity with policy.

3. Nature of available guidelines for performance of work.

The extent to which performance of the work is controlled or influenced by rules, regulations, manuals, procedures, prescribed work practices, principles, policies, or other written instruction or methods.

4. Initiative and originality required.

The degree of inventiveness, imagination, and ability to innovate or create that is required in the work, the extent to which the work requires new approaches or previously unused methods and deviations from standard work practices. The resourcefulness or ingenuity required to solve new problems or old problems in new ways is the crux of this factor.

5. Purposes and nature of person-to-person work relationships.

This factor includes what, why, how, and with whom relations are maintained with persons not in the supervisory chain based within or outside the agency.

6. Nature and scope of recommendations, decisions, commitments, and consequence of error.

This factor reflects the questions, problems, or types of cases in which the employee makes recommendations, decisions, commitments, or conclusions which affect operations, plans, programs, methods, or policies; and the degree of finality in such judgments or actions as measured against such criteria as instructions, delegated authority, and review by supervisors, or agency policies, rules, regulations, statutes, or precedents.

Also included is the likelihood of an error being made by a prudent employee and the consequence of that error to individuals, operations or programs.

7. Nature and extent of supervision exercised over the work of other employees.

- “Nature of supervision exercised” includes supervisory responsibilities in areas such as setting policies; establishing objectives; planning, organizing and establishing work flow; making assignments and reviewing work; selecting, training, and rating performance of employees; coordinating production; and attending to the personnel and administrative functions of the organization.
- “Extent” includes the degree of independence and responsibility with which such functions are performed, the scope of performance as reflected in the difficulty of the supervisory work, the size and complexity of the organization, the variety of functions, etc.

8. Qualifications required.

The knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics required to perform the work. The qualifications required should reflect the other seven factors, as well as the tasks assigned to the position.

TESTS OF SIMILARITY

A job class is a group of one or more positions that are sufficiently similar with respect to duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised and received, and entrance requirements so that:

1. The same title can be used to clearly identify each position.
2. The same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions.
3. The same rate of basic pay can be fairly applied to all positions.
4. Employees in a particular class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall.

A job class should be constructed as broadly as feasible as long as the tests of similarity are met.

CLASS LEVELS

Entry – elementary assignments that are the primary purpose of position(s) and ongoing.

Trainee – the primary duty is completing training to perform at the journey level.

Developmental – assigned to complete limited, well-defined projects to further training. Occurs in occupations with an extended training period with distinct, progressive levels.

Journey – (aka full-proficiency or full working) performs a variety of assignments typical of the field or profession, using standard methods and techniques independently. This is the level of a series with the preponderance of positions.

Advanced – assignments regularly consist of unusual, difficult or exceptional matters completed by modifying approaches, methods, or techniques. Must represent expertise in a specialty area and have clear distinctions from the journey level.

Lead – work involves continuous lead responsibility over employees while also performing the same or similar work. Lead responsibilities include instructing and training staff, assigning and checking work, setting task priorities, and preparing evaluations.

Foreman – acts as an intermediary between workers and management to organize, assign and directly supervise the work of a labor, trades and crafts occupational group. The worker is accountable for the quality and quantity of the work accomplished.

Supervisor – includes the authority and responsibility to effectively recommend or independently take action to employ (appointment, transfer, promotion), discipline or discharge, or adjudicate the grievances of a subordinate employee or employees.

Manager – Primary assignment is the managerial responsibility and responsibility for a major program or programs. Emphasis is on planning, organizing, directing and controlling resources and program delivery.

What is Considered When Determining the Levels to Include in Specifications?

Classes are a catalog of current jobs in the State.

Levels created to contain the groups the tests of similarity require.

The goal is to create as few classes and levels as needed and workable.

What are Significant Work Changes?

Significant changes for classification purposes are changes to the nature, type, or level of the work of a group of positions that would:

1. Alter the defining characteristics of a job class;
2. Dictate changing the boundaries between job classes; or,
3. Mandate creating a new job class for a previously unrecognized body of work.

Significant work changes include such things as: a licensing requirement to perform the work that distinguishes a job class; reorganizations that create new level of hierarchical authority and responsibility that do not fit into the existing class structures; and/or workflow and work processes changes that require that one or more positions perform work that is new to the unit to efficiently complement the existing positions.

CLASSIFICATION RESOURCES

- Classification Webpage & Quick Links
Class Outline, Glossary, Class-Specific Guides, Staffing Chart Guidelines
- Classification Analysts

Class Specification

Class Code: determined based on placement within the Class Outline
Established Date:
Class Title: the best descriptive title for the work

General Description:

Series Description:

A brief statement of the nature of work that distinguishes the class series.

