


POLICY NUMBER: HR2024-001	POLICY TITLE: <b>Classification Policy</b>	
RESOLUTION NUMBER: XX-XX		
ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE: Month Day, Year	POLICY CONTACTS: Human Resources	
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	RELATED POLICIES: N/A.	

## Contents

Classification Policy .....	1
SECTION I – PURPOSE .....	2
A. Purpose of a Classification Policy .....	2
B. Benefits of a Classification Policy .....	3
C. County Rights .....	5
SECTION II – APPLICABILITY .....	5
SECTION III – CLASSIFICATION CONCEPTS.....	6
A. Overview of Classification Concepts .....	6
B. Positions vs. Classifications .....	6
C. The Relationship Between Classification and Compensation.....	7
D. Career Families .....	7
E. Classification Titling and Leveling Concepts .....	8
F. Flexible Staffing.....	15
G. Classification Specifications .....	16
H. Fair Labor Standards Act .....	18
I. Equal Employment Opportunity Categories.....	20
J. Confidential Employees .....	20
K. Classification Determination Factors .....	21
SECTION IV – CONDUCTING CLASSIFICATION STUDIES .....	21
A. How Classification Studies are Initiated .....	21
B. Common Classification Study Questions.....	22
C. Reasons for Conducting a Classification Study .....	23
D. Classification Study Outcomes .....	24
E. Effects of Classification Studies on Incumbents .....	25

## SECTION I – PURPOSE

---

---

### A. Purpose of a Classification Policy

A well-defined classification system is the foundation on which an organization manages its most important resources – people. To this end, County of Humboldt has developed a Classification Policy to achieve many aspects of its human resources management goals.

This Classification Policy serves as the official guidelines and policies for County of Humboldt’s classification system. Any changes to the Classification Policy will be met and conferred upon in compliance with the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA). If there is any conflict between provisions of this Policy and the language contained in the labor contracts (MOUs) or any resolution authorizing pay and benefits between the county and a recognized employee organization, or with the County Code, the provisions contained in the MOU shall take precedence.

Sound classification systems and policies include current, complete, and accurate classification specifications, a classification hierarchy, definitions of classification levels, important allocation factors, supervisory/reporting relationships, supervisory types and definitions, classification/position study procedures, career ladders, and all policies that relate to county job classifications.

Further, the purpose of classification of positions is to (1) classify positions according to their common characteristics of kind of work, level of difficulty, degree of responsibility, qualification requirements, and other factors outlined later in this Policy; and (2) begin the initial formulation of policies and procedures, development of occupational structures and preparation of classification standards, evaluation guides, and other reference materials concerning classification work processes. The paramount qualification requirements of positions included in this Policy are the knowledge, skills, and abilities in position analysis and evaluation to determine the appropriate pay scale, occupational grouping and job families, title, and functional level (or difficulty level) of positions.

While this Policy does not directly address the county’s compensation schedule, for salary administration, the Policy serves as the foundation of the county’s compensation philosophy and approach for administering the various policies and procedures for ensuring that actions related to pay are fair, equitable, and consistent.

Unless otherwise noted, the content of this Policy applies to all county

classifications.

## B. Benefits of a Classification Policy

A classification policy is the foundation for almost all other human resources functions. It is the basis for hiring, legal compliance, and performance management, including coaching and mentoring, workforce planning, compensation, employee relations, promotions, transfers, and training and development. In particular, the following personnel functions benefit greatly from having a good classification policy in place.

### **Recruitment and Hiring**

Well-written classification specifications serve as communication tools that allow both employees and candidates to clearly understand the expectations of the role, its essential duties, and the competencies, educational credentials, and experience required for the role. They can improve recruitment and assist in retaining and motivating the best talent by ensuring that employee expectations are aligned with business expectations of what the role entails.

### **Compensation**

While the compensation should not be included in the classification specification, the classification specification should allow you to do research to determine the market value of that role. It should also allow Human Resources to assess the internal value and to see how a position fits within the county's compensation structure as compared to other jobs. If done well, the classification specification will help Human Resources assess where the class falls within any existing pay structures so that the county does not create inequity or compaction issues when filling the role.

### **Legal Compliance**

While maintaining classification specifications is not required by law, doing so can help the county stay in compliance with many existing employment laws, such as:

- **Fair Labor Standards Act:** Good classification specifications help to ensure proper classification of roles as exempt vs. non-exempt, which will then affect the overtime eligibility of the employee filling the role.
- **Equal Pay Act of 1963:** This law is aimed at abolishing disparity based on gender. Classification specifications should not indicate that there are gender pay differences or bias with regard to the classification.
- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Employment Act:** A good classification policy prohibits unlawful discrimination against any

individual with respect to hiring; compensation or other terms; or conditions and privileges of employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age. By matching up the best candidates based on factors that are relevant, as noted in the classification specification, the county will be able to better prove that its employment decisions were taken based on the ability to perform the job, not based on illegal factors.

**Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA):** By describing the working conditions in a classification specification, the county is also setting out how to safely perform the job. This is also an opportunity to note whether the employee will need to be able to perform hazardous activities.

- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** A good classification specification allows the county to conduct a fair selection process, such as interviewing without leaving out any groups of potential candidates.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act:** The classification specification can be an essential component in determining the essential functions of the job when determining reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The classification specification should specify the essential job functions and should be periodically reviewed for accuracy on this point.

### **Organizational Development and Workforce Planning**

Without a sound and comprehensive classification policy, the county will not be fully positioned to address its current and future organizational development and workforce planning efforts. Workforce planning is the strategic alignment of an organization's human capital with its business direction. It includes the methodical process of analyzing the current workforce, determining future workforce needs, identifying the gap between the present and future, and implementing solutions so the organization can accomplish its mission, goals, and objectives.

People planning is critical to the county's business. A full list of well-developed classification specifications across the organization shows all of the roles for the organization, and thus can show what roles are not filled and help with future planning. Class specifications can note the role of the position within the organization and the future career path so that recruitment is forward-looking to future roles. Hiring managers can then consider whether a candidate is fit for not just the current vacancy, but also consider the fitness of the individual for future advancement.

### **Training, Development, and Performance**

Classification specifications can be matched up with the performance evaluation

system to identify areas where additional training and development is needed. They also serve as the basis for performance management systems by clearly defining the job knowledge and ability factors that relate to successful job performance.

### C. County Rights

The rights of the county derive from the Constitution of the State of California and applicable State codes. The exercise of such rights does not preclude employees or their representatives from raising grievances about the practical consequences that decisions on these matters may have on the wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. The exclusive rights of the county shall include, but not be limited to, the right, subject to applicable law, to:

- Adopt county policies, rules, regulations, and practices, and the use of judgement and discretion in connection therewith.
- Unilaterally and exclusively operate, administer, and manage its services and the workforce performing these services.
- Determine the organization of county government and the mission of its constituent agencies.
- Determine the nature, quantity, and quality of services to be offered to the public and to determine the means of operations, materials, and personnel to be used.
- Introduce new or improved methods or facilities and to change or alter personnel, level of workforce, methods, means, materials, and facilities.
- Exercise control and discretion over its organization and operation through its managerial employees.
- Establish and effect rules and regulations consistent with applicable law.
- Establish and implement standards of selecting county personnel and standards for continuing employment with the county.
- Direct the workforce by determining the work to be performed, the personnel who shall perform the work, assigning overtime and scheduling the work.
- Take disciplinary action.
- Relieve its employees because of lack of work, funds, or for other reasons.
- Determine whether material or services shall be made, purchased, or contracted for.
- Otherwise act in the best interest of efficient service to the citizens of the county.
- Take whatever actions it deems appropriate during an emergency. The determination of whether an emergency exists is solely within the discretion of the county.

## SECTION II – APPLICABILITY

---

This policy applies to all County classifications.

## SECTION III – CLASSIFICATION CONCEPTS

---

### A. Overview of Classification Concepts

This Policy presents a conceptual framework for the county’s classification system and identifies distinct differences in levels of work as determined through the use of established determination factors and class concepts. The concepts summarized in this Policy include:

- Positions vs. Classifications
- The Relationship Between Classification and Compensation
- Career Families
- Classification Titling and Leveling Concepts
- Flexible Staffing
- Classification Specifications
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- Equal Employment Opportunity Categories
- Confidential Employees
- Classification Determination Factors

The classification structure assists in providing a logical, consistent, and fair system, and helps applicants, employees, and managers in understanding job duties, responsibilities, and qualifications; ensures equal pay for equal work; and provides valuable information in organizational planning and analysis, staff development, and performance management.

The county takes a broad approach to classification. Broad classification concepts provide a general fit of an employee to the classification and focus on the broader knowledge, skills, and abilities common to a large number of positions.

Positions are evaluated and classified on the basis of such determination factors as knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the work, the complexity of the work, the authority delegated to make decisions and take action, the responsibility for the work of others and/or for budget expenditures, contacts with others (both inside and outside of the organization), and the impact of the position on the organization.

### B. Positions vs. Classifications

“Position” and “classification” are two terms that are often used interchangeably

but have very different meanings. As used in this Policy:

- A position is an assigned group of duties and responsibilities performed by one person. A position can be full-time or part-time, regular or temporary/extra help, filled or vacant. Often the word “job” is used in place of the word “position.”
- A classification or class may contain only one position or may consist of several positions. When several positions are assigned to one class, it means that the same title is appropriate for each position; that the scope, level, duties, and responsibilities of each position assigned to the class are sufficiently similar (but not identical); that the same core knowledge, skills, abilities, and other requirements are appropriate for all positions; and that the same salary range is equitable for all positions in the class. When positions are classified, the focus is on assigned job duties and the job-related requirements for successful performance, not on individual employee capabilities or amount of work performed.

#### C. The Relationship Between Classification and Compensation

Classification, the description of the work, and the requirements to perform the work are separate and distinct from determining the worth of that work in the labor market and to the organization. While recommending the appropriate compensation for the work of a class depends upon an understanding of what that work is and what it requires, compensation levels are often influenced by two factors:

- The external labor market.
- Internal relationships within the organization.

