



National
Defence

Défense
nationale

ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER
(HUMAN RESOURCES — CIVILIAN)



CLASSIFICATION 101

JULY 2019

Welcome!

Job classification is a hot topic. Treasury Board sets the criteria for the classification program. Classification measures your work, and its place in the organization, against job evaluation tools, to determine your pay.

Most people understand that managers' jobs are classified higher (and pay more) than those of the people working under them. Because a manager's job comes with more responsibility and requires more experience and skill, its value is higher.

But what exactly are those responsibilities and skills? Why is a position in a certain place in a structure? Why do certain jobs exist within an organization while others don't? What makes a job important and how is that determined? Organizational design and job classification deal with these types of questions.

This booklet is a general introduction to classification and to the process used to assign your position's classification. For more information, visit the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization at <http://hrciv-rhciv.mil.ca/en/h-organization-and-classification.page>



The Classification Program

The classification program consists of organizing work logically, with clear intent (the mandate) and defined outputs (the work needed to achieve the mandate). The program evaluates the characteristics of one position in relation to all other positions in an organization. More broadly, it's designed to make objective, fair and consistent decisions in the core public administration.

For example, some work requires specific knowledge. Other work requires rare skill sets or working under demanding conditions. These are job “characteristics”. When a position is evaluated, the classification system consistently considers these job characteristics. So how are these decisions made?

What Is Organizational Design?

Organizational design refers to the way an organization is set up to fulfill its mandate. Government of Canada organizational design views the Public Service as a whole, like a puzzle. Each department is a piece of that puzzle. Organizations (branches, directorates, or divisions) within a department own smaller pieces of the whole. Each piece consists of positions—including yours!—that contribute to delivering its organization's mandate.

Organizational design also defines workflow and the distribution of responsibilities. In turn, it also defines a position's duties and its group and level. On the other hand, classification establishes the value of the work performed by each position.

Organizational design and classification

Your job has a place in the organization; organizational design identifies that place. Let's look at how the process results in your job description being classified, and ultimately determines your pay.

Because job descriptions cover many similar jobs, the Public Service uses standardized job descriptions (SJDs). Later in this section, we'll talk more about this valuable tool.

Step 1: Design the Organization

The flow of work and the distribution of responsibilities. Decisions about organizational design affect the group and level of positions.

Management, with the guidance from a Classification Advisor, develops and maintains a sustainable organizational structure by applying the principles of organizational design. The structure establishes clear roles and responsibilities for each position.

With a well-crafted organizational design, everyone knows:

- *who makes decisions,*
- *who reports to whom,*
- *how information flows,*
- *what the logical work processes are, and*
- *how work groups, areas and units work together.*

Sound organizational design also clarifies what other areas of the organization do, if there is duplication of work to remove, what are the business drivers, what resources and talent are needed to deliver results, and where they can be found. Short-term and strategic business planning becomes more focused.

DID YOU KNOW...

- You're entitled to an accurate, up-to-date job description and have the right to understand the work expected of you.
- The manager has the right and responsibility to organize and assign work. It's the manager's job to select the SJD that represents the work you do and to explain what the SJD specifically means to the work assigned to you.

Step 2: Describe the Work

Management selects a pre-classified job description that best describes the work to be performed by each position in the organization. A job description (JD) is one of many tools used in human resource management. It :

- *informs the Statement of Merit Criteria for staffing,*
- *establishes performance agreements and measures performance against work assigned,*
- *determines applicable collective agreement and salary range,*
- *determines training and development needs, and*
- *identifies official language and security requirements.*



Job descriptions contain the main purpose of the position and the key activities, such as the general duties and responsibilities involved in doing that work. The key activities are then described through: knowledge and skills, intellectual and physical effort, managerial, financial and technical responsibilities, working conditions. These characteristics of the job, enable the classification advisor to fairly assess the job.

Across the core public administration, identical or similar work is performed. Pre-classified or standardized job descriptions (SJDs) provide efficient tools for creating, reviewing and updating a position. They also enable the development of career paths and learning plans. They facilitate employee mobility and increase a manager's flexibility to adapt to changing technology and priorities. In the Public Service, a unique job description—the opposite of a standardized job description—is the exception.

An SJD can be used to describe similar or identical positions. As an example, one position has a duty related to buying fuel for airplanes; another position has a duty related to buying equipment for an office. As the core of this duty is the same (purchasing), mentioning airplanes or office equipment is unnecessary.

The effective date of a job description establishes when the work described has officially been assigned to a position. Managers are responsible for establishing a reasonable effective date, supported by evidence like the implementation of a new mandate.