Class Definition:

A concise statement of the overall kind and level of work performed by positions in the class. Its meaning is meant to be as clear to the general reader as possible.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

Describes the characteristics that, when found in a position, would cause the position to be placed in the class and the boundaries with other, similar, classes.

“May supervise . . .”, “May lead . . .” indicates work that could be assigned a position but its presence or lack is not class controlling, i.e. the position must have other elements that support placing it in the job class (e.g., supervises and regularly leads projects; leads and performs advanced level work).

Examples of Duties:

Lists examples of the work typically performed. The list is not meant to be all-inclusive but is indicative of the kind and level of work typically assigned to positions in the class.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Lists the KSAs that even the most minimally qualified newly appointed employee should possess to perform the work of the class on entry to the job.

Minimum Qualifications:

The lowest type, level, and amount of experience and/or education through which a candidate would normally acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed above.

Substitution:

The specific alternative experience or education, if any, that will substitute for all or part of the education and/or experience above.

Special Note:

Identifies requirements (such as professional licenses) and working conditions, physical demands, or other aspects applicable to all positions in the class of which applicants should be aware at the time they apply.

INTERPRETING AND APPLYING MQS

Minimum qualifications determine who can be considered for appointment and consist of two elements:

- Training – the formal education or specialized vocational training that is regularly required as normal preparation for a given field.
- Experience – the kinds and amount of prior work activities (paid or volunteer) that provide or demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to perform the specific duties of the class.

The required training should generally be limited to the basic formal education that customarily prepares individuals for work in a field.

The experience requirement is intended to ensure new employees can successfully perform the work after a period of orientation or familiarization. Experience must be directly related to the actual duties of positions in the class and should not be equivalent to the work to be performed.

MQs Last Revised Before 1997? (Pre-WPAk)

In class specifications older than 1997 the MQs were written primarily for use by HR Techs in the Examining Section, who had training, guides, and assistance from the MQ writers to maintain consistency and resolve any confusion. Be aware these specifications may refer to obsolete class titles in their experience requirement and use phrases (such as “on a year-for-year basis”) that are no longer used. Contact Recruitment Services if you have questions on successor classes or application of unfamiliar requirements.

Standard Language Used

When the MQs list job class titles of qualifying experience, two introductory phrases are currently used and are given specific meanings:

“The required experience includes work such as . . .” is used to indicate the list of classes is illustrative. Other State job classes that perform similar work will also be considered qualifying.

“The required experience is met by service as . . .” is used to indicate an exclusive list. No unlisted State job classes will be considered qualifying. One caveat, if a listed class has been studied and retitled or replaced by a successor class, experience in the retitled/successor class would be considered qualifying.

Whether the list is illustrative or exclusive, work for another public or private employer that is substantially similar to positions in a qualifying job class would meet the MQs.

Successor Job Classes

A successor class is one that replaces a superseded class, includes the same type and level of work, and to which nearly all the positions in the prior class are allocated. (Specific positions may be allocated to other levels in the series or to other classes without negating successor status.) For example, the Protective Services Specialist II is successor to the Social Worker II, Social Services

Specialist II, Children's Services Specialist II, and Social Worker (Children's Services) II because the work of those classes was consolidated into the new class. A class that is divided into several separate classes would have no successor class (for example: the Public Health Specialist was split into several specialties in 2013. The subsequent Public Health Specialist classes defined a narrower body of work and are not successor classes).

Understanding Format

How the MQs are formatted affects their interpretation and application.

Examples:

- A. Single requirement: a candidate must fully meet the requirement or fully meet its substitution.

Two years of . . .

Substitution:

Two years of . . . will substitute for . . .

- B. Alternate requirements: a candidate must fully meet one of the alternatives.

A bachelor's degree in . . .

OR

Four years of . . . will substitute for . . .

- C. Multipart requirements: a candidate must fully meet both requirements. Fully meeting a substitution will count as meeting the element it substitutes for.

A bachelor's degree . . .

AND

Two years of . . .

Substitution:

A master's degree in . . . will substitute for . . .

- D. Alternate multipart requirements: a candidate must fully meet both requirements for one of the alternatives. Part of one alternative cannot be combined with part the other alternative to qualify.

A bachelor's degree in . . .

AND

Two years of . . .

OR

Four years of . . .

AND

Two years of . . .

Interpreting And, Or, & Commas

A, B, C, and D – all must be present

X, Y, and/or Z – one must be present, but all may be and may make up the whole

1, 2, 3, or 4 – any must be present and are typically exclusive

Oxford Commas are used in MQs.