#### D. Career Families

All classifications within the county are part of a systematic classification structure based on the duties performed, nature and level of responsibilities, and other work-related requirements of the positions. Classifications are grouped into career families, which are classifications with similar functions, roles, or skills.

Each career family consists of different classifications and levels. Once the appropriate career family has been selected, the classification is determined based upon the duties performed, scope of responsibility, level of skill, education requirements, and the potential impact on the county’s operations. Career families are related by common vocations or professions. Classifications in the same family are similar in that they:

- Require similar types of knowledge, skills, and abilities (competencies),

although in varying degrees of complexity and difficulty.

- Have a continuum of knowledge, skills, and abilities that represent a career path from the lowest to the highest-level job.
- Possess associated and related key behaviors.
- Have similar market competitive pay characteristics and conditions.

Examples of career families are engineering, financial services, and information technology. Within the financial services career family, the county has an accounting career ladder, which includes Fiscal Assistant I/II, Senior Fiscal Assistant, Accounting Technician, Accountant-Auditor I/II, Senior Accountant-Auditor, and Supervising Accountant-Auditor, Deputy Auditor-Controller, Assistant Auditor-Controller, and Auditor-Controller.

## E. Classification Titling and Leveling Concepts

Class titling concepts provide the county and its management, employees, and external stakeholders context for titles they see within the class policy. Titling generally reflects levels of work; span of control; and level of authority within the organization, the career family, and the class series.

Within each classification series, there may exist a classification at each level or only at selected levels. The levels within the classification series reflect the county's needs and priorities. For example, in some classification series, there is no need for functions to be performed at the advanced journey or supervisor level. Distinctions between levels within classification series can be defined based on scope of responsibility, complexity and/or variety of work, supervision received and exercised, authority and complexity of making decisions and taking action, and type and level of required knowledge, skills, abilities, education, training, and experience, licensure/certification. Following are descriptions of each classification type: Director, Assistant Director, Deputy Director, Manager, Principal, Supervisor, Program Manager, Professional, Specialist, Coordinator, Technician, and Staff.

### 1. Director

Plans, organizes, manages, and provides administrative direction and oversight for all functions and activities of the assigned department. Provides highly responsible and complex management assistance to the County Administrative Officer and the Board in coordinating and directing county-wide departmental activities and operations. Assists the County Administrative Officer in executing the long-term vision for the county in collaboration with the Board and other department directors. Coordinates assigned activities with officials and outside agencies and fosters cooperative working relationships among county departments and with intergovernmental and regulatory agencies and various public and private groups.



Work situations require the analysis and application of organizational policies and goals, complex laws, and/or general business or ethical considerations. Positions operate in highly visible, politically sensitive, legally complex, and evolving arenas working on significant and strategic issues and problems, as well as county-wide and/or Board priorities and directives, requiring political sensitivity and in-depth evaluation and analysis of various (and often competing) circumstances, interests, and information. Incumbents are responsible for achieving departmental goals and objectives. Incumbents often deal with public officials; members of boards, councils, and commissions; legislators; regulatory agencies; and the community to provide policy direction, explain program mission and objectives, and/or negotiate solutions to difficult problems.

## **2. Assistant Director**

Under administrative direction, provides highly responsible and complex management assistance to the department head in coordinating and directing departmental division activities and operations. Coordinates assigned activities with other departments, officials, outside agencies, and the public; and fosters cooperative working relationships among county departments and with intergovernmental and regulatory agencies and various public and private groups. Provides leadership to all departmental divisions to enable management to effectively and efficiently maximize available resources; ensures quality service provision to the residents of the community; acts as department director in the director's absence; and provides highly responsible and complex professional assistance to county management staff in areas of expertise.

Work situations require the analysis and application of organizational policies and goals, complex laws, and/or general business or ethical consideration. Positions operate in highly visible, politically sensitive, legally complex, and evolving arenas working on significant and strategic issues and problems, as well as county-wide and/or Board priorities and directives, requiring political sensitivity and in-depth evaluation and analysis of various (and often competing) circumstances, interests, and information. Incumbents are responsible for achieving departmental goals and objectives. Incumbents often deal with public officials; members of boards, councils, and commissions; legislators; regulatory agencies; and the community to provide policy direction, explain program mission and objectives, and/or negotiate solutions to difficult problems.

## **3. Deputy Director**

This classification is considered mid-management within a department, managing through subordinate levels of supervision. In addition to the responsibilities outlined at the manager level, responsibilities include allocating staff and budget resources among competing demands and performing significant service delivery planning and

evaluation within a segment of the organization representing a specific service function which has a chain of command.

The main difference between the deputy director and the manager is that the latter has full management responsibility over a recognized unit of the organization, while the former oversees subunit/s through subordinates.

The deputy director spends the majority of time on policy development and administration; long- and short-term planning; ensuring compliance with laws, county ordinances, codes, and regulations; and budgeting responsibilities. The deputy director level develops, recommends, and sets the programs, projects, goals, and policies and procedures of the division.

#### **4. Manager (includes Superintendent)**

This classification is considered mid-management. In addition to the responsibilities outlined at the supervisor level, responsibilities include allocating staff and budget resources among competing demands and performing significant service delivery planning, and evaluation at the subunit level. This level is responsible for a unit, defined as a segment of the organization representing a specific business function which has a chain of command.

