Classifying Staff Positions

The role of the position description

A position description, or PD, documents a position's primary purpose, essential duties, responsibilities and minimum qualifications. It is the primary source of information used by HR Compensation and Organizational Effectiveness (COE) to determine the appropriate job title, FLSA status and pay range. Accurate documentation of duties and classification of the position helps ensure consistent treatment of positions across the university and supports compliance with compensation and labor regulations.

How HR COE reviews a PD

- Review the position's primary purpose, essential duties, scope and responsibilities.
- Compare the information provided on the PD to staff job profiles within the architecture to determine the best-fit profile and title.
- Confirm the appropriate level based on the complexity, scope, leadership responsibilities and decision-making authority assigned to the position.
- Verify that the minimum qualifications align with the selected profile.
- Assign the corresponding job title and pay range associated with the profile.

Influencing factors

Factor	What COE asks
Primary purpose	Why does this position exist? How does it fit into the organization?
Duties	What work is done regularly and makes up most of the role?
Independent judgment	What decisions can the position make independently? What types of issues require consultation, review or approval from others?
Complexity and scope	How complex is the work, and how far does its impact reach (a team, a unit, the university)?
Supervision and leadership	Does the position supervise or lead others? If yes, how many full-time equivalents (FTE)?
Knowledge and skills	What knowledge, skills and education are needed to perform the work?
Reporting relationship	Where does the position sit in the organization?

Matching to a job profile

- **A job profile describes the core duties of a job title.** It defines the typical duties and minimum qualifications for a role and has a defined market-aligned pay grade and range. Profiles are aligned to the market based on the duties, responsibilities, scope and qualifications of the work, rather than the job title alone. Matching a position to the profile that best fits the work being performed is what determines its pay range and FLSA status.
- **The 70% guide.** A position generally aligns with a profile when most of its ongoing responsibilities and overall level of responsibility match the profile. Exact matches are uncommon; classification focuses on overall fit rather than a duty-by-duty comparison.
- **Best fit.** The best fit is the job profile that most closely reflects the position’s core duties and responsibilities.
- **Duties that span two profiles.** The position is classified by its predominant work: the duties performed most regularly that carry the most weight. A higher-level duty performed only occasionally does not raise the classification.

What does not determine classification

- Employee performance or years of service
- Education, certifications or experience beyond what the position requires
- Current employee pay
- Available budget or funding source
- Recruitment challenges
- Temporary, interim or occasional duties
- A desired title, pay grade or compensation outcome

Leader titles

Leader classifications are based on assigned supervisory responsibility, not informal leadership or subject matter expertise. A position must formally supervise 2.0 or more regular full-time equivalents (FTE) to hold a level II title. A position that leads but supervises fewer than 2.0 FTE holds a level I title. The supervision of a large number of students may be considered in determining FTE, with the number of students and the regularity and formality of the supervisory relationship taken into account. An accurate organizational chart is required to support supervisory relationships, and final determination is made by HR COE.

Writing a PD that classifies accurately

- Refer to the PER-1 as a template for developing a staff position description.
- Start with the primary purpose of the position.
- List the essential duties in order of importance
- Assign a percentage to each major area of work to reflect the amount of time an employee spends performing those responsibilities.
- Describe the level of independent judgment: what the position decides and what needs approval.
- Describe supervision: who reports to the position and how many FTE.
- Write about the position, not the person currently in it.
- Describe the work as it is today, not as it used to be or as you hope it will become.
- Use plain language. Avoid K-State jargon and vague or subjective terms.
- Remember that minimum qualifications are set by COE based on the market and must align with the profile. You can add preferred qualifications.
- Include an updated organizational chart.

After a determination

If a PD no longer reflects the work assigned to a position, it should be updated and submitted for review. Updated PDs are evaluated using the same classification methodology as new positions. Changes to duties do not automatically result in a change to the position's classification, title, level or pay range.
Submit updated PDs in the applicant tracking system.

Where to get help

- Your unit's HR manager or HR liaison
- PageUp applicant tracking system: employees can view their own PD, supervisors can review PDs for their direct reports and HR managers and liaisons can view PDs within their department