If you have not seen your job description, ask your manager for a copy. Read and understand how it applies to you; discuss any concerns with your manager.

Step 3: Evaluate the Job

Finally, a classification advisor evaluates how the job descriptions fit in the organization.

Job evaluation (its classification) is the process of assessing the value of a job compared to other jobs within an organization. This unbiased process establishes the hierarchy of jobs within the organization.

Whether one person or a committee evaluates a job, the decision made considers the same information:

- *Signed and dated organization chart that accurately reflects the position and its relationship to other positions in the same unit*
- *Signed and dated job description that reflects the work assigned to and performed by the employee*
- *Information supporting the chosen effective date*
- *Classification relativity analysis (comparison analysis of other similar jobs, inside and outside the department)*
- *Additional information that may assist in evaluating the job: project descriptions, legislation, etc.*

Canadian Forces Members' Jobs

Some employees wonder why Canadian Forces (CF) members who seem to be doing similar work to civilians get paid differently. The answer is that CF members do not fall under the Public Service classification system. CF members have a unique contract and work under unique conditions; they cannot be compared to civilian employees—even if occasionally the work being done is similar.

DID YOU KNOW...

- DID YOU KNOW... If you're unsure which job description has been applied to your position, please follow the <http://hrciv-rhciv.mil.ca/en/m-classification-manager-self-service-guide.page> and select "Search a Position's Information". If a standardized job description (SJD) has been applied to your position, you may access/view the SJD on the [Civilian Job Library](#).



Evaluation

Evaluation begins with studying the job, selecting an occupational group, the correct job evaluation tool, and measuring the job according to the selected evaluation plan.

Occupational Groups

Occupational groups are used to identify groups doing comparable work (financial work, engineering work, technical work). Each group has a detailed definition of what types of jobs can be included, and what work is excluded from that group. For example, legal experts in the LP group (Law Practitioners) produce legal advice. However paralegals, who research legal advice and jurisprudence but do not produce legal advice, are included in the EC (Economics and Social Science Services) group.

Once the classification advisor has established the proper group (for example, PG, EC, or GS-STs), the job description is evaluated against factors within that group's job evaluation standard. While each standard measures work using different factors, some of the common ones include :

- *the knowledge and skills required to do the work,*
- *the scope and impact of decision-making,*
- *whether the job has supervisory or managerial functions, and*
- *the position's influence on others through their communications and contacts.*

Assessing these factors establishes at which level the JD is classified (for example, whether the position is a PG-01, PG-02, or PG-03)

Three Ways to Evaluate Jobs

The Core Public Administration (CPA), uses three kinds of evaluation standards:

1) Point Rating

Point Rating is the most common method used and contains weighted measures for each work factors. Each factor under evaluation is divided into degrees of complexity. Each degree has been assigned a certain number of points, depending on its importance to that classification. Jobs are classified by matching the job description to the appropriate degree of each evaluation factor. The corresponding points are tallied to determine that position's level.

Common occupational groups using this plan include PG, GS, EG and PE.

2) Predominant Degree

The predominant degree rating plan works like point rating, but without the points! Jobs are still assigned a degree within each factor, from least to most demanding, but instead of tallying points, the level is determined by the degree most frequently assigned.

This system is used in occupations in which all factors are considered to be of equal weight. Common occupations using this plan include BI, CH, CO and PS.

3) Level Determinant

The level determinant rating plan tends to be used for classifications where few differences exist between the positions within a given level. The whole job is compared to pre-determined levels that illustrate the requirements of that level. Jobs assigned to the same level are regarded as being of equal difficulty.

Common classifications using this rating plan include DS, EN-ENG and IS.

Job Validation Reviews (JVR)

To better understand the work, a classification advisor may conduct a job validation review. This is an interview with the person holding the position and is done in consultation with the manager. A report either confirms that the right SJD has been applied to the position or recommends using a different SJD.

If you're invited to attend a JVR, the evaluator is looking to better understand your work. You will be asked to explain what you do, how you do it, who it affects, and who is authorized to decide what. Your performance is not being evaluated, just the duties of the job.

Did you know? When conducting a mapping exercise to SJDs, a sample of JVRs may be conducted to validate that the SJDs are reflective of the work.

Job Evaluation Committee

Sometimes, evaluating a job needs the expertise of more than one person: a job evaluation committee is then used.

This committee is normally composed of three members chosen from organizational design and classification advisors

DID YOU KNOW...

