

Job Classification Studies

The Division of Personnel (DOP) conducts a job classification study to establish new job classes or change the definition or distinguishing characteristics, class concepts, class series structure, or salary-range assignments of one or more existing job classes. A classification study may impact only one department or involve positions from numerous agencies. In either situation, studies are a carefully orchestrated collaborative process between agencies and DOP. Studies vary in scope from a single, unique position to hundreds of related positions. Along this continuum, a study may take only a few days to complete, or it may require the concentrated, ongoing joint efforts of numerous DOP and agency staff over many months.

How are job classes identified for review?

The Classification Section confers annually with the Administrative Services Director of each of the fourteen departments to revise and prioritize a department's list of pending study requests. DOP's client service standards commit the division to completing annually at least the top-priority study request submitted by each department and then addressing lower-priority requests equitably and in priority order as time and workloads allow. Other class studies may be proposed by DOP and are included in the study schedule if, after discussion among affected Administrative Services Directors, sufficient support for the study exists.

How are studies conducted?

The job class study process is multi-phased, involving several rounds of information exchange between the participating department(s) and Classification staff. DOP and department management jointly determine the proposed study's scope, timeline, and potential cost implications. DOP and the departments also discuss each party's responsibility to provide information and review drafts.

Departments included in the study prepare and submit updated online position descriptions (OPDs). The Classification staff make presentations as needed to agency staff on the study process and how to write position descriptions. Designated department representatives make a reciprocal presentation to Classification staff on the nature of the work under review. DOP staff review the OPDs and organizational charts, group together positions that are similar in kind and level of work, develop a new or amended class series structure, and begin drafting the related job class specifications for each level in the series.

Each affected department is offered the opportunity to review and comment on draft specifications. Together, those involved in the study finalize specifications, and DOP allocates individual positions to the new job class specifications. Draft allocations are forwarded to each department for review, and the department is provided the opportunity to submit additional information and to request reconsideration. A different

Classification staff member analyzes requests for reconsideration, and the final results are returned to the department.

Workplace Alaska recruitment under the impacted classes is temporarily suspended while the study is finalized. By agreement with the department, the posting of job vacancies is suspended, and all outstanding recruitments are concluded. The lead analyst for the study prepares an internal alignment analysis of the new job classes based upon the principle of like pay for like work and then recommends pay ranges for the new classes. Again, the affected departments have the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed salary range assignments. After discussion and finalization of pay ranges, DOP issues a memorandum documenting the entire study process and its outcomes and posts the new or revised job class specifications on Workplace Alaska.

Affected agencies are notified of the study's implementation date. DOP Technical Services staff are available to answer employee questions about the effect on pay, probationary status, and merit date. Upon implementation, individual positions are allocated to the new job classes, entries are made to the payroll system, and labor unions are notified of bargaining unit changes.