

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Personnel

To: Dianne Kiesel
Director

Date: February 7, 2007

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Subject: Geological Scientist I/II Class Study

Preamble:

The Department of Natural Resources submitted a request to the Division of Personnel to conduct a classification study of the Geologist series, which included the possibility of establishing a new scientist series. At the request of that department, the latter was split apart from the Geologist study, and put on hold in January 2006 but reactivated during the fall of that year.

Study Scope:

The study, which was done following the typical study process, included the review of information provided during the department's presentation, subsequent documentation, and position descriptions, to establish a progression in addition to and above the traditional Geologist series.

Study Method:

The planning and review meetings associated with the Geologist study (see 2006 study file) were held with representatives of the affected agency, and included discussion about the possible establishment of a Geological Scientist (GS) series. After being placed on hold, work began again during the fall of 2006, interspersed with delays due to time commitments with other study projects.

The reason for developing the Geological Scientist series is based on the need for the State to have focused, recognized experts in critical geologic disciplines and sub-disciplines. Such positions are expected to "do science;" consult across-division boundaries; advise directors, the commissioner, and outside agency decision-makers on current technological advancements in specialties; develop new scientific methodology and new research programs; and act as expert witnesses in legislative and legal proceedings.

More recently, the need has become more pressing due to the Governor's charge to the department's Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (G&GS) to take the role of lead

research organization of four new collaborative programs. The new series is meant to allow expert positions to provide the state with the next level of research that will result in significant revenue in the long term exploration of the state's resources.

In accordance with standard classification study procedures, the objectives of a study are to:

- 1) analyze and define the body of work;
- 2) distinguish the work from other related job classes and identify the appropriate levels of work;
- 3) create class specifications that clearly describe and distinguish each class and provide appropriate minimum qualifications; and
- 4) analyze the new classes for internal alignment and determine appropriate salary ranges.

The departmental contact has been Nico Bus, Director, Division of Support Services, and the occupational consultants have been Robert Swenson, Acting Director, and Rod Combellick, Geologist VI, both of the Division of G&GS.

New position descriptions were received, requesting reallocation of two Geologist V positions to the Geological Scientist I job class. A drafted position description was received and used to develop the Geological Scientist II job class, however the department is not in a position to currently establish and allocate positions to the GS II job class but plans to do so in the future. Adequate justification was given and accepted to proceed in this manner. It should be noted that a departmental presentation to classification staff was made as part of the Geologist study process; subsequently, this analyst determined that a test allocation session for Classification staff was not necessary due to the limited number of positions.

After an analysis of duties and responsibilities was completed, the sections of class specifications for two levels were drafted and distributed for comment to the departmental team. The departmental response involving minor changes was received and used to refine the class specifications. Semi-final comments were received on January 30, with the class specifications finalized thereafter.

The combined Study/Allocation Memo was drafted to explain the proposed Geological Scientist I & II job classes, and the reallocation of two positions against the new class specifications; as stated previously, the assigned duties and responsibilities of the positions were used to develop the class specifications. Finally, an internal alignment was done with related job classes in the same Job Family or Job Group to determine the range assignment of the two new job classes, and include in this Study/Allocation Memo. The draft has been shared with the department for comment.

Class Analysis:

The state's classification plan provides for the grouping of positions into job classes when they 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; and 4) employees

in a particular class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall. Job classes should be constructed as broadly as is feasible as long as the tests of similarity are met.

Justification exists to establish a scientific research geologist job class series to meet the current and future needs of the requesting department. Job classes of this nature do not currently exist in the PK Occupational Group, Physical Sciences and Engineering, which consists of eight Job Families.

Geological Scientist I:

Based on the type and nature of duties and responsibilities, decision-making, authority, and expertise in critical geologic disciplines and sub-disciplines, the Geological Scientist I job class was developed to reflect geological research scientist positions focused on discovering, disseminating, and applying new or expanded knowledge and expertise in a specific geological subdivision/sub-discipline. Examples of the latter currently include carbonate sedimentology and airborne geophysics, with plans to include in the future such sub-disciplines as low temperature geochemistry, geochronology, regional tectonics, natural gas hydrates and economic geology.

As peer-recognized experts in specific sub-disciplines, Geological Scientists I develop avenues for geological specialists, project and program managers, and executives within the department, to access new technology and methodology and apply both to strengthening the state's geologic knowledge levels and resource development and management issues.

Geological Scientist II:

In addition to being nationally and peer-recognized experts in their geology sub-disciplines in either the energy resources, mineral resources, engineering geology, or other program related scientific disciplines, Geological Scientists II serve as chiefs of multidisciplinary, geological research functions and oversee the technical coordination of research scientists in scientific disciplines.

Such positions direct, complex, multidisciplinary research programs that may involve outside agency scientists; provide technical expertise at the highest levels of state government; represent the department and make presentations in national forums on scientific research involving one of the major departmental program functions; serve as expert witnesses in public forums and legal proceedings; and provide scientific leadership to top executives and scientists of governmental, academic, and industry sectors.

