

Classification

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Classification and Compensation Team

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Classification

Important Information

This booklet provides general guidance for employees, supervisors, and managers concerning position classification. It is not intended to change or otherwise modify any law, regulation, or collective bargaining agreement that may impact the subject matter of this booklet. In the event that there is an inconsistency, the law, regulation, or collective bargaining agreement will prevail. Please also bear in mind that laws, regulations, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements may be amended at any time.

General Information

Q. What is classification?

A. Classification is the assignment of positions to occupational classes and the allocation of occupational classes to pay grades.

Q. What is the purpose of classification?

A. The classification process groups work into occupational classes and occupational series for personnel and pay administration purposes.

Q. Who conducts classification studies?

A. Some classification studies are conducted by Human Resources Specialists in the County's Office of Human Resources (OHR), who are trained in job analysis. Studies may also be conducted by qualified classification consultants under contract with OHR.

Q. Who makes classification decisions?

A. Classification decisions are made by the OHR Director.

Q. What's the difference between reclassification and reallocation?

A. Reclassification is the reassignment of a position from one occupational class to another. Reallocation is the reassignment of an occupational class from one pay grade to another.

Q. Is there any salary increase on reclassification of a position or reallocation of an occupational class to a higher grade?

A. An employee whose position is reclassified or reallocated to a higher grade will have his or her increment date changed to the effective date of the classification decision. The result is that the employee is eligible for an immediate increase in base salary of up to 3½ percent, if the employee's performance has been satisfactory. An employee's salary must be at least the minimum for the new grade and may not exceed the maximum for the grade.

Q. Does the County have a philosophy or general policy about classification?

A. The County policy is that:

- positions should be classified on the basis of assigned duties and responsibilities and minimum qualifications required; and
- supervisors should practice good position management by assigning

duties and responsibilities appropriate to an employee's authorized position classification. Supervisors should follow merit system principles and should not intentionally assign higher level duties and responsibilities for the purpose of circumventing the competitive promotional process.

Q. What is the difference between a classification study of an individual position and a classification study of an occupational class?

A. Position Classification Study. The purpose of a position classification study is to determine if the position is assigned to the correct occupational class, based on the position's duties and responsibilities and the minimum qualifications required to perform the work. *The classification decision is based on comparison of the work of the position to existing class specifications.*

Occupational Class Study. The purpose of a classification study of an occupational class is to verify that the class specification correctly describes the work of the class and that the class is allocated to the correct grade level.

Although the purposes of position classification studies and occupational class studies are different, both kinds of studies usually involve:

- Analysis of job content documentation, as well as organization charts and other relevant information; and

- Site visits, desk audits of employees, or interviews with supervisors to supplement or confirm written documentation.

Q. What's the difference between a class specification and a position description?

A. Class Specification. A class specification is the written description of an occupational class that describes job components such as complexity of work, nature of contacts, work environment, physical demands, and supervisory responsibilities, if any. The class specification also contains illustrative examples of the work performed, the minimum qualifications and licenses required, probationary period, and medical protocol. Class specifications are used by OHR's classification, recruitment, and occupational medical services staff.

There is a class specification for each of the County's occupational classes. Class specifications may be found in OHR's on-line Resource Library on the County's Web site.

Position Description. A position description (PD) describes the work assigned to a vacant or new position or the work being performed by an employee in a position. A PD is usually required for:

- a new position; or
- a vacant position that must be reviewed for proper classification.

A PD is always required for:

- an individual position classification study requested by an employee or supervisor; or
- when a position is affected by organizational change such as reorganization.

A PD for a filled position is usually completed by the employee in the position. The duties and responsibilities reported on the PD by the employee must be reviewed and verified by the employee's supervisor, division chief, and department director.

The PD form may be found in OHR's on-line Resource Library on the County's Web site.

Job Evaluation Systems

Q. What is a job evaluation system?

A. A job evaluation system is a systematic method of analyzing and evaluating occupational classes in order to allocate them to pay grades or pay bands on a salary schedule.