The main difference between the supervisor and the manager is that the supervisor spends a portion of time performing the same duties as those supervised within their subunit(s), while a manager spends the majority of time on administrative, long- and short-term planning, and budgeting responsibilities. The managerial level develops, recommends, and sets the programs, projects, goals, and policies and procedures of the unit, while the supervisory level is more involved in the day-to-day implementation and execution of those programs, projects, and policies and procedures.

#### **5. Principal (Subject Matter Expert)**

The Principal is typically seen as a deep subject matter expert that provides professional support relative to highly technical and/or sensitive projects/programs; assists other divisions and/or departments in obtaining information and development of recommendations regarding management issues; and assists in the development of new programs and/or addition/modification of program elements as needed to meet goals and objectives. This position functions as the “manager” of a large program and/or multiple projects with significant impact not only county-wide but also on the community at large and may affect outside agencies and other entities. The employee is responsible for designing, planning, implementing, and maintaining the program, including short- and long-term planning activities, budget preparation and implementation, analyzing data for trends, and community

education and outreach. Responsibilities include performing diverse, specialized, and complex work involving significant accountability and decision-making responsibility, as well as extensive staff, public, and organizational contact. Successful performance of the work requires skill in managing projects and coordinating assigned work with other departments and outside entities.

Work situations require the analysis and application of organizational policies and goals, complex laws, and/or general business or ethical considerations. The employee is subject only to the policy guidance of executive management and/or broad regulatory or legal constraints. The ultimate authority for achieving the goals and objectives of the program are with this employee. The employee often deals with public officials, members of boards, councils, commissions, and others to provide policy direction, explain program missions, and/or negotiate solutions to difficult problems.

## **6. Supervisor**

The focus of the job is on the direct supervision and coordination of a unit, and includes hands-on participation in the work activities of those supervised. Incumbents plan, assign, direct, review, and evaluate the work of staff. In addition, incumbents assigned to this level make effective recommendations and/or carry out selection, performance evaluation, and disciplinary procedures.

The supervisor also exercises discretion in selecting appropriate resources to use in accomplishing assigned work; monitors and reviews work in progress and provides technical assistance and guidance; ensures that appropriate policies and procedures are followed by subordinates; monitors, coordinates, and provides input into developing the budget for the subunit(s); and recommends procedures consistent with unit, divisional, and county directives, policies, and regulations, which are developed by higher-level management staff.

As a note regarding titling conventions within technician and staff classification series, the supervisor level is typically designated with a “supervisor” title. Within analyst/specialist and administrator classification series, the supervisor level is typically designated as “senior”.

## **7. Program Manager**

This classification is typically responsible for a program, defined as a planned coordinated group of activities and procedures created for a specific function related to ongoing county operations, initiatives, and services as well as management and/or Board priorities and directives. A program encompasses multiple projects with department-wide and community served impact. Employees are responsible for designing, planning, implementing, evaluating, and modifying

the program, including short- and long-term planning activities; budget preparation and implementation; performing extensive, in-depth, and specialized, administrative, budgetary, financial, and compliance research and analysis; supporting and analyzing programmatic practices and procedures; and developing and implementing recommendations for operational, policy, and procedural improvements for the assigned program(s). Employees serve as a specialist, liaison, and advocate for the assigned program(s) requiring the use of initiative and resourcefulness, considerable independent judgment, and regular contact with senior management positions within the county, other public agencies, legislators, private and community organizations, regulatory and governmental agencies, and the public.

#### **8. Professional (includes Analyst and Deputy)**

This classification performs operational, financial, budgetary, legal, regulatory, political, and/or administrative analyses and studies; researches and analyzes practices and procedures and develops recommendations for organizational, operational, policy, and procedural improvements; and conducts needs analyses, feasibility studies, and evaluations for assigned programs, projects, and activities. Employees receive broad (non-detailed and non-specific) assignments and/or tasks and are responsible for independently developing a plan of action and approach; identifying, synthesizing, and interpreting relevant sources of data and information; selecting and implementing methodology; analyzing and interpreting results; developing recommendations; and presenting final products for supervisor and management review. Work assignments are reviewed during the normal briefing cycle, generally upon completion, and for overall results. Decisions may have significant unit, division, or county-wide service delivery, operational, legislative, regulatory, and/or budgetary/financial impact. A four-year degree in the area assigned is typically a minimum qualification.

#### **9. Specialist**

This classification performs operational and/or administrative analyses and studies; researches and analyzes practices and procedures and develops recommendations for organizational, operational, policy, and procedural improvements for assigned programs, projects, and activities. Employees rely upon their deep knowledge related to the assigned area of expertise to receive broad (non-detailed and non-specific) assignments and/or tasks and are responsible for independently developing a plan of action and approach; identifying, synthesizing, and interpreting relevant sources of data and information; selecting and implementing methodology; analyzing and interpreting results; developing recommendations; and presenting final products for supervisor and management review. Work assignments are reviewed during the normal briefing cycle, generally upon completion, and for overall results. Decisions may have significant unit, division, or county-wide service

delivery or operational impact. A four-year degree in the area assigned is typically a minimum qualification.

