

**UNITED STATES TITLE 5
GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND EMPLOYEES**

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CHAPTER 51 - CLASSIFICATION

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Sec. 5101. Purpose

It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a plan for classification of positions whereby -

(1) in determining the rate of basic pay which an employee will receive -

(A) the principle of equal pay for substantially equal work will be followed; and

(B) variations in rates of basic pay paid to different employees will be in proportion to substantial differences in the difficulty, responsibility, and qualification requirements of the work performed and to the contributions of employees to efficiency and economy in the service; and

(2) individual positions will, in accordance with their duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements, be so grouped and identified by classes and grades, as defined by section 5102 of this title, and the various classes will be so described in published standards, as provided by section 5105 of this title, that the resulting position-classification system can be used in all phases of personnel administration.

Sec. 5102. Definitions; application

(a) For the purpose of this chapter -

(1) "agency" means -

(A) an Executive agency;

(B) the Library of Congress;

(C) the Botanic Garden;

(D) the Government Printing Office;

(E) the Office of the Architect of the Capitol; and

(F) the government of the District of Columbia; but does not include -

(i) a Government controlled corporation;

(ii) the Tennessee Valley Authority;

(iii) the Virgin Islands Corporation;

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- (iv) the Atomic Energy Commission;
- (v) the Central Intelligence Agency;
- (vi) the National Security Agency, Department of Defense;
- (vii) the General Accounting Office; or¹
- (ix)² the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense; or
- (x) the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, Department of Defense.³

Footnotes

¹ So in original. The word "or" probably should not appear.

² So in original. Subsec. (a)(1) does not contain a cl. (viii).

³ So in original. The period probably should be a semicolon.

(2) "employee" means an individual employed in or under an agency;

(3) "position" means the work, consisting of the duties and responsibilities, assignable to an employee;

(4) "class" or "class of positions" includes all positions which are sufficiently similar, as to -

(A) kind or subject-matter of work;

(B) level of difficulty and responsibility; and

(C) the qualification requirements of the work; to warrant similar treatment in personnel and pay administration; and

(5) "grade" includes all classes of positions which, although different with respect to kind or subject-matter of work, are sufficiently equivalent as to -

(A) level of difficulty and responsibility; and

(B) level of qualification requirements of the work; to warrant their

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inclusion within one range of rates of basic pay in the General Schedule.

(b) Except as provided by subsections (c) and (d) of this section, this chapter applies to all civilian positions and employees in or under an agency, including positions in local boards and appeal boards within the Selective Service System and employees occupying those positions.

(c) This chapter does not apply to -

(1) Repealed. Pub. L. 91-375, Sec. 6(c)(9), Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 776;

(2) members of the Foreign Service whose pay is fixed under the Foreign Service Act of 1980; and positions in or under the Department of State which are -

(A) connected with the representation of the United States to international organizations; or

(B) specifically exempted by statute from this chapter or other classification or pay statute;

(3) physicians, dentists, nurses, and other employees in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs whose pay is fixed under chapter 73 of title 38;

(4) teachers, school officials, and employees of the Board of Education of the District of Columbia whose pay is fixed under chapter 15 of title 31, District of Columbia Code; the chief judges and the associate judges of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and the District of Columbia Court of Appeals; and nonjudicial employees of the District of Columbia court system whose pay is fixed under title 11 of the District of Columbia Code;

(5) members of the Metropolitan Police, the Fire Department of the District of Columbia, the United States Park Police, and the Executive Protective Service; members of the police force of the National Zoological Park whose pay is fixed under section 5375 of this title; and members of the police forces of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the United States Mint whose pay is fixed under section 5378 of this title;

(6) lighthouse keepers and civilian employees on lightships and vessels of the Coast Guard whose pay is fixed under section 432(f) and (g) of title 14;

(7) employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts, or in unskilled, semiskilled, or skilled manual-labor occupations, and other employees including foremen and supervisors in positions having trade, craft, or

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laboring experience and knowledge as the paramount requirement, and employees in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing whose duties are to perform or to direct manual or machine operations requiring special skill or experience, or to perform or direct the counting, examining, sorting, or other verification of the product of manual or machine operations;

(8) officers and members of crews of vessels;

(9) employees of the Government Printing Office whose pay is fixed under section 305 of title 44;

