

WHAT IS JOB CLASSIFICATION

What is a classification plan?

A classification plan is a systematic process for grouping jobs into common classifications based on similarities in duties, responsibilities, and requirements. The emphasis of the classification plan will be on broader classifications wherever possible. In other words, when positions have sufficiently similar duties, responsibilities, and requirements they are appropriately classified in one job class. That means they will have the same title and will be allocated on the same salary range. The California Education Code assigns responsibility for the Classification Plan to the Personnel Commission.

Why are job classification studies conducted?

The most common reasons studies are conducted are:

- Gradual changes in duties performed
- Changes in organizational relationships and responsibilities
- Recruitment/retention problems
- Changes in requirements as mandated
- Occasional plan-wide reviews to maintain consistency within a look at the overall jobs of the organization

What happens during a study?

A classification study requires a significant amount of research, data gathering, and analysis and has a good deal of “process” to follow. The methodology typically includes:

- Reviewing all pertinent documentation and information, with one of the most critical pieces of information being a Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) completed by an incumbent(s).
- Conducting interviews and/or desk audits with the incumbent(s) and in some cases gathering information from other employees who perform similar work

- Communicating with supervisors/managers to confirm and clarify information
- Studying classifications
- Analyzing the data
- Developing and/or updating classification specifications/descriptions (often casually called job descriptions)
- Developing and then presenting a preliminary report and recommendations to the Personnel Commission and interested parties
- Communications with interested parties on the preliminary report and recommendations
- Developing and presenting the final report to the Personnel Commission and interested parties
- If applicable, presenting a report and the recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval and adoption

The job evaluation process is technical and objective in nature and involves thoroughly researching, analyzing, determining, and documenting the responsibilities, duties, skills, knowledge and abilities related to a position. The analyst looks at various factors in determining the proper class, such as, but not limited to, decision making responsibilities; scope and complexity of work; nature and purpose of contact with others; required knowledge, skills, and abilities; supervision received and exercised; working conditions and physical effort; organizational level, size, etc. These factors are known as Classification Allocation Factors, an industry recognized principle.

After the analysis is completed, a preliminary recommendation is developed. Recommendations may include reallocating a position to a different class, developing a new class, changing the existing class, or determining that the position is appropriately classified and no change is needed.

What types of classification studies are there?

There are three main types of classification studies:

- **Position Review:** A study of a position's duties to determine the most appropriate classification.

- **Classification Description Update:** A study of the current duties, responsibilities, and required knowledge and abilities of an existing class.
- **New Classification Request:** A study of newly identified duties, responsibilities, and required knowledge and abilities to develop the appropriate classification, specification, and salary.

How long does it take to conduct a study of a position?

A study may take a few weeks to several months. In the case of a District-wide study of the whole classification plan under the auspices of the Personnel Commission, the study may take a year or two. Some of the factors that affect the length of a study are the number of classes and positions included in the study, the amount of research necessary, the extent of the recommendations, department's shifting priorities, the length of time it takes to get information from the department and/or incumbent, the overall effort that is required to complete a thorough understanding of the jobs under stud, and the interested parties acceptance of the recommendations.

Who can ask for a classification study and where do I find the forms?

An individual employee, the bargaining unit, District management have opportunities to ask for a classification review. While California Education Code assigns responsibility to the Personnel Commission for establishing and maintaining the District's Classification Plan, issues with respect to individual positions and incumbents are presently addressed in one of two ways: (1) Classified positions represented by CSEA Chapter 169 are addressed under the provisions of the bargaining unit; (2) Classified confidential, supervisory and management positions are processed under the Rules of the Personnel Commission.

When should a request to study a position for possible reclassification be submitted?

During the next 24 months of the overall review of the entire classification plan, individual requests will not be submitted and processed. Instead, topics that would warrant individual review will instead be addressed within the context of the overall study. That is a major reason why filling out and returning your classification questionnaire during the phase that will study your job is such an important step for you to take.

What factors do not justify a reclassification?

- Performance of the incumbent in the position; reclassification should not be considered a reward or means to promote an outstanding employee who is performing at a very high level of efficiency only the duties of the job, nor a means to punish an incumbent who is performing the assigned duties but in a poor manner that falls short of what the reasonable standard of performance should be
- Retention of a specific employee
- Increase in workload that is of the same nature and level of complexity (volume) – this is a workload issue, not a classification issue
- Knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by the incumbent which are not required or regularly used in the position (e.g., incumbent possesses a Master's degree, but the job requires only a high school education and one or two years of general work experience)
- Desired salary changes on the part of the employee or the employee's supervisor
- Technological changes or tools (e.g. new software) that does not substantially alter the essential functions of the job, particularly if the industry is similarly changing to the new technology (e.g., documents formerly prepared using Word Perfect are now prepared using Microsoft Word 2019)
- Job stress

What are the factors that might justify a reclassification?

