

Human Resources Manual  
Instruction 511-1: Position Classification  
Issuance Date: 05/09/2008

Material Transmitted:

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Instruction 511-1, Position Classification, dated May 9, 2008.

Material Superseded:

This Instruction supersedes HHS Instruction 511-1, Position Classification Program, issued May 16, 1996.

Background:

The Instruction was updated as a response to the effects of the 2003 reorganization that assigned classification responsibility to the Operating Human Resources Organizations (OHROs) (i.e., Atlanta Human Resources Center, Baltimore Human Resources Center, Indian Health Service Human Resources Center, National Institute of Health Office of Human Resources, Rockville Human Resources Center).

Specifically, this Instruction:

1. Details the revised requirements of the Office of Personnel Management classification standards implementation process;
2. Lists the unique requirements when classifying Attorney, Public Affairs, Criminal Investigator, and Administrative Law Judge positions;
3. Enumerates positions excluded from coverage; and
4. Addresses OHRO position classification processing and appeals responsibilities.

This issuance is effective immediately. Implementation under this issuance must be carried out in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, bargaining agreements, and Departmental policy.

Antonia T. Harris  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources

**SUBJECT: POSITION CLASSIFICATION**

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**511-1-00 PURPOSE**

This Instruction outlines the policies, requirements, and responsibilities for administration of the Department's position classification program. It also clarifies the responsibility of the Operating Human Resources Organizations (OHROs) to establish classification appeals procedures in accordance with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines.

**511-1-10 REFERENCES**

- A. 5 CFR § 511, Classification under the General Schedule
- B. 5 CFR § 532, Subparts F and G, Job Grading System and Job Grading Reviews and Appeals

**511-1-20 COVERAGE AND EXCLUSIONS**

A. Coverage

This Instruction covers the classification of positions under the General Schedule and Federal Wage Systems.

B. Exclusions

The following positions are excluded from coverage under this Instruction:

1. Senior Executive Service (SES)
2. Scientific and Professional (ST)
3. Senior-Level (SL)
4. Administratively Determined (AD)
5. U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

**511-1-30 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) is responsible for developing, administering, and evaluating position classification policies and programs, and shall provide overall management and oversight of the Department's classification program by:

1. issuing Department-wide classification policies and guidance;
  2. coordinating Departmental response to OPM guidance;
  3. coordinating the Department's response to OPM's standards development activities;
  4. reviewing all classification appeals cases initiated by OHROs; and
  5. conducting periodic reviews of OHROs regarding administration of the position classification program.
- B. Operating Human Resources Organizations (OHROs) (i.e., Atlanta Human Resources Center, Baltimore Human Resources Center, Indian Health Service Human Resources Center, National Institute of Health Office of Human Resources, Rockville Human Resources Center) are responsible for ensuring classification programs within their serviced Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) are carried out consistently with the law, regulations, policies, requirements, delegated authorities, and OPM classification standards by:
1. providing advice and support to OPDIVS to ensure compliance with classification policies and programs;
  2. delivering sound position classification and position management services;
  3. establishing procedures for reviewing and deciding classification appeals;
  4. conducting position audits when employees appeal classification determinations;
  5. issuing classification appeal decisions through the Classification Appeals Adjudicating Officer, i.e., the Director of the Human Resources function of an OHRO; and
  6. forwarding classification appeal cases to OPM when requested by employees.
- C. Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring every position in their organization has an accurate and certified position description (PD) which provides a clear and definitive description of the primary duties of each position under their scope of responsibility.

#### **511-1-40 CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIAL SERIES**

- A. GS-905 Attorney Positions
1. When classifying GS-905 attorney positions in the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), officials with classification authority will accept a certification from OGC concerning the type of cases and the level of independence at which the attorney is operating. Classifications will be based on this certification.
  2. Attorney positions may not be established outside of OGC without the concurrence of OGC.