(10) civilian professors, instructors, and lecturers at a professional military education school (and, in the case of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, the Director and the Deputy Director) whose pay is fixed under section 1595, 4021, 7478, or 9021 of title 10; civilian professors, lecturers, and instructors at the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy whose pay is fixed under sections 4338, 6952, and 9338, respectively, of title 10; senior professors, professors, associate and assistant professors, and instructors at the Naval Postgraduate School whose pay is fixed under section 7044 of title 10; the Academic Dean of the Postgraduate School of the Naval Academy whose pay is fixed under section 7043 of title 10; civilian professors, instructors, and lecturers in the defense acquisition university structure (including the Defense Systems Management College) whose pay is fixed under section 1746(b) of title 10;

(11) aliens or noncitizens of the United States who occupy positions outside the United States;

(12) Repealed. Pub. L. 104-201, div. C, title XXXV, Sec. 3548(a)(2)(B), Sept. 23, 1996, 110 Stat. 3868;)

(13) employees who serve without pay or at nominal rates of pay;

(14) employees whose pay is not wholly from appropriated funds of the United States (other than employees of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Management System appointed under section 8474(c)(2) of this title), except that with respect to the Veterans' Canteen Service, Department of Veterans Affairs this paragraph applies only to employees necessary for the transaction of the business of the Service at canteens, warehouses, and storage depots whose employment is authorized by section 7802 of title 38;

(15) employees whose pay is fixed under a cooperative agreement between the United States and -

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(A) a State or territory or possession of the United States, or political subdivision thereof; or

(B) an individual or organization outside the service of the Government of the United States;

(16) student nurses, medical or dental interns, residents-in-training, student dietitians, student physical therapists, student occupational therapists, and other student employees, assigned or attached to a hospital, clinic, or laboratory primarily for training purposes, whose pay is fixed under subchapter V of chapter 53 of this title or sections 7405 and 7406 of title 38;

(17) inmates, patients, or beneficiaries receiving care or treatment or living in Government agencies or institutions;

(18) experts or consultants, when employed temporarily or intermittently in accordance with section 3109 of this title;

(19) emergency or seasonal employees whose employment is of uncertain or purely temporary duration, or who are employed for brief periods at intervals;

(20) employees employed on a fee, contract, or piece work basis;

(21) employees who may lawfully perform their duties concurrently with their private profession, business, or other employment, and whose duties require only a portion of their time, when it is impracticable to ascertain or anticipate the proportion of time devoted to the service of the Government of the United States;

(22) "teachers" and "teaching positions" as defined by section 901 of title 20;

(23) administrative patent judges and designated administrative patent judges in the United States Patent and Trademark Office;

(24) temporary positions in the Bureau of the Census established under section 23 of title 13, and enumerator positions in the Bureau of the Census;

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(25) positions for which rates of basic pay are individually fixed, or expressly authorized to be fixed, by other statute, at or in excess of the rate for level V of the Executive Schedule;

(26) civilian members of the faculty of the Coast Guard Academy whose pay is fixed under section 186 of title 14;

(27) members of the police of the Library of Congress whose pay is fixed under section 167 of title 2;

(28) civilian members of the faculty of the Air Force Institute of Technology whose pay is fixed under section 9314 of title 10;

(29) administrative law judges appointed under section 3105; or

(30) members of agency boards of contract appeals appointed under section 8 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978.

(d) This chapter does not apply to an employee of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol whose pay is fixed by other statute. Subsection (c) of this section, except paragraph (7), does not apply to the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.

Sec. 5103. Determination of applicability

The Office of Personnel Management shall determine finally the applicability of section 5102 of this title to specific positions and employees, except for positions and employees in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.

Sec. 5104. Basis for grading positions

The General Schedule, the symbol for which is "GS", is the basic pay schedule for positions to which this chapter applies. The General Schedule is divided into grades of difficulty and responsibility of work, as follows:

(1) Grade GS-1 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are to perform, under immediate supervision, with little or no latitude for the exercise of independent judgment -

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- (A) the simplest routine work in office, business, or fiscal operations; or
 - (B) elementary work of a subordinate technical character in a professional, scientific, or technical field.
- (2) Grade GS-2 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -
- (A) to perform, under immediate supervision, with limited latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, routine work in office, business, or fiscal operations, or comparable subordinate technical work of limited scope in a professional, scientific, or technical field, requiring some training or experience; or
 - (B) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.
- (3) Grade GS-3 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -
- (A) to perform, under immediate or general supervision, somewhat difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal operations, or comparable subordinate technical work of limited scope in a professional, scientific, or technical field, requiring in either case -
 - (i) some training or experience;
 - (ii) working knowledge of a special subject matter; or
 - (iii) to some extent the exercise of independent judgment in accordance with well-established policies, procedures, and techniques; or
 - (B) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.
- (4) Grade GS-4 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -
- (A) to perform, under immediate or general supervision, moderately difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal operations, or comparable subordinate technical work in a professional, scientific, or technical field, requiring in either case -
 - (i) a moderate amount of training and minor supervisory or other experience;
 - (ii) good working knowledge of a special subject matter or a limited field of office, laboratory, engineering, scientific, or other procedure and