The factors that may justify reclassification include:

- Change in type of work/essential functions (e.g. Secretary now doing almost exclusively accounting work)
- Change in lead/supervisory responsibilities
- Change in authority for making operational changes or in developing, recommending, and interpreting policies and procedures and the extent of the impact to the organization

- Addition of stronger, more complex duties/removal of duties (i.e., sometimes the changes in a job no longer warrant the same level of pay)
- Change in organizational structure or mandate that affects reporting relationships, level in the organization

These changes must be significant either in a single area or overall, in order to justify reclassification either upwards or downward. For example, if in the analysis a position is found to have a new function that is not currently within the scope of the current class, and this new function is found to only be 10% of the overall duties of the position, reclassification is not likely.

How is the incumbent involved in the study?

The incumbent's role is to thoroughly and accurately complete the PDQ and provide clear and concise information in an interview regarding the work that is being performed in the position. The incumbent may also participate in communications and provide feedback on the preliminary report and recommendations (for example, review a draft updated job description for completeness and accuracy).

Due to the nature of incumbent's having a vested interest in the outcome of a classification study, it's critical for incumbents to understand an important concept:

*A classification study is the evaluation of a position or group of positions and the nature and kind of work assigned and expected to be performed by the position. A classification study is **not** a study of how well incumbents do their jobs. An incumbent's performance on the job is **not** considered in a study.*

An employee is really smart and efficient and their manager has been giving them additional assignments. Many of these assignments aren't listed in the job spec for their current position. Should the manager or employee ask to have this position reclassified?

Not necessarily. Most of the District's job classifications have been written "broadly" to be able to encompass a wide variety of duties and responsibilities. To think that an employee can't do anything outside of what's specifically stated in a job class specification is not accurate. Employees often perform duties that are not specifically listed on the class specification, but as long as those duties are within the overall purpose, scope, and level of the class, then the duties are likely to be appropriately assigned.

However, that said, managers/supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees work within the definition of their position and job classification. If the duties that are assigned are not appropriate, then when operationally possible, the duties should be reassigned to a more appropriate position. Only if the additional duties cannot be reassigned and are anticipated to be ongoing, should a reclassification study be requested.

If the classification review recommends a change to a position, does this mean the employee will get more money?

Not necessarily. There are several possible outcomes to a classification study. The study most often determines that an employee is in the correct job classification. However, the study may determine that the work being performed by the employee is more appropriately reclassified into a job classification which pays the same, pays more, or pays less than the current job classification. The study may determine that a new job classification needs to be created, so additional work must be done to set the appropriate salary of the new job classification. The pay for the new job classification may be the same, more, or less than the pay of the employee's current classification.

An employee's position has been studied and determined that it was in the correct job classification, but made some changes to the job specification. Why isn't the salary being studied at this time?

Salaries are only studied under very specific circumstances. During a classification study, the only time a salary is studied is when a new job classification is created. Human Resources may, but under very limited circumstances, re-evaluate a classification's salary if those specification updates are extremely significant to the overall scope, complexity, purpose, and knowledge and abilities of the classification.

An employee's position has been reclassified – what will the employee's new salary be?

When an employee is reclassified to a job classification with a higher salary range than the current job classification, it is considered a promotion. Salaries upon promotion are determined by the bargaining unit contract or the Personnel Commission Rules. Generally, the employee will receive an increase to the salary step which is closest to a minimum 2½% to 3% increase from their current salary, but not less than the minimum salary step of the new classification, and not

more than the highest step of the new classification.

When an employee is reclassified to a job classification with a lower salary range than the current job classification, it is treated as an involuntary demotion. Salaries upon involuntary demotion are determined by the bargaining unit contract. Generally, the employee will receive the highest salary step for the new classification which does not exceed their current salary. However, whenever the effect of a reclassification is to reduce an employee's salary, the Human Resources Director may recommend that the employee continue to receive their previously authorized salary until such time as the salary range for the new classification exceeds the employee's current salary. This is defined as being "Y" rated.

When an employee is reclassified to a job classification with the same salary range as the current job classification, the employee will retain the same salary step they were at prior to the reclassification.

An employee has been reclassified to a different job classification. How does this affect seniority?

If the reclassification is to a different, or new job class allocated to a higher salary range, the seniority in the new job class begins upon the date the promotion/reclassification is effective.

If the reclassification is to a lower level classification, meaning a lower salary range, an employee's time in a higher (paid) job class counts toward seniority in the lower (paid) job class. The time in the higher class will be added to the time in the new class for purposes of determining seniority in a layoff situation.

If the reclassification is to a different class on the same salary range, seniority from previous classifications at the same or higher salary range counts toward seniority in the different but same-range classification.

If an employee's position is reclassified to a different job classification, will they continue to be covered by the current MOU and/or represented by the same Union?

Not necessarily. The employee will be covered by the MOU and the bargaining unit which represents the job classification into which they have been reclassified. Unrepresented employees fall under the purview of the Personnel Commission Rules.