

Office of Financial Management, State Human Resources  
**Glossary of Classification Terms**

The language in the class specification will have priority when explaining or defining any of the terms.

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**Administrative.** See Nature of Work.

**Advise.** Identify options and recommend a course of action to assist others to resolve problems or make decisions.

**Allocation.** Assignment of a position to a job class (WAC 357-01-020).

**Best Fit.** Allocation of a position to a class when the duties are not a perfect fit but best describes the majority of duties and level of responsibility assigned to the position.

**Class.** A level of work (WAC 357-01-075).

**Class Series.** A grouping of job functions having similar purpose and knowledge requirements but different levels of difficulty and responsibility (WAC 357-01-080).

**Class Series Concept.** Describes the overall purpose, duties, and general responsibilities of classes in a series. Not all series have a class series concept, however, if one exists, it is typically found at the entry level of the class series.

**Class Specification.** An official document that defines the primary purpose of the job class. It summarizes the nature and scope of the duties and responsibilities.

**Complexity of Work.** Refers to the scope, variety and difficulty of the duties, responsibilities, and skills required to perform the work. Complexity is categorized as:

**Basic** – Performs clear-cut tasks under close or direct supervision with little choice as to which rules and procedures to follow or materials or equipment to use.

**Routine** – Performs several related and repetitive tasks that require some judgment regarding the rules and procedures to follow or the materials or equipment to use.

In order to identify complex and highly-complex work, you must consider the following components:

- Nature of Work Assignment.
- Level of Difficulty in Identifying the Work to Perform.

Refer to the following descriptions to distinguish between complex and highly-complex work.

**Complex**

**Nature of Work Assignment:**

- Duties consist of performing a variety of different but established and related work methods or procedures.
- Requires necessary expertise to work on all levels of the assignment.
- Independently decides which rules, processes, materials or equipment to use to accomplish the work assignment.

- Usually requires working with multiple clients, staff or other stakeholders to complete the assignment, but may not require a complete understanding of business processes, strategic direction, impact on internal/external stakeholders and the organization(s) involved.

**Level of Difficulty in Identifying the Work to Perform:**

- May require devising new or original methods and processes to analyze, evaluate and fully determine the issues and tasks at hand.
- Uses independent judgment and originality by interpreting data and/or compiling information to develop a work plan.
- Makes decisions on what needs to be done by considering several different approaches or methods.
- Often requires refining work methods and techniques to complete the assignment.

**Highly-Complex**

**Nature of Work Assignment:**

- Work consists of a broad range of duties involving multiple unrelated work processes and methods. This often requires intensive, in-depth analysis of technical issues.
- Requires highly specialized technical skills and expert knowledge over a wide range of job specialty areas and work practices to complete broad, multi-faceted assignments.
- Requires complete understanding of business processes, strategic direction, impact on internal/external stakeholders and the organization or organizations involved.

**Level of Difficulty in Identifying the Work to Perform:**

- Requires making decisions with major uncertainties regarding the most effective approach or methods to use. This requires analyzing multiple factors such as:
  - Changes in customer business requirements or rapidly evolving technology in a specialty area.
  - Extensive research and analysis of systems, facts, figures, or similar information to determine the nature and scope of issues involved.
  - Independently determining the level of involvement with stakeholders and other staff including higher-level management within and/or across organizations.
  - Work can be highly visible to external stakeholders such as the public, legislature, media.
- Assignments frequently require:
  - Using non-standard or untested processes to plan the assignment.
  - Evaluating the impact of technological change.
  - Consultation with external experts who are not stakeholders.
  - Integrating the activities of multiple specialty areas.
  - Developing new work standards, methods or techniques.
- Outcomes for assignments cannot be predicted based on current precedent or established processes or procedures.

**Compression.** Occurs when there is an insufficient salary differential between the subordinate and the supervisor or between class levels within a series.

**Coordinate.** Independently organize, monitor, evaluate and make adjustments for a program or activity.

**Direct the Work of Others.** Provides work guidance or direction but is **not** a “lead”; does **not** have the responsibility of assigning, instructing and checking the work of others on a regular and ongoing basis.

**Entry.** See Level of Work.

**Expert.** See Level of Work.

**Incumbent.** A person currently holding an assigned position.

**Independent.** Authority to make decisions without supervisory approval regarding the work rules, processes, procedures, materials, equipment, and methods which will be used. Modifications to processes, procedures and methods must conform to the employer's policies and regulations.

**Inversion.** When the salary of the subordinate is higher than that of the supervisor.

**Job Description.** See Position Description.

**Journey-Level.** See Level of Work.

**Judgment.** The latitude an individual has in making decisions such as work priorities, workflow, work methods, and formulating, revising, interpreting and applying policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

**Lead.** An employee who performs the same or similar duties as other employees in his/her work group and has the designated responsibility to regularly assign, instruct and check the work of those employees on an ongoing basis.