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practice; and

(iii) the exercise of independent judgment in accordance with well-established policies, procedures, and techniques; or

(B) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(5) Grade GS-5 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

(A) to perform, under general supervision, difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal administration, or comparable subordinate technical work in a professional, scientific, or technical field, requiring in either case -

(i) considerable training and supervisory or other experience;

(ii) broad working knowledge of a special subject matter or of office, laboratory, engineering, scientific, or other procedure and practice; and

(iii) the exercise of independent judgment in a limited field;

(B) to perform, under immediate supervision, and with little opportunity for the exercise of independent judgment, simple and elementary work requiring professional, scientific, or technical training; or

(C) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(6) Grade GS-6 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

(A) to perform, under general supervision, difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal administration, or comparable subordinate technical work in a professional, scientific, or technical field, requiring in either case -

(i) considerable training and supervisory or other experience;

(ii) broad working knowledge of a special and complex subject matter, procedure, or practice, or of the principles of the profession, art, or science involved; and

(iii) to a considerable extent the exercise of independent judgment; or

(B) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(7) Grade GS-7 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

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(A) to perform, under general supervision, work of considerable difficulty and responsibility along special technical or supervisory lines in office, business, or fiscal administration, or comparable subordinate technical work in a professional, scientific, or technical field, requiring in either case -

(i) considerable specialized or supervisory training and experience;

(ii) comprehensive working knowledge of a special and complex subject matter; procedure, or practice, or of the principles of the profession, art, or science involved; and

(iii) to a considerable extent the exercise of independent judgment;

(B) under immediate or general supervision, to perform somewhat difficult work requiring -

(i) professional, scientific, or technical training; and

(ii) to a limited extent, the exercise of independent technical judgment; or

(C) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(8) Grade GS-8 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

(A) to perform, under general supervision, very difficult and responsible work along special technical or supervisory lines in office, business, or fiscal administration, requiring -

(i) considerable specialized or supervisory training and experience;

(ii) comprehensive and thorough working knowledge of a specialized and complex subject matter, procedure, or practice, or of the principles of the profession, art, or science involved; and

(iii) to a considerable extent the exercise of independent judgment; or

(B) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(9) Grade GS-9 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

(A) to perform, under general supervision, very difficult and responsible work along special technical, supervisory, or administrative lines in office, business, or fiscal administration, requiring -

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(i) somewhat extended specialized training and considerable specialized, supervisory, or administrative experience which has demonstrated capacity for sound independent work;

(ii) thorough and fundamental knowledge of a special and complex subject matter, or of the profession, art, or science involved; and

(iii) considerable latitude for the exercise of independent judgment;

(B) with considerable latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, to perform moderately difficult and responsible work, requiring -

(i) professional, scientific, or technical training equivalent to that represented by graduation from a college or university of recognized standing; and

(ii) considerable additional professional, scientific, or technical training or experience which has demonstrated capacity for sound independent work; or

(C) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(10) Grade GS-10 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

(A) to perform, under general supervision, highly difficult and responsible work along special technical, supervisory, or administrative lines in office, business, or fiscal administration, requiring -

(i) somewhat extended specialized, supervisory, or administrative training and experience which has demonstrated capacity for sound independent work;

(ii) thorough and fundamental knowledge of a specialized and complex subject matter, or of the profession, art, or science involved; and

(iii) considerable latitude for the exercise of independent judgment; or

(B) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(11) Grade GS-11 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

(A) to perform, under general administrative supervision and with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of marked difficulty and

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responsibility along special technical, supervisory, or administrative lines in office, business, or fiscal administration, requiring -

(i) extended specialized, supervisory, or administrative training and experience which has demonstrated important attainments and marked capacity for sound independent action or decision; and

(ii) intimate grasp of a specialized and complex subject matter, or of the profession, art, or science involved, or of administrative work of marked difficulty;

(B) with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, to perform responsible work of considerable difficulty requiring somewhat extended professional, scientific, or technical training and experience which has demonstrated important attainments and marked capacity for independent work; or