A, B, C, and D vs A, B, C and D

Combination Substitutions Clarification

A substitution that allows “any combination” of post-secondary education and experience to meet a requirement (commonly seen as a four-year requirement substituting for a bachelor’s degree) includes the option of either being zero. (For example: four years of experience and no postsecondary education.) Current standard is to use “education and/or experience” but older class specifications may say “education and experience” and omit the “/or”. They shall be interpreted to include the full range of possible combinations (i.e., 4 years of any combination is met by anything from 0+4 to 4+0).

If a combination must include education or experience, and ‘none’ is not an option, the restrictive phrase “if it includes” will be part of the substitution and indicate elements must be part of the combination. For example: a substitution of “any combination of postsecondary education and experience” with the phrase “if it includes 12 semester/16 quarter hours postsecondary education in . . .” will exclude applicants whose combination of education and experience does not include at least 12 semester hours of coursework in the specified area(s).

SUBMITTING POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

An updated a Position Description must be submitted for Classification review when:

1. One or more of the following has occurred:
 - The supervisory authority assigned to the position is changed or modified (e.g., direct report positions added, changed, deleted, etc.)
 - Assignment of a new primary duty (the main duty for which the position exists to perform)
 - A shift in the position's focus (e.g., responsibility shifts from reviewing a form for completeness to approving the action requested on the form, OR the position supports Program B while it's PD indicates it supports Program A)
 - The mission, goals, or objectives of the position or the program the position supports changes (e.g., new statutory mandates alter the program function, department executive team establishes new goals or mission that impacts the work performed by the position in question)
 - Essential duties have been added, deleted, or modified
 - The physical requirement and/ or potential hazards section has been modified. This information is necessary to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and OSHA bloodborne pathogens standards.
 - This list is not exhaustive, if you feel that there are other areas of the PD that have substantially changed then you would need to update the PD prior to the recruitment process. If you are unsure if the changes to a PD are substantial, please contact your Classification lead for clarification. **OR**
2. The position description (PD) is at system start up in OPD (i.e., last reviewed in hardcopy process prior to the OPD system's creation in 2006). **OR**
3. The position is an Accounting Technician/Accountant and the PD was last reviewed before 8/1/2009. The Accounting Study tested a "prospective" study method with the goal of minimizing the negative impact on employees and organizational disruption. Rather than require PDs be updated at the start and allocated at implementation, Subject Matter Experts and targeted interviews were used to create the classes. To ensure new employees are placed in properly allocated positions, we require an updated PD be submitted prior to recruiting to fill a vacancy. If you have any questions, please contact DOPLR Classification Services.

Timely Classification Review

Like many of you, Classification Services is challenged to carry out our work with tighter budgets and fewer resources. To assist with more timely processing of PDs, below are some items that you should be aware of when submitting PDs:

- Updating a PD prior or concurrent with a recruitment should occur only when the PD is still at system start up, or if there are significant changes in duties, or if the PD is outstanding from the 2009 Accounting Technician/Accountant Study.

- Be mindful of the work demand section, most delays in processing a PD occur during the review of this section. Selected ratings need to match the requirements of the position.
- Ensure the classification questionnaire is fully completed with the required information. Answering with N/A is not appropriate, nor helpful.
- Ensure the staffing chart depicts the correct proposed structure and attach to the OPD submission.
- Reviewing a flexibly-staffed position typically takes longer than the 21 day client service standard as the review and analysis is equivalent to reviewing multiple PDs per position along with the review of training plans.
- Reallocation of a filled position that includes a Bargaining Unit change for will take longer than the 21 day client service standard, due to the union notification and appeal period in the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement. The allocation will not be final until the notification period has passed or, if appealed, the Alaska Labor Relations Agency has issued a decision.

THESE THINGS DON'T COUNT IN CLASSIFYING POSITIONS



FINANCIAL NEED



RELATIVE EFFICIENCY



VOLUME OF WORK



UNUSUAL QUALIFICATIONS



SCARCITY OF NEW EMPLOYEES



LENGTH OF SERVICE



PERSONALITY

Lead vs Supervisory Authority for BU Determinations

8 AAC 97.990(a)(5), provides the following definition of a supervisory employee:

“Supervisory employee” means an individual, regardless of job description or title, who has authority to act or to effectively recommend action in the interest of the public employer in any one of the following supervisory functions, if the exercise of that authority is not merely routine but requires the exercise of independent judgment:

- (A) employing, including hiring, transferring, laying off or recalling;
- (B) disciplining, including suspending, discharging, demoting, or issuing written warnings; or
- (C) grievance adjudication, including responding to a first level grievance under a collective bargaining agreement;

This definition of supervisory employee is used to determine whether or not a position is placed in the Supervisory Bargaining Unit. In keeping with Alaska Labor Relations Agency’s Decision and Order 198, et al., placement in the SU bargaining unit requires that two standards be met. First, the employer must have conferred on an employee the authority to act or effectively recommend action in any one of the three supervisory functions: employing, discipline, or grievance adjudication. Second, the employee must exercise independent judgment in performing the function when the opportunity arises.

