

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Classification
DOPLR-07

III. Job Classes and Specifications

A. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to provide guidelines to establish job classes and to write and revise class specifications.

B. Scope

These guidelines apply to all job classes covering positions in the classified and partially exempt services. These guidelines also serve as a model for class specifications for positions in the exempt service when recruited for on Workplace Alaska.

C. Authority

AS 39.25.150(1)--Requires Rules on a Classification Plan

2 AAC 07.005--Classification Plan

2 AAC 07.010--Class Specifications

2 AAC 07.015--Class Titles

AS 39.25.150(3) require the Personnel Rules to provide for a classification plan and the use of employee selection methods.

Section 60-3, Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedure

[43 FR 38295 (August 25, 1978)] provides a standard set of principles on the use of selection procedures in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

D. Job Class Test of Similarity

A job class is a group of one or more positions which 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 (MQs) 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 test of similarity are met.

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E. Class Specification Maintenance Requests

A Maintenance Request is the appropriate means to request minor changes to an existing job class such as MQ revisions, title changes, and the removal of references to obsolete job classes. Maintenance Requests do not affect class concepts, class series structure, or salary range assignment. Changes that would alter which positions are allocated to a job class or the basic rate of pay of the class are major changes that require the more in-depth analysis and deliberation of the study process.

1. Agencies wishing to reexamine the MQs of job classes should request a consultation with Classification Studies to determine if the MQs should be amended through a Maintenance Request.
2. The Division Director (or appropriate delegate) submits a request by email to:
 - a. The Classification Section; with copies to:
 - The department's Administrative Services Director (if submitted by a delegate, please also cc your Division Director); and,
 - Department HR staff.
 - b. This email should include:
 - A description of the change or concern.
 - The job class(es) impacted by the change or concern.
 - Any proposed solutions
 - Any additional agencies who utilize the impacted job class(es).
 - The department's designated contact for this request.
3. Amendments to MQs typically take 10 - 20 business days to complete and, like other actions completed by Classification, are interactive and collaborative processes.

F. Classification Studies

A classification study is conducted to establish a new job class, or change part or all of the class definition and distinguishing characteristics, class concepts, class series structure, or salary range assignments of one or more existing job classes. Class studies require a tremendous amount of effort by agency employees and raise the expectations of the employees under study. Studies should be conducted only when they are warranted; however, their essential purpose is to ensure proper maintenance of the State's classification plan.

1. An agency may request (through their Administrative Services Director) a classification study when they experience problems with the use of existing class specifications or have work that doesn't fit into existing specifications. Requests may be sent by email to the Classification Manager or Studies Supervisor and should include:
 - a. A description of the specific aspects of the work that appear to be no longer appropriate to the existing class structures and why.
 - b. The job class(es) impacted by the change or concern.

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- c. The business or administrative problems arising from the use of the current classes.
- d. Details regarding the departments efforts to change practices, workflow, position design, or other items to work within the current class specifications.
- e. Details on the elements driving prioritization of the study (effect on staffing, workflow, efficiency, business goals, etc...)
- f. Any additional agencies who utilize the impacted job class(es).
- g. Your department's designated contact for this request.

2. Division of Personnel and Labor Relations (DOPLR) may initiate a study when indicated by issues from position allocations, recruitment, agency concerns outside the class specifications, and when routine maintenance is indicated. A classification study typically includes the following main stages:
- a. Planning
 - b. Data Gathering
 - c. Job Analysis
 - d. Writing Class Specifications
 - e. Position Allocation
 - f. Internal Alignment and Study Documentation
 - g. Implementation

G. The Class Study Process:

1. Plan and scope the study.

- a. The DOPLR Classification Studies Unit reviews the request and notifies other affected agencies.
- b. If DOPLR agrees to conduct a study, a planning meeting will be scheduled to which affected departments will be invited to send a representative. The purpose of the meeting is to determine the scope, methods and impact of the proposed study, timelines, and responsibilities.