## **10. Coordinator**

The term “Coordinator” is often used for classes responsible for the coordination and administration of one or more programs or projects in a department/division with external contractors, agencies, and/or service providers.

The employee would typically have responsibility for independently coordinating one or more programs or projects on a regular basis. The duties involved would include the implementation of the program’s or project’s goals and objectives, oversight of performance, input as to budget preparation and administration, promotion or marketing, and evaluation. Incumbents at this level may have limited supervisory responsibility such as exercising functional and technical direction over full-time staff, or directing part-time, temporary, and/or contract staff, volunteers, and/or interns.

## **11. Technician**

This is a paraprofessional classification that performs a combination of duties requiring the application of knowledge obtained from technical, vocational education, and/or experience usually provided through a two-year degree and/or post-secondary coursework and/or training. Employees assume regular ongoing work that involves specific technical and programmatic skills and abilities, requiring the interpretation and application of policies and procedures of greater depth as it relates to the assignment.

## **12. Support Staff**

Administrative support and maintenance positions within this category engage in work that is predominantly standard and customarily mental, manual, mechanical, or physical work. The work is transactional, meaning that the focus is on maintaining the normal workflow of operations and the work typically fits within established techniques, procedures, processes, or specific standards. Typically, employees acquire their skill by experience rather than by advanced specialized intellectual instruction.

### *Classification Series Leveling Concepts:*

Classification levels within a series should be distinguishable, and generally fall within the following levels of work:

#### ➤ **Senior (Advanced Journey/Lead Staff Level)**

In addition to performing the full scope of work, employees provide technical and functional direction to assigned staff on an on-going, day-to-day basis, and perform the most difficult and complex assignments requiring the advanced knowledge of concepts in assigned area of responsibility, as well as county and regulatory standards, practices, policies, and procedures. Responsibilities include performing diverse, specialized, and complex work involving significant accountability and decision-making responsibility. Employees organize and oversee day-to-day activities and are responsible for providing support to an assigned supervisor/unit manager in a variety of areas. Successful performance of the work requires an extensive background as well as the ability to coordinate subunit or unit work with that of other units and outside agencies. For some positions, the work involves a high-level of problem-solving requiring analysis of unique issues or problems without precedent and/or structure and formulating and presenting strategies and recommendations to management.

➤ **III (Advanced Journey/Highly Specialized)**

Employees at this level perform a full range of duties, possess special technical or function expertise, and are assigned specialized duties. They typically are assigned significant responsibilities above the journey level that require specialized knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience, and exercise independent judgment in the performance of their duties. The standard for allocation of this class level is that the position is responsible for performing the highly specialized work for a preponderance of the time. III's may also provide technical or functional direction on a project or intermittent basis to lower-level staff.

➤ **II (Journey/Fully Proficient)**

In addition to performing the full scope of work, employees are responsible for duties requiring thorough knowledge of concepts in assigned area(s), as well as county practices, procedures, policies, and regulatory requirements. Employees at this level are required to be fully trained in all procedures and able to provide technical guidance to less experienced staff. Employees use independent judgment and decision-making authority when identifying, evaluating, adapting, and applying appropriate concepts, guidelines, references, and procedures to resolve moderate to complex problems. Work is typically reviewed upon completion for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements as well as the methodology used in arriving at the end results.

➤ **I (Entry)**

Depending on functional assignment, knowledge may be attained by obtaining a high school diploma (or equivalent), completing specific coursework, or obtaining a

four-year or advanced college or university degree. Entry-level classifications generally perform the same duties as the journey level in the series; however, the duties are typically performed in a learning capacity, with less skill and complexity, and under closer supervision. Incumbents may not have any (or only very limited) experience upon entry. The employee is responsible for the performance of his or her own work only. Work situations normally involve making choices among a limited number of alternatives that are clearly defined by policies and procedures. Direct supervision is readily available. (Note: Some Merit System Services classifications titled "I" may not be considered entry level.)

### ➤ Trainee

The county has several Trainee classifications that are typically accompanied by a formal training program where incumbents gain the required experience to advance to the entry level.

Some exceptions to these titling and leveling guidelines may be found within the classification structure (e.g., Deputy County Counsel I/II/III/IV/Senior), where the IV level is the fourth working and fully proficient journey level of the series; however, these are limited exceptions based on operational needs.

## F. Flexible Staffing

Flexible staffing exists when a classification series has two or more levels and an employee can be initially appointed to any level in the series, depending upon experience and/or education, and can be promoted from one level in the series to another without further testing. The purpose of using this type of classification structure is not to give employees more money for doing the same job (grade creep); rather, there needs to be some rationale for its use, such as a classification that has several positions allocated to it in one department and the need to bring in new employees at a lower level, or to recognize a level that handles the most complex duties of a class.

The two levels (and sometimes three levels, although not common) in a flexibly-staffed class series are essentially the same job (though the scope of duties is more limited at the entry level), and it is the employee's performance that warrants promotion to the journey level, rather than a change in the position. In most cases, after putting in at least the required time-in-grade, if an employee is performing the full scope of the classification's duties and is doing so independently and with little direction, then promotion to the journey-level class is warranted. Flexible staffing is the only case in any classification decision where the performance of the employee is the major consideration. All other class decisions consciously remove the employee from the equation with the entire focus placed only on the duties and responsibilities of the position, irrespective of the incumbent and their

performance.

