

Whether you've just recently been hired by the District or have been an employee for some time, you've probably heard about classification. And, you may be confused about just what it means. You may also have heard about reclassification and are thinking about asking for a reclassification of your current job.

In either case, it's best to start with a clear understanding of what classification is, what it is not, and why we have it.

Why Does Classification Exist?

With more than 5,000 part- and full-time employees performing hundreds of tasks, the District needs a way of grouping types of jobs. As much as the individual talents of employees are valued, it would be an monumental, impractical (if not impossible) job for Human Resources to keep track of each person and his/her talents and tasks.

For this reason, jobs have been clustered into more manageable groups by their related duties and levels of skills and responsibilities for purposes of assigning collective bargaining units, salary ranges and career paths. These groups are called **classifications**.

For you, the classification system clearly defines duties you will be expected to be able to perform. It also establishes a pay range based on duties, skills and responsibilities.

When Is a Job Classified?

For a new position, it is classified before you ever hear about the job; before it is opened for competition. Classification is the process of matching the expectations of the department in terms of skills and responsibilities of the position with potential applicants.

For an existing position, reclassification may be in order after perhaps two years of gradually changing job duties where the sum of new, ongoing job expectations in effect creates a "new" job **significantly different from the original**. Reclassification is a means of bringing the description and compensation for that "new", changed job in line with "cousin" jobs.

What Classification Is

Classification is the process of grouping related jobs. It gives rise to classification descriptions, which define the duties, skills and responsibilities required of a broad group of jobs, irrespective of where in the District a job is or the person in that job.

It is crucial to make the distinction between the position (with its classification and job description) and the talents of the incumbent.

Be mindful of the difference between the "classification description" and the "job description". While the classification description is a general overview of duties you may be expected to perform anywhere in the District under that classification, the job description is the specific list of duties and skills for a particular job in a particular location/position.

For the District, classification means the recruiting department can seek out and screen persons interested in and qualified for just what that department (and the job) needs done.

What Classification Is Not

It is not a means for you, an incumbent, to get a promotion. Promotions are earned through the same processes used to hire new employees; that is, applying for, being evaluated as qualified for, interviewing and being offered the new job. To increase your chances of climbing the District career ladders from within, openings for jobs are advertised so current employees may compete for promotion. These announcements appear in the "Communicator", a District publication for employees.

When A Position Might Be Reclassified

A job/position, not the capabilities of the incumbent, must have changed so that the duties do not match the current classification. These changes usually occur slowly (often over months or over years) with the employee gradually accumulating additional or more complex duties. These changes can include the continuing need for different or greater skills.

How a Reclassification Study Is Conducted

You or your supervisor/manager may request reclassification by filling out a Position Description Questionnaire available from Human Resources.

If you feel there is a continuing, seemingly-permanent demand on you to perform at a level higher than your classification (for example, asked to supervise others when your job description doesn't specify supervising others, or assigned to take meeting minutes in shorthand when your job description doesn't call for a knowledge of shorthand) you may request a reclassification **during the annual window period**.

But first, talk with your supervisor and explain what you feel is a difference between what you were hired to do and what you are now being asked to do. Since your supervisor will have to sign the Position Description Questionnaire anyway, this allows you two to talk about your duties early. Perhaps differences in your expectations and those of your supervisor can be remedied just by talking.

Your supervisor also has the opportunity here, and later in the process, to take away or not assign those "out-of-class" duties, thus returning your job to its original status and classification.

The reclassification process does not take the place of the grievance process. If you feel your are being discriminated against, there are other avenues open to you. Consult your employee handbook or bargaining agreement for more information.

When a Position Description Questionnaire is filed with Human Resources, it is reviewed by specialists there. Quite often differences in expectations can be settled at this stage.

If this documentation shows permanent changes may indeed have occurred in your job, the questionnaire may be forwarded to an outside, independent consultant specializing in personnel classifications. You and your supervisor and/or manager may be asked to provide further documentation and/or be interviewed. The collected information will be analyzed and related to the District's current classification structure. After which, the consultant (or other entity) will make a recommendation.

If that recommendation favors reclassification, your **President or Vice Chancellor may choose** to withdraw those duties that changed the job classification. Or, your Vice Chancellor or President may submit the recommendation, along with rationale and budget implications, to the Board of Trustees.

The final decision as to whether a job will be reclassified rests solely with the District's Board of Trustees. No one else can guarantee anything.

What Happens If Your Position Is Reclassified?

One of two things can happen:

1. As the incumbent in the old position, you may be appointed to fill the new classification if you have been in the position for at least a year, and if you meet the minimum requirements of the new classification. **OR**
2. The position may be reclassified and opened to competition for which you may apply. If you are a permanent employee in the old classification and do not get the new job, you'll be transferred to another job carrying your original permanent classification.

What Is Reallocation of Salary Range?

If your position is properly classified as to the duties required, but you believe the pay does not match/reflect the duties performed, you may seek a reallocation of salary range instead of a reclassification. This process of adjusting a position to a more equitable pay range is reviewed using the Hay Methodology considering job knowledge, problem solving, and accountabilities.

If this more accurately reflects your situation, contact Human Resources and/or your bargaining/meet and confer unit representative. The forms necessary for initiating this process and the names of your representatives are available from Human Resources, Classification & Compensation office at 388-6576. Again, the District's Board of Trustees must also approve.

More Questions?

We've tried to put a very complex issue into readable form. If you still have questions, you may contact Human Resources, Classification & Compensation offices, 388-6576.

Before You Do Anything Else...

Read your handbook. We've generalized guidelines for reclassification here for a broad audience. Your unit handbook will determine your specific situation. Descriptions/explanations here do not supersede, by implication or inference, collectively bargained agreements or policies and procedures adopted by the San Diego Community College District Board of Trustees.

San Diego Community College District
Human Resources, Classification & Compensation
3375 Camino del Rio South, room 330
San Diego, CA 92108-3883
(619) 388-6576

Info for you*

about job
classification:

What it is.
What it isn't.

**Why the District
has it.**

An Equal Opportunity Employer.

The San Diego Community College District has a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap in accordance with state and federal law.

The San Diego Community College District is governed by its Board of Trustees. No oral or written representation by any employee is binding on the San Diego Community College District without the express approval of the Board of Trustees.

Board of Trustees: Richard S. Grosch, Maria Nieto Senour, William H Schwandt Jr., Peter Zschiesche, Mary Graham, and a student member. Constance M. Carroll, Chancellor.
12/12/08

*** from Human Resources Classification & Compensation,
San Diego Community College District**