**Level of Work.** Each level listed is typically a separate class with a separate title, salary and different work performed.

**Entry** - Performs beginning level work under close or direct supervision. Incumbents typically work within narrowly established guidelines and parameters. Duties are often repetitive and routine and decision-making is limited. Clear work directions and parameters are provided and outcomes are reviewed by higher levels.

**Journey** - Fully competent and qualified in all aspects of a body of work and given broad/general guidance. Individuals can complete work assignments to standard under general supervision. Also referred to as the working or fully-qualified level.

**Senior** - The performance of work requiring the consistent application of advanced knowledge and requiring a skilled and experienced practitioner to function independently. Senior-level work includes devising methods and processes to resolve complex or difficult issues that have broad potential impact. These issues typically involve competing interests, multiple clients, conflicting rules or practices, a range of possible solutions, or other elements that contribute to complexity. The senior-level has full authority to plan, prioritize, and handle all duties within an assigned area of responsibility. Senior-level employees require little supervision and their work is not typically checked by others.

**Expert** - Within the context of the class series, has the highest level of responsibility and extensive knowledge based on research and experience in a specific area. Resolves the most complex, critical, or precedent-setting issues that arise. Positions act as a resource and provide guidance on specialized technical issues. Although an employee may be considered by their peers as an expert or "go-to" person at any level, for purposes of allocation, the term is typically applied to an employee in a higher class level who has gained expertise through progression in the series.

**Managerial.** See Nature of Work.

**Nature of Work.** Basic types of work assignments performed by a class:

**Administrative** – Determines or participates in making policy, formulates long-range objectives and programs, and reviews the implementation of programs for conformance to policies and objectives.

**Clerical** – Work that supports office operations.

**Managerial** – Plans, coordinates, integrates, executes, controls and evaluates activities and functions of an organization. This includes developing budgets, policies and procedures, service delivery and staff supervision.

**Paraprofessional** – In a supportive role, performs some of the duties of a professional or technician. These duties usually require less formal training and/or experience normally required for professional or technical status.

**Professional** – Performs work that requires consistent application of advanced knowledge usually acquired through a college degree in a recognized field, work experience, or other specialized training. Exercises discretion and independent judgment when performing assignments. Examples include, but are not limited to, social workers, psychologists, registered nurses, economists, teachers or instructors, human resource consultants, accountants and information system analysts.

**Technical** – Specialized knowledge or skills gained through academic or vocational courses offered in technical and community colleges, or equivalent on-the-job training.

**Trades** – Duties require specialized manual or mechanical skills and a comprehensive knowledge of work processes, normally acquired through an apprenticeship or other training program.

**Paraprofessional.** See Nature of Work.

**Position.** A group of duties and responsibilities performed by an employee (WAC 357-01-240).

**Position Description.** An official document describing the functions and tasks assigned to a position.

**Procedure.** A written course of action or method for completing assignments; the how-to steps to produce a desired result.

**Professional.** See Nature of Work.

**Program.** A specialized area with specific complex components and tasks that distinguish it from other programs (or the main body of an organization). A program is specific to a particular subject and has a specific mission, goals and objectives. A program typically has an identifiable funding source and separate budget code.

The specific components and specialized tasks involve interpretation of policies, procedures and regulations, budget coordination/administration and independent functioning. Typically requires public contact relating specifically to program subject matter, clients, and participants.

Duties are not of a general support nature transferable from one program to another. Performance of clerical duties is in support of an incumbent's performance of specialized tasks. Independent performance of these duties usually requires at least a six-month training period.

**Program Manager.** Duties involve authority over:

- Developing program goals and objectives.
- Developing timetables and work plans to achieve program goals and objectives.
- Developing program policies and procedures.
- Preparing program budgets, adjusting allotments and authorizing expenditures.
- Controlling allocation of program resources.
- Setting and adjusting program priorities.
- Evaluating program effectiveness.

**Reallocation.** The assignment of a position to a different class (WAC 357-01-270).

**Senior-Level.** See Level of Work.

**Specialist.** Duties involve intensive application of knowledge and skills in a specific segment of an occupational area.

**Supervision Required, Levels.**

Terms listed below describe types of supervision received. These terms are generally acceptable; however, you may use additional language to clarify these job elements within the position description for a specific position. An example would be a position that is designated as in-training. The level of supervision during the

in-training period may be different than the level of supervision the position receives once the training period is complete.