Q. What job evaluation system or systems does the County use?

A. OHR currently uses two job evaluation systems - the Quantitative Evaluation System (QES) and the broadbanding system.

Q. Are all classes evaluated using a job evaluation system?

A. No. The QES job evaluation system applies to occupational classes in the OPT and SLT bargaining units and to classes on the general salary schedule not represented by a union. The broadbanding system is used for high level supervisory and managerial classes in the Management Leadership Service (MLS).

Classes on certain other salary schedules are not evaluated using a job evaluation system. Instead, pay for these salary schedules is determined as follows:

- Police bargaining unit and fire/rescue bargaining unit salary schedules - collective bargaining;
- Sworn police management and uniformed fire/rescue management salary schedules - criteria described in the County Code;
- Minimum wage/seasonal salary schedule - Federal minimum wage is the key reference.

Q. How is a class evaluated using QES?

A. QES has 10 job evaluation "factors," or important elements of jobs. These factors are

- Knowledge Required
- Supervisory Controls
- Guidelines
- Complexity
- Scope and Effect
- Contacts
- Public Service/Assistance
- Working Conditions
- Physical Demands
- Supervision Exercised

To evaluate an occupational class information about the major duties and responsibilities of the class is analyzed and compared to the QES factor level definitions. An appropriate level and corresponding points are determined for each factor. The point total for all the factors is then converted to a grade for the class on the general salary schedule, the OPT salary schedule, and the SLT salary schedule.

Q. How is an MLS class evaluated?

A. The factors described in the class specification, such as job functions, supervisory controls, delegation of authority, complexity, and scope of work are the broadbanding criteria for allocating the MLS classes to pay bands.

Q. Is anything else considered in allocating a class to a grade or pay band?

A. In allocating a class to a grade or pay band, OHR may consider other relevant factors such as current salary rates for similar occupational classes in both the public and private sectors. This is to ensure that the County's salaries are competitive in the labor market.

Occupational Class Study

Q. Who may request a classification study of an occupational class and what are the criteria for acceptance of such a request?

A. The OHR Director may determine that a class study is needed, or a department director or MCGEO may request a study of a class.

In support of a request for a study of a class, a department director or MCGEO must provide to the OHR Director evidence of at least one of the following:

- Recruiting applicants to the class at the normal hiring rate has been difficult and/or the County has had difficulty retaining such employees.
- There has been a major and significant change to the work of the class due to technological change or other unforeseen factors having significant impact on the work.

Q. When may a study of a class be requested?

A. A study of an occupational class may be requested during the months of June or December. Studies of OPT/SLT bargaining unit classes may not be requested more often than every 36 months, although exceptions may be made by the OHR Director.

The OHR Director will review the study request and the reason for it and will advise the requestor of acceptance or rejection of the request within 30 days of receiving it.

Occasionally, the need for a study of a class may be identified outside the June or December time frames, due to reorganization or other special circumstances. The OHR Director must authorize any special studies.

Q. What documentation must an employee provide if the employee's class is to be studied?

A. An employee will need to complete, individually or with others in the same class having similar assignments, a questionnaire about the employee's duties and responsibilities. The party who requested the study (a department director or MCGEO), will normally coordinate the submission of organization charts and other required documentation.

Q. What is involved in the study of a class?

A. Occupational class studies usually include:

- Analysis of written organizational and job content information;
- Selected site visits or desk audits, and/or discussions with supervisors, to verify and supplement the written documentation;
- Analysis of recruitment and retention experience for the class;
- Analysis of salary survey data;
- Revision of class specifications as necessary to reflect the major duties and responsibilities of the class; and
- Evaluation of the duties and responsibilities of the class using a job evaluation system.

Q. How long does a class study take?

A. How long a study takes varies depending on such things as the size of the class, OHR's or the consultant's workload, the time of year (i.e., key participants may be on vacation), adherence to established deadlines for documentation, comments, etc., or other extenuating circumstances.