- The evaluation process does not consider personal performance, volume of work, recruiting difficulties, salaries, or the present classification (group or level) of the position.
- The evaluation of work must be based on facts. Making assumptions about the work or current reporting relationships can introduce a bias about a position's value. The percentage of time spent on each activity is not a reliable indicator in determining the primary purpose of the job.

and trained managers from inside or outside the department. It usually contains both men and women.

A job evaluation committee is required under these circumstances:

- *The job would affect the value of similar jobs, in this or other departments*
- *The creation of a new job or the change of a job classification may create a precedent*
- *A new job or change of classification may create a significant increase in salary expenditures*
- *A new SJD is created*
- *The likelihood of a reclassification, either up or down, is high*
- *The position is contentious*
- *A new organizational structure is being implemented that will impact other positions*
- *A new occupational group is introduced in the organization*

Evolution or change in functions and Classification

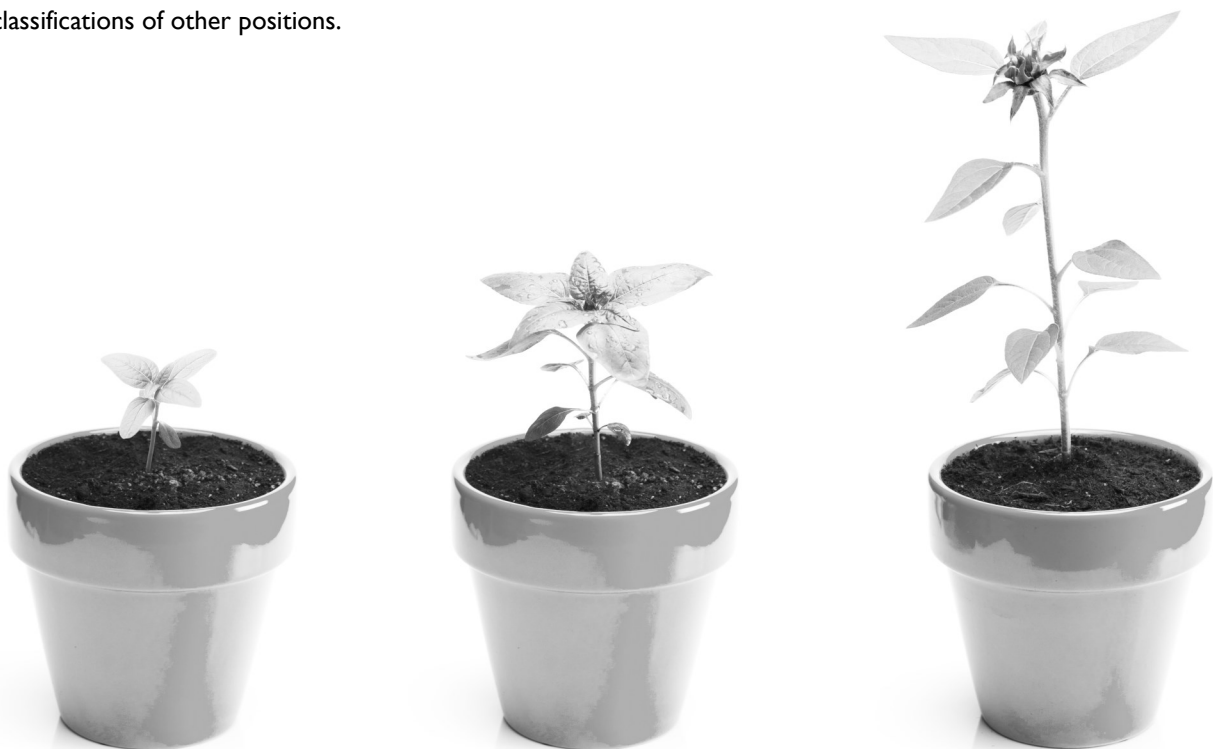
Change in work is inevitable. It can come from anywhere: a shift in the unit, departmental priorities, technological change are just a few examples. The section could be reorganized, or the nature of a job could change. Any of these changes may affect your job classification.

Your position's classification changes only when there is significant and permanent change in the primary functions of the position as written in your job description. Your manager is responsible for assigning and organizing your work. When work is added or removed, he or she should review the JD applied to your position discuss it with you.

If your job has changed, your manager may select a different JD and submit it to the classification process. Depending on the nature of the changes, the evaluation could result in a decision for the same group and level or for a different group and level.

As an employee, it is your responsibility to understand the work required of you. Don't be afraid to ask your supervisor for clarifications.

Because classification is a complex system, change in classification can take time. It's based on relativity between all jobs in the Public Service. A change to one position could affect the way an entire unit functions in terms of work flow, which in turn might affect the job descriptions and classifications of other positions.



Classification and Modernization

Modernizing Classification?