Promotion from the first level to the second level is not a vested right after serving time in grade. Recommendations to be promoted within a flexibly-staffed class series are based on the following criteria:

- The employee is allocated to a position that has been designated as flexibly staffed.
- The employee has passed their probationary period in the lower flexibly-staffed classification.
- The employee meets all of the education and experience requirements for the higher flexibly-staffed classification, including the stated time-in-grade requirement.
- The employee is performing the full range of duties in the higher classification.
- The employee's overall job performance is consistently meeting standards, as detailed in recent performance evaluations.

Major characteristics of flexible staffing are:

- Ability to hire employees at any level in the classification series.
- Ability to recognize performance and to promote staff based on demonstrated knowledge, skills, and abilities, independence of work performance, and a specific amount of time-in-grade experience.
- Ability to promote from one level to the next without further examination or competitive selection process.

To help facilitate standards, class specifications should indicate that the classification is flexibly staffed and positions are normally filled by advancement from the entry level, after gaining the knowledge, skills, and experience that meet the qualifications for and after demonstrating the ability to perform the work of the higher-level class, and is subject to management approval.

## G. Classification Specifications

Classification specifications provide:

- A written summary documenting the work performed by the incumbents of the classifications.
- Distinctions among the classes.
- Documentation of requirements and qualifications to assist in the recruitment and selection process.

A class specification normally reflects several positions and is a summary document that does not list each duty performed by every employee. The class specification,



which is intended to be broader, more general, and informational, is intended to indicate the general scope and level of responsibility and requirements of the class, not detail-specific position responsibilities.

The sections of each class specification are as follows:

**Title:** This should be brief and descriptive of the class and consistent with other titles in the classification policy and the occupational area. The title of a classification is normally used for organization, classification, and compensation purposes within the county. Often working titles are used within a department to differentiate an individual. All positions have a similar level of scope and responsibility; however, the working titles may give assurance to a member of the public that they are dealing with an appropriate individual. Working titles must be authorized by Human Resources via an authorized form to ensure consistency within the county and across departmental lines.

**Definition:** This provides a capsule description of the classification and should give an indication of the type of supervision received, the scope and level of the work, and any unusual or unique factors. The phrase “performs related work as required” is not meant to unfairly expand the scope of the work performed, but to acknowledge that jobs change and that not all duties are included in the class specification.

**Supervision Received and Exercised:** This section specifies which class or classes provide supervision to the class being described and the type and level of work direction or supervision provided to this class. The section also specifies what type and level of work direction or supervision the class provides to other classes. This assists the reader in defining where the class “fits” in the organization and alludes to possible career advancement opportunities.

**Class Characteristics:** This section slightly expands upon the Definition, clarifying the most important aspects of the class and distinguishing the class from the next higher-level in a class series or from a similar class in a different occupational series.

**Examples of Typical Job Functions:** This section provides a list of the major and typical duties, intended to define the scope and level of the class and to support the Qualifications, including knowledge and abilities. This list is meant to be illustrative only. It should be emphasized that the description is a summary document, and that duties change depending upon program requirements, technology, and organizational needs.

**Qualifications:** This element of the class specification has several sections:

- A listing of the job-related **knowledge and abilities** required to successfully

perform the work. They must be related to the duties and responsibilities of the work and capable of being validated under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Uniform Guidelines on Selection Procedures. Knowledge (intellectual comprehension) and abilities (acquired proficiency) should be sufficiently detailed to provide the basis for selection of qualified employees.

- A listing of **educational and experience** requirements that outline the typical minimum and alternative ways of gaining the knowledge and abilities required for entrance into the selection process. These elements are used by Human Resources as the basic minimum qualifications screening technique for job applicants.
- **Licenses and/or certifications** identify those specifically required to perform the work. These certifications are often required by an agency higher than the county (e.g., the State), and can therefore be appropriately included as requirements. These elements are used by Human Resources to primary source verify credentials with the certifying agency during the minimum qualifications screening.

**Physical Demands:** This section identifies the basic physical abilities required for performance of the work. These are not presented in great detail but are designed to indicate the type of pre-employment physical examination and to provide an initial basis for determining reasonable accommodation for ADA/FEHA purposes. Determining factors include, but are not limited to, effort exerted for sustained periods, manual dexterity requirements, lifting requirements, and pushing, pulling, crouching, and stooping requirements.

**Environmental Conditions:** These can describe certain outside influences and circumstances under which a job is performed; they give employees or job applicants an idea of certain risks involved in the job and what type of protective gear may be necessary to perform the job. Examples are loud noise levels, cold and/or hot temperatures, vibration, confining workspaces, chemicals, mechanical and/or electrical hazards, and other job conditions.

#### H. Fair Labor Standards Act

One of the major components of classification review is the determination of each classification's appropriate Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status (i.e., exempt vs. non-exempt from the FLSA overtime rules and regulations). FLSA determinations may be reviewed by a labor attorney to ensure accurate status. Below are the steps used for the determination of exempt FLSA status.