(C) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(12) Grade GS-12 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -

(A) to perform, under general administrative supervision, with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of a very high order of difficulty and responsibility along special technical, supervisory, or administrative lines in office, business, or fiscal administration, requiring -

(i) extended specialized, supervisory, or administrative training and experience which has demonstrated leadership and attainments of a high order in specialized or administrative work; and

(ii) intimate grasp of a specialized and complex subject matter or of the profession, art, or science involved;

(B) under general administrative supervision, and with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, to perform professional, scientific, or technical work of marked difficulty and responsibility requiring extended professional, scientific, or technical training and experience which has demonstrated leadership and attainments of a high order in professional, scientific, or technical research, practice, or administration; or

(C) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

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- (13) Grade GS-13 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -
- (A) to perform, under administrative direction, with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of unusual difficulty and responsibility along special technical, supervisory, or administrative lines, requiring extended specialized, supervisory, or administrative training and experience which has demonstrated leadership and marked attainments;
 - (B) to serve as assistant head of a major organization involving work of comparable level within a bureau;
 - (C) to perform, under administrative direction, with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of unusual difficulty and responsibility requiring extended professional, scientific, or technical training and experience which has demonstrated leadership and marked attainments in professional, scientific, or technical research, practice, or administration; or
 - (D) to perform other work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.
- (14) Grade GS-14 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are -
- (A) to perform, under general administrative direction, with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of exceptional difficulty and responsibility along special technical, supervisory, or administrative lines which has demonstrated leadership and unusual attainments;
 - (B) to serve as head of a major organization within a bureau involving work of comparable level;

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(C) to plan and direct or to plan and execute major professional, scientific, technical, administrative, fiscal, or other specialized programs, requiring extended training and experience which has demonstrated leadership and unusual attainments in professional, scientific, or technical research, practice, or administration, or in administrative, fiscal, or other specialized activities; or

(D) to perform consulting or other professional, scientific, technical, administrative, fiscal, or other specialized work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

(15) Grade GS-15 includes those classes of positions the duties of which are –

(A) to perform, under general administrative direction, with very wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of outstanding difficulty and responsibility along special technical, supervisory, or administrative lines which has demonstrated leadership and exceptional attainments;

(B) to serve as head of a major organization within a bureau involving work of comparable level;

(C) to plan and direct or to plan and execute specialized programs of marked difficulty, responsibility, and national significance, along professional, scientific, technical, administrative, fiscal, or other lines, requiring extended training and experience which has demonstrated leadership and unusual attainments in professional, scientific, or technical research, practice, or administration, or in administrative, fiscal, or other specialized activities; or

(D) to perform consulting or other professional, scientific, technical, administrative, fiscal, or other specialized work of equal importance, difficulty, and responsibility, and requiring comparable qualifications.

Sec. 5105. Standards for classification of positions

(a) The Office of Personnel Management, after consulting the agencies, shall prepare standards for placing positions in their proper classes and grades. The Office may make such inquiries or investigations of the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements of positions as it considers necessary for this purpose. The agencies, on request of the Office, shall furnish information for and cooperate in the preparation of the

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standards. In the standards, which shall be published in such form as the Office may determine, the Office shall -

- (1) define the various classes of positions in terms of duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements;
- (2) establish the official class titles; and
- (3) set forth the grades in which the classes have been placed by the Office.

(b) The Office, after consulting the agencies to the extent considered necessary, shall revise, supplement, or abolish existing standards, or prepare new standards, so that, as nearly as may be practicable, positions existing at any given time will be covered by current published standards.

(c) The official class titles established under subsection (a)(2) of this section shall be used for personnel, budget, and fiscal purposes. However, this requirement does not prevent the use of organizational or other titles for internal administration, public convenience, law enforcement, or similar purposes.

Sec. 5106. Basis for classifying positions

(a) Each position shall be placed in its appropriate class. The basis for determining the appropriate class is the duties and responsibilities of the position and the qualifications required by the duties and responsibilities.

(b) Each class shall be placed in its appropriate grade. The basis for determining the appropriate grade is the level of difficulty, responsibility, and qualification requirements of the work of the class.

(c) Appropriated funds may not be used to pay an employee who places a supervisory position in a class and grade solely on the basis of the size of the organization unit or the number of subordinates supervised. These factors may be given effect only to the extent warranted by the work load of the organization unit and then only in combination with other factors, such as the kind, difficulty, and complexity of work supervised, the degree and scope of responsibility delegated to the supervisor, and the kind, degree, and character of the supervision exercised.