2. A job class is developed or revised on the basis of all the data available from the data collection techniques identified in Section-II of this SOP. Determine and conduct the data collection necessary to obtain sufficient facts and information to make sound classification decisions. Analyze the jobs, and other supporting documentation.

3. Collect additional information as needed to delineate the classification factors, tasks performed, the nature, variety, and complexity of work, the nature of supervisory controls, guidelines, contacts, originality, recommendations, decisions, consequence of error, supervision exercised and received, and the knowledge, skills, abilities and minimum qualifications required. Document the sources of information.

4. Determine the types of work covered by the information gathered. If the information covers more than one of the categories below, separate class specifications must be written for each class or series. A class series may not cross from one type of work to another.

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- a. Professional: Work is creative, analytical, evaluative, interpretive, and requires a range and depth of specialized and theoretical knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's degree or higher. The work requires the exercise of discretion, judgment and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations, and to improve data, materials and methods.
 - b. Administrative: Work involves the exercise of analytical ability, judgment, discretion and personal responsibility, and the application of a substantial body of knowledge of principles, concepts and practices applicable to one or more fields of administration or management. While these positions do not require specialized education, they do involve the type of skills (analytical, research, writing, judgment) typically gained through a college level education, or through progressively responsible experience. Employees engaged in administrative work are concerned with analyzing, evaluating, modifying and developing basic administrative support programs, policies and procedures, that facilitate the work of agencies and their programs.
 - c. Technical (includes Paraprofessional): Technical employees perform tasks, methods, procedures, and computations that are covered by established precedents or guidelines and often require a high degree of skill, care, and precision. (Paraprofessional work is typically associated with and supportive of a professional field.) It involves extensive practical knowledge gained through experience and/or specific formal or on-the-job training. Work in these occupations may involve substantial elements of the work of the professional or administrative field, but requires less than full knowledge of the field involved.
 - d. Clerical: Work involves processing data normally initiated elsewhere, or easily ascertained and that is subject to verification, revision, correction and forwarding for action, referral, or archiving. The work is structured, often repetitive and performed in accordance with established guidelines.
5. Analyze the information; group together positions that are similar in kind and level of work; and structure the series. Determine the number and type of levels appropriate to the work series. **Not all class series will include all of the following levels:**
- a. Entry: Assignments consist of basic or elementary tasks and duties. This level is appropriate when these tasks and duties constitute the primary purpose of one or more positions and are ongoing. This level is the entry into a series, typically after high school or college. Experience gained at this level will qualify an incumbent for the next level.
 - b. Trainee: Similar to the entry level but includes as a significant duty the completion of training to perform at the journey level. The goal is to provide training to perform journey-level work. This level is suited for flexibly staffed or coupled classes.

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- c. Developmental (or advanced trainee): Assignments involve completion of limited, well-defined projects or completion of portions of the journey-level work for the purpose of furthering the incumbent's training. This level may occur in occupations with an identified journey level that requires an extended training period with distinct, progressive levels or phases of training.
 - d. Journey or Full Working: Work involves a variety of assignments that are typical of the field or profession. Incumbents perform the full range of assignments independently, using standard methods and techniques of the field. This level usually requires both knowledge and experience in the related job area as a minimum qualification for entry into the class. Most positions in an organization should fall into this level. In some instances, this is the first level in the series.
 - e. Advanced: Assignments consist of unusual, difficult or exceptional matters encountered in the work, which are completed by modifying approaches, methods or techniques. Advanced-level work must be defined and represents expertise in a specialty area. Specialists in particular aspects of a profession sometimes fit into this category. There must be clear distinctions between the advanced level and the journey level.
 - f. 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. Lead responsibilities may also include involvement in the hiring process, but not at the level of full supervisory authority.
 - g. Supervisory: Assignments include 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.
 - h. 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. This level may be separated from the series and titled "chief" or "*program* manager".
6. Structure the class series, determine the number and type of levels, and develop the class controlling characteristics of each job class (definition and distinguishing characteristics). Present structure to study contacts/management.
 7. Prepare draft class specifications (See section H). Provide copies of the draft specifications to the affected departments and to other sections of the DOPLR for review and comment.
 8. Review the comments and make appropriate revisions to the class specifications
 9. Prepare draft allocations based upon the approved, final class specifications. Use the standard class study spreadsheet and provide a copy to the department study contact(s) for