The OCHRO is currently reviewing some occupational groups. In recent years, the Economics, Law Practitioner and Law Manager groups were implemented. The OCHRO continues its modernization efforts, with the Computer Systems (CS), and Program and Administrative Services (PA) groups, with others to come.

Classification Conversion

A conversion is the introduction of a different classification standard to evaluate work. The Office Chief Human Resources Office (OCHRO) is responsible for renewing elements of the classification program to reflect the realities of today's core public administration. Conversion initiatives ensure that occupational group definitions and job evaluation standards are modern and relevant.

To prepare, the Directorate Civilian Classification and Organization (DCCO) has a team of human resource specialists in classification who are actively engaged in developing more SJDs, and in mapping them, updating jobs at the same time.

Mapping to SJDs – Updating jobs

Mapping is an exercise to update existing positions by linking them to an applicable SJD. The intent is to update job description and to use SJDs across the department. Mapping does not change your day-to-day work. *A classification advisor conducts mapping when:*

- *A new or updated job description becomes available.*
- *Introducing a new or revised standardized job description*
- *Implementing a new organizational structure*
- *Preparing for an upcoming classification conversion*

Roles and responsibilities during a mapping exercise

DCCO proposes an SJD to the manager. The manager validates that the proposed SJD reflects the functions to be performed and approves the mapping. The manager then communicates and discusses the content of the SJD with the affected employees.

The employees are responsible for understanding the content of the SJD and for raising any concerns.

DID YOU KNOW?

- It takes 18 to 36 months to develop a classification standard.
- It can take two years to convert a single group in a department.
- Treasury Board must approve all new occupational groups and standards.



Classification Grievances

If you're an employee under the Public Service Employment Act and your position has been reviewed, you may file a classification grievance if you disagree with the classification decision (group and level) or a labour relations grievance if you disagree with the content of the job description, or the effective date selected.

If you wish to submit a classification grievance, you must file a written notice to your supervisor no later than 35 calendar days after receiving notification of the classification decision or after becoming aware of an action or circumstance affecting the classification of your position. <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28698>. For labour relations grievances, please refer to your collective agreement for the process to submit.

In your written grievance, include the following elements:

- *Substance of the grievance*
- *Title, position number and classification of the position*
- *Corrective action being requested*
- *Name of your representative*
- *Your signature*
- *The date*

The Grievance Process

On receipt of a classification grievance, the supervisor signs and dates the grievance form and returns it to you as well as submits it to classification services at [+E-Class@ADM\(HR-CIV\) DCCO@Ottawa-Hull](mailto:+E-Class@ADM(HR-CIV) DCCO@Ottawa-Hull).

A classification advisor will examine each grievance for timeliness and if you have the right to grieve. If the grievance is valid, you will receive an acknowledgement letter that will also include an approximate timeline for a hearing, pending union review.

If a job content and a classification grievance are filed together, a labour relations officer will resolve the job content question first. The classification grievance will remain on hold until this is done.

Withdrawal of a Grievance

At any time before the grievance decision is issued, you may withdraw a grievance. Just give a signed, written notice or send an e-mail to the supervisor with a copy to e-Class. No other person, including your representative, may do so on your behalf.



Common Classification Misconceptions

The classification system was specifically designed to ensure fairness in job analysis and evaluation. Nonetheless, many myths and misconceptions exist. Let's dispel some of them and clarify what exactly the classification process does.

Classification deals with the relative value of work across the Public Service. This means the relative value of positions, not the relative value of people. Everyone has heard comments such as "Given his education and experience, he should be at least an AS-03" or "With how much work I do and how much time I put in, why haven't I moved up a level?" Let's look at the three most common misconceptions:

"Classification Measures Performance"

No. Classification is not related to performance—either good or bad. If you're occupying a position, it cannot be reclassified to a higher level simply because you're doing a good job. Why? The classification refers to the "value" of the duties assigned to the position, not to the "value" of the employee in the position. Therefore, the position classification could change only if the assigned work has changed and new or different responsibilities were added to or removed from the position.

If you've become very skilled at a particular position and would like more responsibility or challenge, it may be a good time for you to look for other opportunities that reflect your skills. You can do this by applying through jobs.gc.ca.

"Classification Is Based on Your Skills"

False. Even though you're able to do something doesn't necessarily mean that your skill is needed for your position. A common tendency is to think of our own skills as being exactly what our position requires, rather than looking more objectively at your position.

For example, imagine that you're a writer but that you can also analyze statistics. Every now and then on your own initiative, you use a statistical program to analyze the flow of transactions through your section. Your boss loves the report, and everyone in your section has found an improvement in efficiency. Should statistical analysis be part of the core functions of your writer position?