Q. What are the possible outcomes of a study of an occupational class?

A. The class specification for the class will be updated to reflect the current duties and responsibilities of the class. The evaluation of the class, based on the predominant duties and responsibilities of the majority of the positions in the class, and reference to labor market data may indicate that the grade for the class is correct or that the grade should be higher or lower. Occasionally, a study of a class or a series of classes will indicate the need for some revision of the class structure - that is; a class may be added to a series or deleted from a series.

Also, occasionally, one or more positions in a class are found to be doing work that is significantly different from the work of the majority of the class, and a new class may be created for these positions. The new class will have its own class specification and a grade based on an evaluation of its duties and responsibilities.

Q. How do I find out the results of a study of my class?

A. Your department director or MCGEO will receive notification and a copy of OHR's or the classification consultant's classification study report. Your department director or MCGEO will share the report with you. You may review the report and provide any written comments to your director. Your director or MCGEO will submit your comments and any other comments to OHR within a total of 30 calendar days from when the report was received.

Q. What happens after I submit my comments on the classification recommendation?

A. OHR and/or the consultant considers the comments received and makes whatever changes are appropriate to the original findings and recommendations before submitting the report to the OHR Director for the classification decision.

OHR then notifies the department director or MCGEO and affected employees of the classification decision. If a class has been allocated to a lower grade, the OHR Director will advise affected employees of their opportunity to request an administrative review.

Q. What is the effective date of the OHR Director's classification decision?

A. The effective date is the beginning of the pay period following the OHR Director's decision.

Q. If I disagree with the OHR Director's classification decision, is there any appeal?

A. If your class has been allocated to a lower grade, you or MCGEO may request administrative review of the OHR Director's classification decision. (See page 10.)

Individual Position Classification Study

An employee in the OPT or SLT bargaining units may choose to be represented by MCGEO when requesting a position classification study. In this section, where references are made to an employee, if the employee is represented by MCGEO, MCGEO will act or respond in place of the employee.

Q. Who may request a classification study of a position?

A. The OHR Director may determine that a study of a position is necessary, or a department director or an employee may request a position classification study.

Q. When may a classification study be requested?

A. A study may be requested during the month of June. In extraordinary circumstances, a department director may request, in writing, a position classification study at a time other than June. The OHR Director must authorize any special study that is not requested during June.

Q. What documentation must be provided?

A. What is required is:

- A complete position description signed by the employee, the employee's immediate supervisor, and department director;
- A memorandum from the department director (or department director's comments on the position description) indicating either of the following:
 - That the duties and responsibilities have changed and are no longer consistent with the position's current classification; where the new duties and responsibilities originated and how they came to be assigned to this position; and that the department director concurs with the employee's request for position reclassification.

or

- That the position's duties and responsibilities have not changed substantially and the department director does not believe that the position should be reclassified.

- An organization chart that reflects the organizational location of the position and its reporting relationships.
- The current Position Profile Form for the position (with no changes entered).

Note that the documentation must be complete or the request will be returned to the originator.

Q. What is involved in an individual position classification study?

A. A position classification study normally includes:

- Analysis of the position description and any other job content documentation, as well as organization charts and other relevant information; and
- A site visit or desk audit, if deemed necessary, with the employee or an interview with the employee's supervisor, if deemed necessary, to supplement or confirm written documentation.

The OHR Specialist or consultant then compares the duties and responsibilities of the position to existing class specifications to determine the most appropriate classification for the position.

Q. Is QES used to determine a position's classification?

A. QES is not used in a classification study of an individual position. Class specifications are used to determine a position's most appropriate classification. However, if the classification study determines that a new class must be created for the position, QES is used to evaluate the duties and responsibilities of the new class.

Q. How long does a classification study of a position take?

A. How long a study takes varies depending on such things as OHR's or the consultant's workload, the time of year (i.e., key participants may be on vacation), adherence to established deadlines for documentation, comments, etc., or other extenuating circumstances.