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positions within the department. Establish a deadline for submitting additional information and requesting reconsideration of a draft allocation based upon class controlling factors.

10. Prepare a study memorandum summarizing the details pertaining to the study and an internal alignment analysis based upon the principle of like pay for like work. Assign the job class(es) to the salary range or other pay designator appropriate to the applicable salary program.
11. The Classification Manager, under delegated authority from the Director for DOPLR, reviews and approves each class specification and salary range assignment before the specification is implemented.
12. When approved, the class specification and study memoranda are finalized and issued. The new or revised specification is posted on Workplace Alaska, and DOPLR sections and affected departments are notified of the effective date of implementation.

H. Writing Class Specifications

Each job class must be described in a class specification. The elements required are described below.

1. Class Code

Classification Section staff assign the class code based on the classification plan.

2. Class Title

The class title should be the best descriptive title for the work. It should concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed, be as brief as possible, be gender neutral, easily recognized, and understood by potential applicants.

3. General Description

- a. Series Description

A brief statement of the nature of work that distinguishes the class series. The element(s) described should be common to all levels within the class series.

- b. Definition

- The essential "reason for being" of the position or positions in the job class is stated in the **Definition**. This is a concise statement of the overall kind and level of work performed by the class. Its meaning should be as clear to the general reader as possible.
- The **Definition** identifies the class title and may contain options, such as two discrete functions of equivalent level and kind, where each is of sufficient magnitude to deserve recognition.

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- The level of the class within the occupation (trainee, journey, etc. See G.5) should be identified, even if there are no classes at other levels.
- If supervisory authority is a critical component of all positions in the job class, include the following language in the Definition. "This is a supervisory class with substantial responsibility for the exercise of independent judgment in employing, disciplining, or adjudicating grievances of subordinates."

c. Distinguishing Characteristics:

This part of the class specification describes the characteristics of the work of the class that distinguishes it from all other classes and class series. It consists of two sections:

- Information specific to the job class. One or more paragraphs that describe the unique characteristics of the specific job class. It addresses difficulty and complexity in terms of: supervision exercised and received, types of assignments, procedures, methods of work, control over the employees' work, variety and scope of work, and the like. It should also include statements that reflect the unique characteristics of the level.
- Information that establish the boundaries of the class by comparing it with other directly related classes and stating specifically how they differ from the subject class.

4. Examples of Duties

- a. This section lists examples of the work typically performed. The list is not meant to be all-inclusive but should be indicative of the kind and level of work typically assigned to positions in the class. Statements should be written clearly and concisely. Do not use unexplained abbreviations or acronyms.
- b. List the duties which are most characteristic of the job class and the most useful in showing the boundaries of the class. Separate duties into functional areas when it's useful. List each duty on a separate line or paragraph, beginning with those that are most indicative of the class. Start each duty description with an action verb (as defined in the PD writing guide addendum). Examples listed are:

Type financial reports . . .
Repair automotive equipment . . .
Write letters and reports . . .

- c. Duty descriptions should also include details sufficient to clearly describe the work to an applicant or employee who is not familiar with the class, and to allow differentiation from work performed by employees in other job classes. Details may include, for example, how work is done or the purpose of the task.