Class Title:

A class title should be the best descriptive title for the work. It is intended to concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed and should be brief, easily recognized, gender neutral, and understood by potential applicants. "Geological Scientist" is an accurate and appropriate descriptor of this body of work.

Minimum Qualifications:

The minimum qualifications (MQs) established for a job class must relate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work and must not create an artificial barrier to employment of individuals in protected classes.

The specific skill sets and knowledge base required are extensive due to the nature and type of work and demands of the job. An advanced degree with a thesis of study in a critical sub-discipline, e.g. carbonate depositional systems or whole earth geophysics, in addition to significant experience, are the minimum requirements. It must be remembered that Geological Scientist positions are recognized experts in critical disciplines and sub-disciplines, and must bring that expertise upon entry to employment.

Class Code:

A Class Code is assigned based on the placement of the job class in the classification schematic of Occupational Groups and Job Families. Occupational Groups are made up of related Job Families and encompass relatively broad occupations, professions, or activities. Job Families are groups of job classes and class series that are related as to the nature of the work performed and typically have similar initial preparation for employment and career progression.

This job class series meets the definition of the Occupational Group, PK Physical Sciences and Engineering, within its subordinate Job Family PK01 Physical Science Specialists. Of the four job class series within this Job Family, the Geological Scientist job class series is most closely related to the Geologist job class series, and less related to the remaining Hydrologist, Chemist, and Engineering Geologist job class series, which are not scientifically research focused.

AKPAY Code:

AKPAY Codes are assigned to job classes for use in computer systems which cannot use the six-digit Class Codes established with the revision of the Classification Outline on July 1, 2006. The AKPAY Codes for new job classes are five-digit alpha-numeric codes beginning with K and numbered in sequence. The new AKPAY Codes are K0014 (Geological Scientist I) and K0015 (Geological Scientist II).

Fair Labor Standards Act:

The positions in this study are covered by the minimum wage and maximum hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as Amended (FLSA), and are considered to meet the criteria for the Professional exemption (Y). The criteria test is met since the positions have employees 1) compensated on a salaried basis at a rate not less than \$455 per week; and 2) whose primary duty is the performance of work requiring knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction.

Internal Alignment:

The salary range of a job class is determined based on internal consistency within the State's pay plans, in accordance with merit principles, with the goal of providing fair and reasonable compensation for services rendered and maintaining the principle of "like pay for like work." In evaluating 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 Occupational Group and Job Family or related job families.

The only job class series related to the Geological Scientist (GS) series and, therefore used for internal alignment purposes, is the recently studied Geologist series; the latter is in the PK01 Job Family. The original request for the Geologist study included the establishment of the GS series to parallel the upper levels or job classes of the Geologist series. The PK01 Job Family also includes the Hydrologist, Chemist, and Engineering Geologist job classes, which are not appropriate to use for internal alignment purposes. These job classes do not involve original scientific research and do not require specific skill sets and an extensive knowledge base; the nature and type of work, as well as the demands of the job, are different.

The Geological Scientist I is thought to parallel the majority of classification factors found to exist in the Geologist V job class, R22. These type of positions function as section chiefs/program managers, responsible for supervising, coordinating, managing, and providing long-term scientific leadership and oversight for major applied (non-research) geologic program areas. These program areas include energy resources, mineral resources, engineering geology or large mine management in the same department, requiring Geologists V and Geological Scientists I to work and collaborate very closely. Though Geologists V are focused on applied geology work with an emphasis in a discipline rather than expertise in a sub-discipline and sometimes geology in general, the minimum requirements of both require advanced education and experience in the same fields. Due to the sub-discipline expertise level of work and responsibilities, the Geological Scientist I job class has minimum qualification requirements reflecting progression up from the Geologist V job class.

The scientific research expertise to discover and apply new technology and methodology with many unknowns exceeds the more traditional project manager role, scope of discipline-focused work and responsibilities, and background requirements of the Geologist IV, R21. The latter coordinates technical efforts of professional geological teams assigned to complex, multiple projects in a geographical region, reporting to Geologists V or equivalent natural resource managers.

The appropriate range assignment of the Geological Scientist I is R22.

Typically, in state professional job class series, progressive levels are assigned at two-range intervals and only in cases where there exists clear justification for deviation from that pattern does the Division of Personnel assign greater than or less than this two-range difference. No justification for deviation exists. Therefore, the appropriate range assignment of the Geological Scientist II is R24.

There are only two other resource-related scientist job class series in the state's classification plan, that being the Fisheries Scientist I/II and Wildlife Scientist I/II, both assigned R22 and R24, respectively. Both are assigned to the Job Family PH01 Fish and Wildlife in the Occupational Group, PH Biological Sciences.

Position Allocation:

Current Classification:

<u>PCN</u>	<u>Class Title</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Rg</u>	<u>Loc</u>	<u>BU</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>FLSA</u>
102055	Geologist V	PK0135	22	JBA	SS	FACL	Y

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Department of Natural Resources

Nico Bus, Director
Division of Support Services
Department of Natural Resources

Management Services-Resources Group

Technical Services-Resources Group

Employee Services

Retirement & Benefits-Missouri Smyth

Employee Records