HRDG 4511 - Section D - Classification Audits

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Subchapter 4511
Position Classification
Section D - Classification Audits

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A classification audit is basically an interview in which a classifier discusses the assigned duties and responsibilities with the employee, and also the supervisor. An audit obtains information about a position and focuses only on the major duties currently assigned and performed on a regular basis.

Audits are conducted via written questionnaires, telephone, and sometimes at the employee's workplace when possible. On-site audits are conducted only as a last resort to gain pertinent information that is otherwise unattainable. After the audit, classifiers determine the proper title, series, and grade of positions by comparing actual duties and responsibilities to criteria in published OPM classification standards. Grade controlling duties must occupy at least 25% of the employee's time, and be regular and recurring.

Introduction

The following factors are not considered in audits or the classification of positions:

- Temporary or minor duties that do not affect the position's classification.
- Financial need of the employee.
- Volume of work (this is a position management consideration).
- Qualifications of the employee.
- Work performance of the employee.
- Employee length of service.
- Recruitment difficulties.
- Comparison to another classified position.

Other areas of the personnel management system take some of these considerations into account such as performance and incentive awards, the merit promotion plan, periodic step increases, and special pay rates.

Audits are done in situations where classifiers need detailed information about jobs to make classification determinations.

Audits may be required when:

When Audits are Necessary

- Significant new work duties have been assigned on a permanent basis.
- A change is proposed to the title, series, or grade level of an encumbered position.
- A new classification standard is being implemented.
- Mission changes or reorganizations occur.

Resolution is needed for disagreement on the classified position.

Disagreement on assigned duties and content of PDs is usually resolved at the local level. After consulting with HRD Classification - if a supervisor decides that a desk audit may be beneficial, the request should be sent through supervisory channels and submitted to the Servicing Classification Specialist.

Requesting an Audit

The classifier determines if an audit will be conducted, or if an employee's concerns would be better addressed using a different process. Generally, audits are more likely to occur when requests are based on specific job changes which have occurred since the position was last classified. The classifier will verify the accuracy of the current position description and may want an updated PD and AD-332 Cover Sheet before deciding if an audit is appropriate.

Preparing for an Audit

Classifiers prepare for audits by reviewing PDs, classification standards, and organizational information; and will ask several questions during the audit. Employees will have ample opportunity to provide views on aspects of the job they feel are important.

The following tips may be helpful to employees preparing for an audit:

- Think about privacy during the audit. If the normal work environment lacks privacy or is noisy, reserve an alternate location.
- Employees should be ready to discuss all their major responsibilities; reviewing the position description may be helpful for preparation.
- Bring a small work sample if it would help illustrate and clarify the work being done.
- If the position duties include out-of-office activities, ensure that the classifier has an accurate picture of what the job is all about.
- Employees should convey to the classifier the approximate proportion of work time that is spent on each major component of the job, and be ready to talk about how the job has changed (new duties, impact of technology, impact of new program requirements, etc.).

Audit Results

After interviews are completed, extensive analysis of the data and the classification standards takes place. As a result, audit decisions generally take a few weeks. Most audits confirm the validity of previous classification determinations. In some instances, however, it may be determined that changes in title, occupational series, and/or grade are warranted. When a decision is reached, the results will be communicated through supervisory channels.

If the position is found to be functioning at a grade below its current classification, other actions that may occur are:

- The classification specialist works with the position's supervisor on finding ways to strengthen the job, through the assignment of more difficult work.
- Effect the downgrade within six pay periods of the classification determination, or reassign the employee to a different, properly classified position at the employee’s current grade level.
- If above efforts fail to resolve the situation, the position needs to be reclassified to the correct grade level as determined through the audit process. If that happens, employees in downgraded positions are usually entitled to grade and pay retention benefits, plus re-promotion priority placement rights.
- If the reclassification will result in loss of grade or pay, a memorandum must advise the employee that they may file a classification appeal in accordance to policy, and must specify the time limits for doing so.

If a position is found to be functioning at a grade level above its current level, the classification specialist will work with the HR staffing specialist and the supervisor of the audited position to effect appropriate action such as:

- Assignment of duties that is consistent with the position's current grade level.
- Establishment of a higher graded position that can only be filled through competitive procedures.
- Assignment of the higher level work to another position.
- Noncompetitive promotion, if accretion-of-duty requirements are met.

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