The above standards are met when the authority over a permanent position is conferred, whether it is full-time, part-time, or seasonal. Authority over non-permanent positions, including student interns, is by its nature a temporary assignment that will not move a position into the Supervisory Bargaining Unit. There may be rare, special cases when nonpermanent subordinate positions support placing the superior in the supervisory bargaining unit (such as a long-term project position supervising other long-term project positions; authority over long-term nonpermanent positions that will continue for several years; or similar possible exceptions). Such exceptions require the approval of the Director of the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations or designee.

A position may be assigned responsibility for common supervisory duties such as writing performance evaluations, mentoring, training, determining how work is performed, assigning work and monitoring workloads, and participating in interviews and filling out rating sheets on applicants without authority to act or effectively recommend actions regarding hiring, discipline, or grievance adjudication. This responsibility will not cause a position to be placed in the Supervisory Unit. This work is also indicative of a **lead worker**, and that position’s level of authority for hiring, discipline, and grievance adjudication would be represented on the supervisory grid in the PD at levels 3 or 4.

A position who, whether they do all of the above supervisory functions or not, which has the authority to act or effectively recommend action in any one of the areas of hiring, discipline, or grievance adjudication would have their level of authority in at least one area represented as 1s or 2s in the supervisory grid and they would therefore be appropriate for the SU bargaining unit.

Supervisory authority for hiring, disciplining, and grievance adjudication should be shown in section 5 (supervisory or lead level authority) and substantiated by other sections of the position description where it is appropriate (i.e., in sections 2.1 (main purpose), 2.2 (duties), 3.4 (actions & decisions made), and the staffing chart.

Collective Bargaining Units in the Classified Service

General Government (GG/GP and GY/GZ): Statewide unit of classified, nonconfidential, nonsupervisory employees of the Executive Branch not included in another bargaining unit. The unit includes clerical, technical, professional and administrative personnel.

Supervisory (SS): Statewide unit of classified, supervisory employees of the Executive Branch not included in another unit.

Labor, Trades and Crafts (LL): Statewide unit of classified, nonsupervisory, trades and crafts employees of the Executive Branch.

Confidential (KK): Statewide unit of supervisory and nonsupervisory classified employees in the Executive Branch who assist and act in a confidential capacity to a person who formulates, determines, and effectuates management policies in the area of collective bargaining.

Public Safety (AA, AP): Classified, nonsupervisory, nonconfidential employees of the Department of Public Safety who have primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of State laws (fish and game, penal, traffic or highway) and require certification as a police officer by the Alaska Police Standards Council. This unit also includes classified, nonsupervisory, nonconfidential employees of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities who have primary responsibility for international airport safety and fire protection, and require certification by the Alaska Police Standards Council.

Correctional Officer (GC): Classified, nonsupervisory, nonconfidential employees who have primary responsibility for the safety and security of State correctional centers and inmates, and require certification by the Alaska Police Standards Council.

Partially Exempt (PX): Positions designated partially exempt by statute or decision of the Personnel Board pursuant to AS 39.25.130.

Excluded (EE): Positions in the classified service which ALRA has specifically excluded from existing bargaining units by order and decision; positions for which no unit has petitioned to represent; and positions excluded from other units by mutual agreement of the state and the otherwise appropriate bargaining unit representative.

Strike Classes

Strike Class designations are set in accordance with AS 23.40.200 and ALRA Decision and Orders. Variance from the guidance below must be approved in advance by the Classification Manager and/or the Labor Relations Manager.

Sec. 23.40.200. Classes of public employees; arbitration.

(a) For purposes of this section, public employees are employed to perform services in one of the three following classes:

- (1) those services which may not be given up for even the shortest period of time;
- (2) those services which may be interrupted for a limited period but not for an indefinite period of time; and
- (3) those services in which work stoppages may be sustained for extended periods without serious effects on the public.

(b) The class in (a)(1) of this section is composed of police and fire protection employees, jail, prison, and other correctional institution employees, and hospital employees.