It is expected that all employees require a certain level of close supervision during the review period as they are learning the components of the position. However, consider the following when determining the level of supervision required of a position on a regular and ongoing basis:

- Amount and type of higher-level oversight the employee receives.
- Latitude the employee has in determining which work methods and priorities to apply.
- Scope of decision-making authority delegated to the employee.
- Extent to which the employee's completed assignments are reviewed.

There are four basic types of supervision:

**(1) Close supervision - Supervisor or lead provides daily oversight of work activities; advice and assistance is readily available to assist in completing assignments or tasks.**

- Employee is assigned duties according to defined procedures.
- Employee performs a variety of routine duties within established policies and procedures or by referring to the written guidelines.
- Work is reviewed for accuracy, completion, and adherence to instructions and established standards, processes and procedures as necessary and upon completion.

An employee is given specific instructions regarding duties to perform, assignments to complete and sequence of work steps and processes to follow. The employee must follow work methods that are already defined. Any deviation is reviewed by the supervisor or lead.

Close supervision is provided to the incumbent until tasks are well known and then can be performed without close supervision. For assignments requiring other than a standard business process, close supervision and guidance are provided by either the supervisor or higher-level analyst.

**For Example:** An office assistant is required to complete data entry on various spreadsheets. While learning the tasks to perform the supervisor may give instruction and provide clearly defined procedures for the employee to follow and daily supervision may be close. Once the employee has learned the components of the task, the expectation would be to perform these tasks or duties independently as the duties and tasks are routine and repetitive in nature and instruction is clearly defined.

**(2) General supervision - Advice and assistance is available as needed. Review of work may be frequent but not usually detailed. Emphasis is placed on quality of completed assignments.**

- Employee performs recurring assignments without daily oversight following established guidelines, policies, procedures and work methods.
- Employee prioritizes day-to-day work tasks. Supervisor provides guidance and must approve deviation from established guidelines, policies, procedures and work methods.
- Decision-making is limited in context to the completion of work tasks. Completed work is consistent with established guidelines, policies, procedures and work methods. Supervisory guidance is provided in new or unusual situations.
- May develop procedures for performance of a variety of duties within the scope of the job.
- Perform complex duties within established guidelines.
- Work is periodically reviewed for compliance with guidelines, policies and procedures.

**For Example:** A maintenance mechanic is given several work orders and is responsible for prioritizing and independently completing the assigned repairs. Once the work orders have been completed the supervisor may review completed work to ensure appropriate industry standards have been met.

**(3) General direction – Employee receives broad instruction. Advice and assistance is available at the request of employee. However, review of work usually emphasizes accomplishment of broader work unit goals and/or performance measures rather than specific work assignments.**

- Employee independently performs all assignments using knowledge of established policies and work objectives with little direct oversight from supervisor.
- Employee plans and organizes their own work and assists in determining priorities and deadlines. May deviate from standard work methods, guidelines or procedures in order to meet work objectives.
- Employee exercises independent decision-making authority and discretion to decide which work methods to use, tasks to perform and procedures to follow to meet work objectives.
- Completed work is reviewed for effectiveness in producing expected results.
- Employee establishes procedures for attaining specific goals and objectives in a broad area of work.

**For Example:** A new program is being implemented and the employee is responsible for establishing guidelines and administrative procedures that will be implemented as part of the new program. This may be done in consultation with the program manager regarding the goals and objectives of the new program and other factors such as the scope, impact and constraints with other programs within the organization.

**(4) Administrative direction - Advice and assistance is limited to accomplishment of broad objectives and policies. Completed work is reviewed for compliance with laws and regulations, and adherence to program goals, objectives, budgetary limitations and general employer policies.**

- Employee receives guidance in terms of broad goals and overall objectives and is responsible for establishing the methods to attain them.
- Employee works independently within the scope and context of rules, regulations and employer objectives.
- Employee independently plans, designs and carries out programs, projects and studies in accordance with broad policy statements or legal requirements.
- Employee exercises independent decision-making authority for determining work objectives and goals to be accomplished.
- Employee is in charge of an area of work and formulates policy for this area but does not necessarily have final authority for approving policy.

**For Example:** A senior biologist position formulating environmental policy for a region's wildlife habitat.

**Supervisor.** An employee who is assigned responsibility by management to participate in all of the following functions with respect to their subordinate employees:

- Selecting staff
- Training and development
- Planning and assignment of work
- Evaluating performance
- Resolving grievances
- Taking corrective action

Participation in these functions is not routine and requires the exercise of individual judgment.

**Technical.** See Nature of Work.

**Trades.** See Nature of Work.

**Washington General Service (WGS).** A system of personnel administration that applies to classified employees or positions under the jurisdiction of chapter 41.06 RCW which do not meet the definition of manager found in RCW 41.06.022.

**Work Methods.** Techniques for performing tasks including the sequence of steps to accomplish a desired outcome.