3. OGC shall respond to requests for concurrence to establish attorney positions within 30 days of the request, in compliance with established classification performance and accountability metrics.
- B. GS-1035 Public Affairs Positions
1. Public Affairs positions at the GS-1035-14 level and above may not be established outside of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA) without the concurrence of ASPA.
  2. ASPA shall respond to requests for concurrence to establish Public Affairs positions within 30 days of the request, in compliance with established classification performance and accountability metrics.
- C. GS-1811 Criminal Investigator Positions
1. Criminal Investigator GS-1811 positions may not be established outside of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) without the concurrence of OIG.
  2. OIG shall respond to requests for concurrence to establish Criminal Investigator positions within 30 days of the request, in compliance with established classification performance and accountability metrics.
- D. GS-935 Administrative Law Judge Position
- The Office of Personnel Management retains the authority to establish all GS-935 Administrative Law Judge positions.

#### **511-1-50 IMPLEMENTING OPM-MANDATED CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS**

- A. New or updated classification standards and/or classification guides must be applied to covered positions within 12 months of OPM's issuance date.
- B. The following strategies may be considered when implementing new classification standards:
  1. Apply standards first to new positions and positions under classification appeal.
  2. Apply standards to vacant positions prior to initiating recruitment.
  3. Apply standards to positions where a grade change is expected.
  4. Process mass changes, as appropriate, rather than individual personnel actions.
  5. Make pen-and-ink changes for minor revisions with no grade impact.

## **511-1-60 CLASSIFICATION APPEALS**

- A. Each OHRO will establish Classification Appeals application, review, and approval procedures.
- B. OHRO Directors will serve as the Classification Appeals Adjudicating Officers for their respective OPDIVs. Each Classification Appeals Adjudicating Officer will receive incoming employee classification appeal requests and will issue appeal decisions.
- C. General Schedule employees may appeal, at any time, the classification of their positions either within their OHRO or directly to OPM. However, simultaneous appeals to the OHRO and OPM are not permitted. Initial appeals through the OHRO are recommended in order to preserve subsequent OPM appeal rights. General Schedule employees may choose to appeal to OPM through the OHRO. The Classification Appeals Adjudicating Officer must act on the appeal within 60 days or forward it to OPM for action.
- D. Wage grade employees must appeal first to their OHRO. If dissatisfied with the result, they may then appeal to OPM. An appeal to OPM must be filed within 15 calendar days after receipt of the OHRO appeal decision. OPM may extend the time limit for filing if circumstances beyond the appellant's control prevented them from filing within 15 days, or if the appellant was not aware of the 15-day time limit.
- E. If an employee, in a position covered by a new/revised classification standard, files an appeal prior to the implementation of the new OPM standard, the OHRO must immediately apply the new standard in order to properly adjudicate.
- F. When an OHRO disagrees with a decision rendered by OPM on a classification appeal, a reconsideration of the decision may be requested. Such requests are to be forwarded to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources for review and concurrence prior to submission to OPM.

MEMORANDUM

To: Director, Atlanta Human Resources Center  
Director, Baltimore Human Resources Center  
Director, Rockville Human Resources Center  
Director, Human Capital Group, National Institutes of Health  
Director, Human Resource Center, Indian Health Service

From: Antonia T. Harris  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources

Subject: Position Classification

I hereby delegate the following to:

Operating Human Resources Organizations (OHROs):

- Authority to classify all General Schedule and Federal Wage System positions.

The following delegation exclusions apply:

- Written concurrence must be obtained from the Office of General Counsel (OGC) prior to classifying Attorney positions outside of OGC.
- Written concurrence must be obtained from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA) prior to classifying Public Affairs positions.
- Written concurrence must be obtained from the Office of the Inspector General prior to classifying Criminal Investigator, GS-1811 positions.
- The Office of Personnel Management retains the authority to establish all GS-935 Administrative Law Judge positions.

Effective Date: This delegation is effective immediately.