

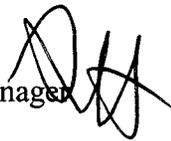
# MEMORANDUM

**State of Alaska**  
**Department of Administration**  
**Division of Personnel & Labor Relations**

**To:** Dianne Kiesel  
Director

**Date:** September 21, 2006

**From:** Amanda Holland  
Classification Manager



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**Subject:** Grants Administrator Study, Phase III

## **History**

In 2004, the Department of Health and Social Services submitted a request to study the Grants Administrator (GA) job class series. The Division of Personnel followed standard study methodology with allocations to the revised class specifications becoming effective August 16, 2004, as did range assignments for the GA I (R14) and GA IV (20). At that time, no action was taken on range assignments at the II and III levels due to some controversy over the draft proposed ranges of 16 and 18, respectively, which represented a downward 1-range change for 38 affected positions.

In August of 2005, the Division of Personnel re-opened the temporarily shelved study to address departmental concerns with the GA II and III salary range assignments (Phase II). An independent review was conducted and upheld the findings of Phase I of the study, with a recommendation for full implementation of the original study at ranges 14, 16, 18, and 20.

In February 2006, study implementation meetings were held with each department to address impacts on incumbents, and agency wide concerns. Several agencies requested suspension of the results of Phase II of the study in order to allow for further study input from a broad audience to, 1) address perceived inaccuracies or gaps in the GA II and III class specifications as compared to the work currently being performed, 2) reevaluate the minimum qualifications for the entire job class series, and 3) reevaluate range assignments.

Nine agencies employ positions at varying levels within the series. Agencies were given until April 7, 2006 to submit comments and suggestions addressing the previously identified areas. This comment period (Phase III) resulted in six of the nine affected agencies submitting substantive recommendations.

## **Summary Comments**

### Grants Administrator II/III Class Specifications

Department comments regarding the GA II and GA III class specifications elaborated on specific tasks associated with grant administration or the level of independence with which each level is

expected to function, but did not alter the overall nature or level of work performed. The majority of comments were supplementary to duties, functions, or tasks already captured in the class specification. However, several tasks identified by departments were added to the GA II class specification. Regarding the GA III definition section, department recommendations were generally directed at modifying the existing options to provide variations more representative of the allocation of positions in each respective agency, but did not substantially alter the meaning or level of the work performed. The GA III class definition was revised to incorporate a combination of agency suggestions.

It is important to note that the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities section of the class specifications received a major amount of input from departments. This area of the class specification contains those elements that minimally qualified or newly appointed employees should possess to perform the work of the class. This section is not intended to detail those traits required for full performance in the class. That having been said, most of the departments requests centered on modifying the level of knowledge required for a given task, e.g. considerable versus working knowledge (GA II), or comprehensive versus considerable knowledge (GA III). As these are the journey and advanced levels of the series a working, or considerable level of knowledge, respectively, are those which would normally be required upon entry to the class.

#### Grants Administrator I/II/III/IV Minimum Qualifications

The bulk of suggestions regarding GA I minimum qualifications (MQ's), recommended restricting the requirements to a bachelor's degree, or a substituting combination of education and experience, totaling four years. This recommendation raises the threshold for entry with no attendant change in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the work. MQ's are crafted from the KSA's required for entry to a job class. A comparison of the KSA's and required experience or education reflect the fact that raising MQ's for entry into the series would artificially inflate MQ's and create an imbalance between MQ's and KSA's.

Phase I of the GA Study resulted in an expansion of the MQ's to allow for a broader applicant pool. The previously required Bachelor's degree was removed during Phase I and higher level job classes were added as qualifying. The change in job classes which qualify for entry to the GA I job class, from Administrative Clerk III and Accounting Clerk III, to Administrative Assistant and Accounting Technician I, represents recognition of the increased complexity of the work and a reasonable solution to recruitment difficulties by increasing the salary range for GA's I, one range from 13 to 14. The KSA's required of Administrative Assistants, Accounting Technicians I, and Program Budget Analysts I, represent those necessary for entry to the GA I job class, and those which incumbents would obtain after the prescribed qualifying period of service.