(c) The class in (a)(2) of this section is composed of public utility, snow removal, sanitation, and educational institution employees other than employees of a school district, a regional educational attendance area, or a state boarding school.

(d) The class in (a)(3) of this section includes all other public employees who are not included in the classes in (a)(1) or (2) of this section.

Classification's Strike Class Indicator

- 1 = Prohibited from Striking
- 2 = Limited Right to Strike
- 3 = Unlimited Right to Strike
- N = Non-unionized position (Strike class not relevant)

Strike Class by Bargaining Unit

Code	Unit	Strike Class
AA	PSEA Public Safety Officers	1
AP	PSEA Airport Police & Fire Officers	1
BB	MEBA Licensed Engineer Officers	2
CC	MM&P Deck Officers	2
EE	Executive Branch, Excluded Employees	N
GC	Correctional Officer Unit	1
GP/GG	General Government Unit	3 (with exceptions, see below)
GZ/GY	General Government Unit	1
KK	Confidential Employees Assoc	3 (with exceptions, see below)
LL	Labor, Trades, and Crafts Unit	3 (with exceptions, see below)
MM	IBU Unlicensed Marine Unit	2
NG	National Guard	N
RR	Retirees	N
SS	Supervisory Unit	3 (with exceptions, see below)
TA	AVTEC Teachers Assoc	2
TM	Teachers' Education Assoc of Mt. Edgecumbe	3
XA	Alaska Aerospace Corporation	N
XE	Partially Exempt and Exempt Exec Branch	N
XJ	Judicial Branch	N
XL	Legislative Branch	N

Exceptions by Position's Department:

- Dept of Public Safety = 1 for all positions

Exceptions by Position's Placement in a Facility:

- Adult Correctional Institutions = 1 for all positions
- Alaska Pioneers' Homes = 1 for all positions
- Alaska Psychiatric Institute = 1 for all positions
- Juvenile Justice Youth Centers = 1 for all positions (except Soc Svcs Assoc and clerical positions that support a juvenile probation office collocated in a facility)

Exceptions by Position's Job Class:

- Adult Probation Officers = 1 for all positions (this includes Adult Probation Officers, Alcohol Safety Action Program)
- Juvenile Probation Officers = 1 for all positions
- Wildland Fire Dispatchers = 1 for all positions
- Wildland Fire and Resource Technicians = 1 for all positions

Exceptions by a Combination of Elements:

- Emergency Services Dispatchers at Airports = 1
- GP/GG positions in the Enterprise Technology Services division, Department of Administration, in the following job classes = 2
 - Data Communications Specialist
 - Data Processing Technician
 - Data Security Administrator
 - Data Security Specialist
 - Database Specialist
 - Systems Programmer

Positions with Special Handling

Coupled Class positions

As defined by AAM 130.280, coupled job classes are established when the journey (or full working) level of work requires specific certification and training (e.g., Correctional Officers) that is not available prior to employment with the State. Employees are hired at the trainee level and must complete specialized training before advancing to the journey level. Because of the specialized training requirements, positions may be filled at the journey level job class only by transfer, rehire, or layoff recall.

Coupled positions are always classified at the journey (or full working) level. An incumbent is placed in the trainee level class while in trainee status as an exception to the classification.

Flexibly-staffed positions

Flexible staffing is a recruitment and retention and workforce planning tool that facilitates entry to an occupational field and provides a formal training path so higher level work can be performed. It may also facilitate knowledge transfer for advanced or expert positions that otherwise cannot be filled.

Flexible staffing plans are established individually for single positions. Classification must approve and establish positions as flexibly staffed before recruitment or reallocation of a filled position is conducted using the flexible staffing provisions.

Classifying Flexibly-staffed positions requires the Classification Analyst evaluate each level as a separate allocation decision. This increases the amount of time spent in establishing or updating Flexibly-staffed positions, but eliminates the need to submit a new position description each time a change in level is needed.

Multiple class positions

Multiple class positions are a recruitment and retention tool that allows management to fill a position for either licensed or non-licensed work, depending on applicant qualifications. Multiple class positions use more than one job class, all of which are performing related work (e.g., Licensed Practical Nurse, Nurse I, and Nurse II). It may be comprised of multiple levels within a class series or multiple related classes and may be combined with flexible staffing. It may apply to either a single position or all positions within a job class.

Classifying Multiple class positions requires the Classification Analyst evaluate each class as a separate allocation decision. This increases the amount of time spent in establishing or updating Multiple class positions, but eliminates the need to submit a new position description each time a change in job class is needed.