Q. How do I find out the results of the position classification study?

A. OHR sends a copy of the study report of findings and recommendations to your department director and to you. You may provide any written comments to your department director. Your director reviews and submits your comments and any that he or she chooses to make to OHR within 15 calendar days of receiving the report.

Q. What happens after I submit my comments on the classification recommendation?

A. OHR and/or the consultant will consider the comments received and make whatever changes are appropriate to the original findings and recommendations before submitting the report to the OHR Director for the classification decision.

OHR notifies you and your department director of the classification decision. If your position has been reclassified to a lower grade, the OHR Director will advise you of your opportunity to request an administrative review of the classification decision.

Q. What happens to my salary if my position is reclassified to a lower grade?

A. If your position is downgraded, you may keep your current salary. If your salary is more than the maximum salary for the new grade, you may keep the salary but may not receive any service increments while your salary is above the maximum for your grade.

However, even if your salary is above the maximum for your new grade, you may receive the same general wage adjustment that other employees in the same occupational class and on the same salary schedule receive.

Q. What is the effective date of the OHR Director's classification decision?

A. The effective date is normally the beginning of the first pay period following the date of the OHR Director's decision or twelve months from the date all the documentation necessary to conduct the study was received. If the position classification study is part of a reorganization, the effective date could be later.

Q. If I disagree with the OHR Director's classification decision, is there any appeal?

A. If your position was reclassified to a lower grade, you may request an administrative review of the OHR Director's classification decision. There is no appeal or administrative review of a classification decision that retains the same grade for the position or upgrades the position's classification.

Administrative Review

Q. What is administrative review?

A. Administrative review is a fact-finding review of a classification decision by an independent, professionally qualified consultant. The consultant determines the appropriate methodology for the review, which includes review of all written materials related to the classification study, and usually includes interviews or meetings with the affected employee(s) and supervisor.

Q. Who may request an administrative review of a classification decision?

A. An employee whose position or occupational class has been downgraded by a decision of the OHR Director may request an administrative review.

Q. How do I request an administrative review?

A. You send a memorandum requesting the review to the OHR Director, stating your reasons for requesting the review. Your request must be submitted within 10 days of receiving the OHR Director's classification decision.

Q. May I have assistance in the administrative review process?

A. OHR staff can provide any procedural information you might need but cannot assist you with preparing for the administrative review. You may, however, ask another person to assist or represent you during the process. Note that you are responsible for any costs associated with your representation.

Q. How long does it take for the consultant to complete the fact-finding review?

A. OHR must provide all documentation associated with the classification study, including your request for administrative review, to the classification consultant within 30 days from the date you requested the review. The consultant then has 30 calendar days to conduct the review and provide a report and recommendations to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Q. How do I find out about the consultant's findings and recommendation?

A. The Chief Administrative Officer will provide a copy of the consultant's report to you. You have 10 days from receipt of the report to submit any written comments on the consultant's recommendations to the OHR Director.

Q. Who makes the final classification decision after the administrative review is complete?

A. All materials concerning the classification study and administrative review, including your comments, are forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer, who makes the final classification decision, normally within 15 days of receiving all necessary information.

Q. If I disagree with the Chief Administrative Officer's classification decision, is there any further appeal?

A. The only remaining appeal is to the Merit System Protection Board. The basis for an appeal to the Board is that the administrative review procedures specified in the *Personnel Regulations* were violated.

More Information

Q. Where can I get more information about the County's classification program?

A. Consult *Personnel Regulations* Section 9, *Classification* (as amended October 21, 2008), and the Agreement between MCGEO and Montgomery County, Maryland.

Or, contact OHR's Classification and Compensation Team at 240-777-5039.

Information is also available in Office of Human Resources' Classification website at

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/classification/Classification.html>

or OHR FAQs at

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/faq/FAQ.html>

Also see Section 9, Appendix E and Appendix F of the *Personnel Regulations*

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/labor/regulation.html>

Note: This information can be made available in an alternate format, if necessary. Contact the Classification and Compensation Team at 240-777-5039.