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Sec. 5107. Classification of positions

Except as otherwise provided by this chapter, each agency shall place each position under its jurisdiction in its appropriate class and grade in conformance with standards published by the Office of Personnel Management or, if no published standards apply directly, consistently with published standards. When facts warrant, an agency may change a position which it has placed in a class or grade under this section from that class or grade to another class or grade. Subject to subchapter VI of chapter 53 of this title, these actions of an agency are the basis for pay and personnel transactions until changed by certificate of the Office.

Sec. 5108. Classification of positions above GS-15

- (a) The Office of Personnel Management may, for any Executive agency -
- (1) establish, and from time to time revise, the maximum number of positions which may at any one time be classified above GS-15; and
 - (2) establish standards and procedures (including requiring agencies, where necessary in the judgment of the Office, to obtain the prior approval of the Office) in accordance with which positions may be classified above GS-15.
- (b) The President, rather than the Office, shall exercise the authority under subsection (a) in the case of positions proposed to be placed in the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Drug Enforcement Administration Senior Executive Service.

Sec. 5109. Positions classified by statute

- (a) The position held by an employee of the Department of Agriculture while he, under section 450d of title 7, is designated and vested with a delegated regulatory function or part thereof shall be classified in accordance with this chapter, but not lower than GS-14.
- (b)
- (1) The position held by a fully experienced and qualified railroad safety inspector of the Department of Transportation shall be classified in accordance with this chapter, but not lower than GS-12.

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(2) The position held by a railroad safety specialist of the Department shall be classified in accordance with this chapter, but not lower than GS-13.

Sec. 5110. Review of classification of positions

(a) The Office of Personnel Management, from time to time, shall review such number of positions in each agency as will enable the Office to determine whether the agency is placing positions in classes and grades in conformance with or consistently with published standards.

(b) When the Office finds under subsection (a) of this section that a position is not placed in its proper class and grade in conformance with published standards or that a position for which there is no published standard is not placed in the class and grade consistently with published standards, it shall, after consultation with appropriate officials of the agency concerned, place the position in its appropriate class and grade and shall certify this action to the agency. The agency shall act in accordance with the certificate, and the certificate is binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials.

Sec. 5111. Revocation and restoration of authority to classify positions

(a) When the Office of Personnel Management finds that an agency is not placing positions in classes and grades in conformance with or consistently with published standards, it may revoke or suspend the authority granted to the agency by section 5107 of this title and require that prior approval of the Office be secured before an action placing a position in a class and grade becomes effective for payroll and other personnel purposes. The Office may limit the revocation or suspension to -

- (1) the departmental or field service, or any part thereof;
- (2) a geographic area;
- (3) an organization unit or group of organization units;
- (4) certain types of classification actions;
- (5) classes in particular occupational groups or grades; or

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(6) classes for which standards have not been published.

(b) After revocation or suspension, the Office may restore the authority to the extent that it is satisfied that later actions placing positions in classes and grades will be in conformance with or consistent with published standards.

Sec. 5112. General authority of the Office of Personnel Management

(a) Notwithstanding section 5107 of this title, the Office of Personnel Management may -

(1) ascertain currently the facts as to the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements of a position;

(2) place in an appropriate class and grade a newly created position or a position coming initially under this chapter;

(3) decide whether a position is in its appropriate class and grade; and

(4) change a position from one class or grade to another class or grade when the facts warrant. The Office shall certify to the agency concerned its action under paragraph (2) or (4) of this subsection. The agency shall act in accordance with the certificate, and the certificate is binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials.

(b) An employee affected or an agency may request at any time that the Office exercise the authority granted to it by subsection (a) of this section and the Office shall act on the request.

Sec. 5113. Classification records

The Office of Personnel Management may -

(1) prescribe the form in which each agency shall record the duties and responsibilities of positions and the places where these records shall be maintained;

(2) examine these or other pertinent records of the agency; and

(3) interview employees of the agency who have knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of positions and information as to the reasons for placing a position in a class or grade.

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(Sec. 5114. Repealed. Pub. L. 99-386, title I, Sec. 110(a), Aug. 22, 1986, 100 Stat. 822)

Sec. 5115. Regulations

The Office of Personnel Management may prescribe regulations necessary for the administration of this chapter, except sections 5109 and 5114.¹

Footnotes

¹ See References in Text note below.