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5. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

In this section, list the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that even the most minimally qualified **newly appointed** employee should possess to perform the work of the class on entry. Do not include KSAs which are usually or only acquired by serving in the job.

a. The KSAs should cover all significant aspects of the work. They serve as guides to developing assessment tools and work standards. KSAs should be measurable or verifiable through assessment devices such as tests, demonstrations, observations, or reviews of previous accomplishments. Do not refer to personal elements such as honesty, sobriety, and dependability; these attributes are requirements for employment in any position.

- **Knowledge** is an organized body of information that must be known to be able to perform the job duties and essential functions to produce the expected outputs/results. Example: Knowledge of information technology systems. The definition level descriptions used in this section are:

- **Some Knowledge:** Familiarity with the particular subject matter concerned, gained by completing introductory training or course work in the field, self-study, or limited practice in the field.

- **Working Knowledge:** Sufficient knowledge to perform effectively in a range of work situations.

- **Considerable Knowledge:** Sufficient knowledge of the subject to enable the employee to perform effectively in all normal work situations of the field.

- **Thorough Knowledge:** Advanced knowledge of the subject to enable the employee to perform unusually difficult and complex assignments in the field.

- **Extensive Knowledge:** Broad and intensive grasp of substantially all areas of the subject sufficient to enable the employee to originate new hypotheses, concepts or approaches and/or to direct their implementation.

- **Skill.** A demonstrated capacity to perform the physical or mental activities required to perform the associated task. EX: Type 30 words per minute.

- **Ability.** A potential, whether or not developed, for performing the associated task. EX: Ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing.

b. When writing KSA statements, remember that a single statement from one level could be applied to a higher or lower level, or might be appropriate to more than one occupational group.

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6. Minimum Qualifications

- a. Minimum qualifications determine who will be eligible to apply for appointment and must be written as broadly as feasible. Minimum qualifications comprise:
- **Training:** The formal education or specialized vocational training that is regarded as normal preparation for a given field.
 - **Experience:** The kinds and amount of prior work activities (paid or volunteer) that prepare an employee to perform the specific duties of the class.
- b. Minimum qualifications must relate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work and may be subject to legal scrutiny to ensure they do not create artificial barriers to the employment of individuals in protected classes. Exercise care and judgment in stating qualifications to ensure they are job related: do not confuse "minimum qualifications" with "desired qualifications."
- c. The statement of required training should generally be limited to the basic formal training that customarily prepares individuals for work in a field.
- Some jobs require specific degrees, licenses, or certifications (e.g., law degree, licensure as a Registered Nurse, Commercial Driver's License, etc.) for which no substitution is allowed.
 - Some do not require a degree, but do specify course work for which no substitution is allowed. In this case, the number of required quarter or semester hours in the specific field must be identified.
 - It is good practice to mention any specialized training courses or programs that could qualify an applicant for the job class when they are commonly available and could reasonably be acquired as basic preparation.
 - Describe the type and level of education required. Use the following examples as a guide:
 - a) "A high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate."
 - b) "A bachelor's degree from an accredited college." (When any degree is sufficient.)
 - c) "A bachelor's degree from an accredited college in 'degree field.'" (When a specific degree is required.)

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d. The experience requirement is intended to ensure new employees can successfully perform the work after a period of orientation or familiarization. (Typically the probationary period).

- Experience should be directly related to the actual duties of positions in the class.
- Required experience should not be equivalent to the work to be performed, as this would be excessive as a minimum requirement.
- A description of the experience required should be followed by its equivalent State of Alaska job class, when useful.
- When the list of qualifying work experience is illustrative, and other State job classes may qualify, use the following.

“The required experience includes work such as (insert job class{es}) with the State of Alaska or the equivalent with another employer.”