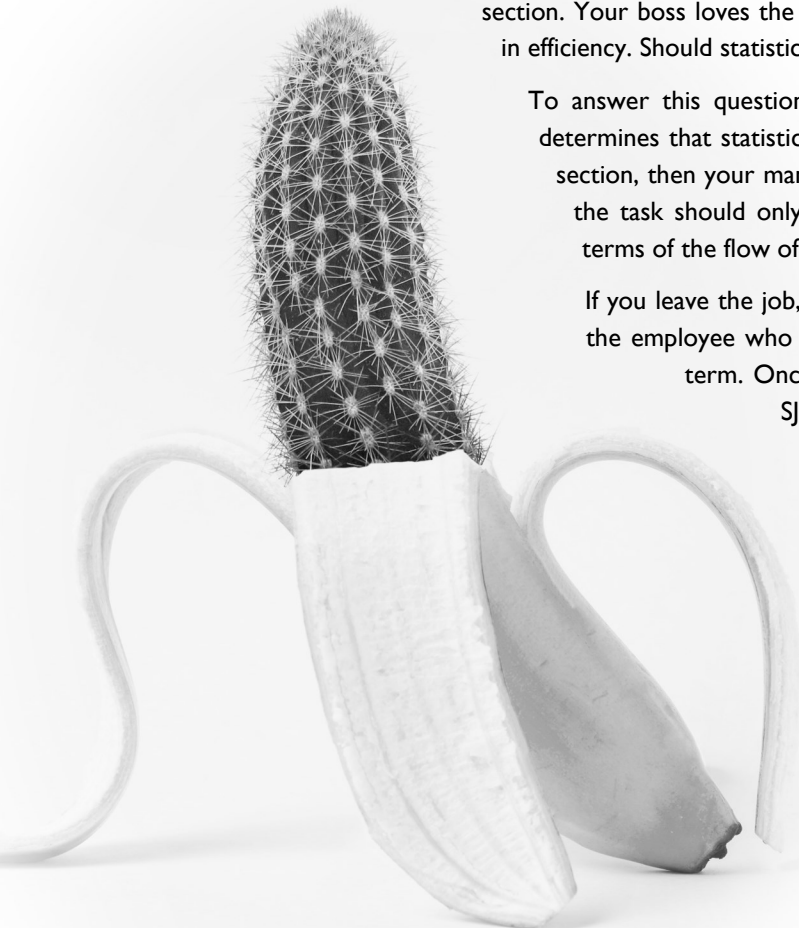
To answer this question, let's review the objectives of your section. If your manager determines that statistical analysis is indeed important to the proper functioning of your section, then your manager should select a different SJD to reflect this work. That said, the task should only be added to the position where it would most make sense in terms of the flow of work in the section regardless of your skills in the job.

If you leave the job, the work will remain a constant. The work is not dependent on the employee who occupies the position. Your manager needs to plan for the long term. Once the manager has determined where the new work resides, an SJD is selected and submitted to be evaluated by classification.

"Classification Is Related to Being Busy"

Untrue. Classification is not related to how busy you are or how much work you have to do. Positions are classified based on the nature of their duties and responsibilities, not on the volume of work.

Let's take two GL aircraft maintenance (AIM) specialists doing the same job, one in Bagotville and one in Winnipeg. Because an increased training schedule has created a temporary staff shortage, the maintenance



specialist in Winnipeg is working at an above average pace. In contrast, at the moment, Bagotville is fully staffed, allowing the maintenance specialist to work at a normal pace.

Given this situation, would it make sense to give the Winnipeg GL-AIM a higher classification? Since both employees have the same duties and responsibilities, their pay and classification must be the same, no matter how many aircraft they work on in a given day.

Classification does not consider the volume of work, only the different types of work. Management needs to address the issue of workload separately from the issue of classification. If you feel that you have too much work to do, discuss the issue with your manager.

Conclusion

The job evaluation standards used to classify jobs are designed to allow fair decisions based on the how each job relates to those around it and across the Public Service. While the classification process can be time consuming, it's simply because the classification system reflects that the work people do is complex.

If you have questions about a particular aspect of classification, start by talking to your manager or to your union representative. If you would like to research the subject, the following Intranet sites are good places to start:

- Directorate Civilian Organization and Classification:
<http://hrciv-rhciv.mil.ca/en/h-organization-and-classification.page>
- Directive on Classification:
<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28700>
- Directive on Classification Grievances:
<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28698>
- Directive on Classification Oversight:
<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28699>