The MQ's for the GA II job class anticipate the "feeder" job classes will adequately prepare an incumbent for entry into the journey level of the series, without being too restrictive. This is evident in the MQ's for those feeder classes; Accountants I, Grants Administrators I, Procurement Specialists I, etc., which all require either a bachelor's degree or specific experience that is directly applicable to the KSA's required for service in the GA II job class. The existing GA II specifications require one or two years of specific work experience, depending on the relatedness of the job class. Generally, MQ's at the Journey Professional level require a Bachelor's degree and one year of experience.

Based on the conclusion that the MQ's for the entry and journey levels in the series were appropriately defined, it was similarly determined that subsequent increases in the qualifications required for entry to the advanced and managerial level, with no relative increase in the KSA's, were not warranted.

### Salary Analysis

Salary ranges are determined based on internal consistency within the state's pay plans in accordance with merit principles. The goal of internal consistency is to provide fair and reasonable compensation for services rendered and maintain the principle of like pay for like work. To evaluate internal consistency the difficulty, responsibility, knowledge, skills, and other characteristics of a job are compared with job classes of a similar nature, kind, and level in the same job group and family or related job families.

The current Grants Administrator series salary range (SR) assignments are GA I (SR 14), GA II (SR 17), GA III (SR 19), and GA IV (SR 20).

The type and level of duties and responsibilities assigned the Grants Administrator II were compared to the characteristics of the Loan Collection Officer I (SR 16), School Finance Specialist I (SR 16), Accountant II (SR 16), Procurement Specialist II (SR 16), Contracting Officer II (SR 16), Program Budget Analyst II (SR 16), Community Development Specialist II (SR 16), Administrative Manager II (SR 17), and Internal Auditor II (SR 17).

Exceptions include the Administrative Manager series at SR 15, 17, 19, 21; and Internal Auditor series at SR 14, 17, 19, 21. However, the exception classes are not as closely related in terms of scope or variety of work, or MQ's. The Contracting Officer III job class, at SR 19, closely resembles the level, difficulty, and nature of supervision exercised by GA's III. The Contracting Officer series salary range assignment is 14, 16, 19, and 22.

The results of the comparisons identified the Grants Administrators II were most closely related in nature, kind, and level of work performed with those classes assigned to SR 16. Also, the majority of those classes were in series whose structures followed the SR 14, 16, 18, 20 alignments. The MQ's of the GA II job class most closely resemble MQ's at SR 16 level for related benchmark classes.

### **Conclusion**

Effective September 21, 2006, the GA II and III specifications have been revised to incorporate several duties, functions or tasks identified by departments. Also, the GA III job class definition has been revised to better suit the applicability in different departments.

The minimum qualifications were reviewed and remain consistent with the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for entry to each job class in the series. No change is recommended.

The internal alignment analysis supports assignment of ranges 14, 16, 18, and 20 for the Grants Administrators I - IV, which would represent a 1-range decrease for the 45 positions currently allocated to the II - III levels. The merit principle allows for market consideration in range assignments. Due to the current national workforce shortage, market pay was considered in this pay analysis and as a result, the merit principle can be upheld with no range change actions under

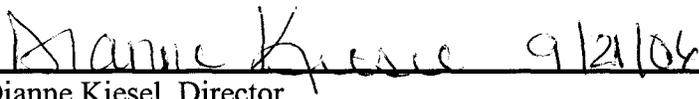
this class study. This should be taken into consideration when determining the final range assignments. The series would remain at its current R 14-17-19-20 pay structure.

Study Results Approved – range change down, II-III  
R 14-16-18-20

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Dianne Kiesel, Director

Study Results Approved – no range change  
R 14-17-19-20

  
Dianne Kiesel, Director

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Study Results Disapproved

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Dianne Kiesel, Director

Ecc: Mike Maher, Director  
Information & Administrative Services  
Dept. Environmental Conservation

Tom Lawson, Director  
Administrative Services  
Dept. Fish & Game

Sam Thomas, Director  
Administrative Services  
Dept. Commerce, Community and Economic Development

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Guy Bell, Assistant Commissioner  
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Management Services – Resources, General Agencies, DH&SS, Public Protection

Technical Services -- Resources, General Agencies, DH&SS, Public Protection

Employee Services

Classification