- When only certain job classes will meet MQs (and there are no other classes within state service that will be allowed as an equivalent), "is met by service as" is used to indicate an exclusive list. For Example:

“The required journey technical-level experience is met by service as an Accounting Technician II with the State of Alaska or the equivalent with another employer.”

e. General Guidelines

1. Related families of jobs should have similar general requirements at each level in the series. The following are **very general** guidelines:

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Remark</u>
Skilled Trades, Crew Chief, Senior Technician	experience = 2 - 3 years
Entry Professional	Bachelor's or experience substitution
Journey Professional	Bachelor's + 1 year relevant experience
Advanced Professional, Or Supervisory Professional	Bachelor's + 1 year journey experience
Manager/Second Line Supervisory Professional	Bachelor's + 1-2 years relevant experience
Administrator	Bachelor's + 1-2 years relevant experience

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2. The stated training and experience examples do not exclude others that would provide equivalent preparation. Different kinds of formal training or self-study, or different kinds and amount of experience may be accepted if they provide equivalent preparation. These equivalents should be addressed in a substitution statement. (See substitution section)
3. Complete the Minimum Qualifications section even when there are no minimums, stating "none required."
4. Job classes that are defined as exclusively in the partially exempt service may have minimum qualifications similar to those in the classified service. When a specific minimum qualification has not been established, use the following.

"The position(s) in this job class are in the partially exempt service per Alaska Statute (give the citation)."

f. Substitution

- Many job classes have alternative methods of meeting minimum qualification requirements. Exceptions with no alternative such as a medical degree and license for a doctor or admission to the Alaska Bar Association for an attorney, are typically set in statute. For other classes, include any substitution statement under the subheading "substitution."
- State the specific alternative experience or education that will substitute for a specified minimum qualification. For example:

"Number of years of technical experience performing _____ will substitute for the required bachelor's degree."

"Number of years of additional qualifying experience will substitute for the required bachelor's degree."

"Graduate study in _____ will substitute for up to one year of the required experience. (2 semester hours or 3 quarter hours of graduate study equals one month of work experience.)"
- Refer to DOPLR SOP 0I (Recruitment) for standard examining equivalencies for education.
- If there is a requirement for which there is no substitution, this should be clearly stated.

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- Work with representatives responsible for determining whether applicants meet minimum qualifications early on in drafting minimum qualifications and special requirements. Be sure their understanding of the minimum qualifications is the same as yours.

10. Special Note

- a. This section identifies job requirements such as professional licenses (e.g., for a nurse or engineer), certificates (e.g., occupational therapist or police officer), special course work, driver's license, etc. There must be at least one duty statement in the examples of duties that shows why the requirement is necessary. These requirements must be met at the time of application, at the time of appointment, or within a specified time after appointment. (State which period applies).
- b. This section also lists working conditions, physical demands, or other aspects of the job which applicants should be aware at the time they apply. In most instances, listing physical demands in the KSAs section will be adequate. Use judgment in determining if it is significant or unusual enough to be included in a minimum qualification note so applicants will see it at the time they apply. Keep in mind the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act with regard to essential functions.

Examples:

"Requires working rotating shifts."

"Requires frequent travel to remote areas in boats and small aircraft."

11. Cross Coding Class Specifications

The job class must be coded for Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) purposes and to provide viable comparisons with other job coding systems. The following codes are determined according to placement in the Class Outline and the federal coding structures:

- a. Occupational Group
- b. EEO4 Category
- c. Job Family
- d. Class Outline Category
- e. SOC Code. A six-digit number obtained from the Standard Occupational Classification Manual published by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.
- f. State and Local job code
- g. Census EEO code

12. Class History

This section includes the dates of all changes/revisions, followed by a brief notation describing the change/revision. The last name of the specification writer/editor follows in parenthesis. The comment should include the prior class code, class title, and salary range if it changes. NOTE: Older specifications will only have writer/editor initials or nothing at all.

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Examples:

08/01/92 Original – P1234, State Worker I, SR 10. (Mason)

09/01/98 Definition rephrased. (Murry)

11/01/99 MQs revised. MQ Questions created. (Epstein)

01/02/2005 Salary Range from 10 to 12. (Mason)

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