**Salary Basis Test:** To qualify for exemption, the incumbents in a classification

generally must be paid not less than an amount specified by the FLSA. A classification is typically exempt if the incumbents in a classification are paid on a salary basis with a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period, not subject to reduction due to variations in quantity or quality of work performed. They receive full salary for any week in which they perform any work.

**Exemption Applicability:** The classification may be FLSA exempt if the incumbents perform any of the following types of jobs:

- **Executive:** Employee whose primary duty is to manage the business or a recognized department/entity and who customarily directs the work of two or more employees. This also includes individuals who hire, fire, or make recommendations that carry weight regarding employment status.
- **Administrative:** Employee whose primary activities are performing office work or non-manual work on matters of significance relating to the management or business operations of the firm or its customers and which require the exercise of discretion and independent judgment.
- **Professional:** Employee who primarily performs work requiring advanced knowledge/education and which includes consistent exercise of discretion and independent judgment. The advanced knowledge must be in a field of science or learning acquired in a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction.
- **Computer professional:** Employee who primarily performs work as a computer systems analyst, programmer, software engineer, or similarly skilled work in the computer field performing (a) application of systems analysis techniques and procedures, including consulting with users to determine hardware, software, or system functional specifications; (b) design, development, documentation, analysis, creation, testing, or modification of computer systems or programs, including prototypes, based on and related to user or system design specification; or (c) design, documentation, testing, creation, or modification of computer programs based on and related to user or system design specifications; or a combination of the duties described above, the performance of which requires the same level of skills.

**Job Analysis:** A thorough job analysis of the job duties must be performed to determine exempt status. An exempt position must pass both the salary basis and duties tests. The job analysis should include:

- Review of the minimum qualifications established for the position.
- Review of prior class specifications, questionnaires, and related documentation.

- Confirmation of duty accuracy with management.
- Review and analysis of workflow, organizational relationships, policies, and other available organizational data.

Non-exempt classifications work within detailed and well-defined sets of rules and regulations, policies, procedures, and practices that must be followed when making decisions. Although the knowledge base required to perform the work may be significant, the framework within which incumbents work is restrictive and finite. (Please note that FLSA does not allow for the consideration of workload and scheduling when it comes to exemption status.)

Finally, often a classification performs both non-exempt and exempt duties, so time spent on each type of duties is analyzed. If a classification performs mostly non-exempt duties (i.e., more than 50% of the time), then the classification would be considered non-exempt. The bargaining unit or recognized employee organization that a classification has been designated to is not a factor in FLSA exempt status determination.

#### I. Equal Employment Opportunity Categories

The county is responsible for identifying each classification's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) job category and reporting EEO employee data to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEO job categories include:

- Officials and Administrators
- Professionals
- Technicians
- Protective Service
- Paraprofessionals
- Administrative Support
- Skilled Craft
- Service-Maintenance

The definition of each category may be reviewed in Human Resources procedural documents.

#### J. Confidential Employees

Per the county of Humboldt Employer-Employee Relations Policy, a confidential employee is defined as an employee who is required to develop or present management positions with respect to employer-employee relations or whose duties normally require access to confidential information that is used to contribute significantly to the development of management positions such as future bargaining strategy or changes that the employer anticipates may result

from collective bargaining.

#### K. Classification Determination Factors

An effective classification system is based on the interrelationship between duties performed, the nature and level of responsibilities, and other work-related requirements of the classifications.

Classifications and classification systems are not a stable, unchanging entities. Classifications may be updated and revised by conducting classification studies that are organization wide or position specific. The methodology used for both types of studies is the same.

For either type of study, when identifying appropriate placement of new and/or realigned positions within the classification system, there are general determination factors to consider. By analyzing these factors, the county will be able to change and grow the organization while maintaining the classification system. Additional details about each factor may be found in Human Resources procedural documents.

- Type and Level of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Required
- Supervisory/Management Responsibility
- Supervision Received
- Problem Solving
- Authority for Making Decisions and Taking Action
- Interaction with Others
- Working Conditions/Physical Demands

## SECTION IV – CONDUCTING CLASSIFICATION STUDIES

To properly maintain the classification system, it is sometimes necessary to conduct classification studies, which may involve anything from a single-position audit to determine if it is properly classified to a study of an entire classification series or organizational unit.

To help understand the process and issues related to classification studies, the information in this section provides answers to common questions about position and classification studies and outlines a typical process.

#### A. How Classification Studies are Initiated

The following are standard ways classification studies are initiated during the open period. Check with Human Resources for the current classification/review timeline,

which is typically during the county's fiscal year budget process. This will allow Human Resources the time to carry out the classification study and provide recommendations to potentially be implemented in the next fiscal year budget.

All classification study requests must be submitted on a form prescribed by Human Resources and accompanied by an organizational chart indicating the proposed changes.

- Department heads may request classification studies (usually single position reclassifications) in writing during the county fiscal year budget process.
- A department head and Human Resources may agree that due to special circumstances, a classification study is warranted outside of the county fiscal year budget process. (e.g., a department/division/unit reorganization, access to grant funding, and new regulatory mandates)
- A recognized employee organization, on behalf of its members, may directly request a classification study. The request must be in writing to Human Resources, which states why the study is requested and outlines the changes that the position(s) have undergone over time that warrant a review.

Classification study requests apply to the following circumstances:

- Allocating an additional position when a job classification currently exists within the current County Classification System.
- Reallocating an existing position (with no incumbent) when a job classification currently exists within the current County Classification Policy.
- Development of a new job classification.
- Reclassification of an existing position (with an incumbent).

*A Position Description Questionnaire may be required before any classification study or reclassification can occur.*

## B. Common Classification Study Questions

Based on the classification determination factors in Section II of this Policy, in the maintenance of the classification system when an employee is assigned additional duty or responsibility and requests a change in classification, it is reasonable to ask:

- What additional knowledge, skills, and abilities are required to perform the duty?
- How does one gain these additional knowledge, skills, and abilities (through extended training, a short-term seminar, or on-the-job experience)?
- Does this duty or responsibility require new or additional supervisory responsibilities?
- Is there a greater variety of or are there more complex problems that need to

- be solved as a result of the new duty?
- Does the employee have to make a greater variety of or more difficult decisions as a result of this new duty?
  - Are the impacts of decisions greater because of this new duty (effects on staff, budget, county-wide activities, and/or relations with other agencies)?
  - Are guidelines, policies, and/or procedures provided to the employee for the performance of this new duty?
  - Is the employee interacting with internal and external stakeholders more frequently or for a different purpose as a result of this new assignment?
  - Have the working or physical conditions of the job changed as a result of this new assignment?

The analysis of classification determination factors, as well as the answers to these questions, are used to determine appropriate classifications for county positions. The factors above will also help to guide the placement of specific positions to the existing classification system and/or revision of classification system in the future.

### C. Reasons for Conducting a Classification Study

#### **Why Are Classification Studies Conducted?**

- Due to gradual changes in duties performed.
- Due to changes in organizational relationships and responsibilities.
- Due to recruitment/retention problems.
- Need for more equitable internal alignment; to establish an orderly, rational systematic structure of jobs based on their “worth.”
- To assist in setting pay rates that are comparable to related jobs in other organizations (additionally, an internal alignment analysis or a compensation study may need to be conducted).
- To allow for measuring work against a common standard; to plan and organize work effectively by defining work tasks, duties, responsibilities, functions, and related requirements.
- To identify a career ladder of progression or direction for employee advancement.
- To provide a solid foundation for addressing compensation issues (once again, an internal alignment analysis or a compensation study may need to be conducted).

#### **Factors That May Justify a Reclassification:**

- A change in type of work or essential functions (e.g., a secretary now doing accounting work a large percentage of the time).
- A change in lead or supervisory responsibilities.
- A change in (a) authority for making operational changes; (b) developing,

recommending, and interpreting policies and procedures; or (c) the impact to the organization, affecting the work group, unit/section, division, department, or county.

- The addition of stronger, more complex duties or removal of lower-level duties.
- A change in organizational structure or mandate that affects reporting relationships, level in the organization, amount of management review, and/or interactions.

### **Factors That Do Not Justify a Reclassification**

- The performance of the incumbent in the position; reclassification should not be considered a reward or means to promote someone.
- The retention of a specific employee.
- An increase in workload that is of the same nature and level of complexity (i.e., volume); this is a workload issue.
- A change in the emphasis of existing essential functions that are generally of the same complexity.
- Knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by the incumbent that are not required or regularly used in the position.
- Technological changes or tools (i.e., new software) that do not substantially alter the essential functions of the job (particularly if the “industry” is similarly changing to the new technology).
- Job “stress”; perceived stress cannot be reliably measured and varies between individuals.

### **D. Classification Study Outcomes**

Classification studies are used to determine classifications and levels of positions. This may result in a variety of outcomes as listed below:

- Reclassification to an existing classification with a higher, lower, or same salary.
- Reclassification to a new classification with a higher, lower, or same salary.
- Revision of an existing classification title and/or classification specification with the class concept essentially remaining the same (e.g., same career family, level, determination factors, etc.).
- Development of a new classification.
- Deletion of an obsolete classification.
- Reorganization or reassignment of duties with no change in classification.
- No classification action; the position is appropriately classified and the class specification is accurate.



E. Effects of Classification Studies on Incumbents

The county’s memoranda of understanding, Personnel Rules, Merit System Rules, and other relevant policies, rules, and procedures must be considered when determining how a classification study impacts incumbents.

When a classification study results in the reclassification of a regular position to another class, it is appropriate for the incumbent of that regular position to be granted “regular/permanent” status in the new class, assuming they currently have such status with the county, are not a probationary or at-will employee, and meet the minimum qualifications of the new class. This essentially means that the incumbent gains status in the new class without having to take a competitive examination, being appointed from the appropriate eligible list, and serving a new probationary period.

Once an analysis is complete and the recommendations are final, incumbent salary placement will be determined and implemented based upon the relevant MOU, Personnel Rules, and county policies.

---

---

Board Approved:

Pursuant to Board Order \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_