**Introduction**

Western HR is providing the following information on the classified staff classification and compensation process. A number of questions have arisen regarding this process and we hope that the following information provides some clarity for both employees and supervisors.

Decisions regarding an employee’s classification are made either at time of recruitment or when a position is submitted to HR for review, either by an employee or by a supervisor. Information and guidance from State HR continues to assist Western to ensure that our interpretation of the classification specifications is reflective of the State HR’s intended application of the classifications.

If you have questions that are not addressed here, please contact your HR Consultant.

**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Position Allocation Process**

**General Questions**

**Q**: **What prompts HR to conduct a position review?**

A: A position review is initiated in one of three ways:

1. A recruitment when the position is new and/or vacant;
2. When an employee submits a position review request; and
3. When a supervisor/department manager submits a position review request (often as a result of a reassignment of duties or a reorganization of the unit).

**Q: Does Western HR have flexibility to change the position review process?**

A: The policies and procedures regarding the position allocation and review process are dictated by State HR and Western HR must maintain alignment with the State. HR does include additional steps in its process, such as the interview summaries, to ensure that employees receive as comprehensive of a review as possible. As the State provides new/updated guidance and clarification of its classification system, whether through a salary survey, Director’s Reviews or other methods, adjusts its allocation and classification review processes to maintain the alignment with the State. When a position comes to HR for review and it is determined that the current classification is no longer the appropriate classification, HR reallocates the position accordingly.

**Q: How does HR determine a position’s classification?**

A: Western HR follows the State’s [allocation process](http://www.hr.wa.gov/CompClass/Allocation/Pages/default.aspx) with the addition of interview summaries.

For an employee-requested review, HR reviews the employee’s updated position description, Position Review Request ([Employee](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/EmployeePortionPosnRevwReqst.docx) & [Supervisor](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/SupervisorPortionPosnRevwReqst.docx) portions), org chart, and any supplemental materials provided to HR. The employee and supervisor interviews are also a significant consideration in the review.

For a supervisor-requested review, HR reviews the updated position description and org chart, and any supplemental materials provided to HR. The employee and supervisor interviews are also a significant component of the review process.

*Please note: For IT positions, an IT position description form will also need to be attached to the PageUp position description form.*

For non-IT positions, HR then determines the appropriate allocation:

1. A position is allocated based upon the majority of the position’s duties. If there is no majority of duties, a position is allocated based upon the “best fit,” which has been defined by the State Personnel Resource Board.

Every position is reviewed *de novo*. A position is reviewed as if it had no classification. A position’s current or previous classification is not determinative or relevant to the outcome of a position review. Western is required to reallocate a position to the correct classification even if it was historically allocated to another classification for justifiable reasons.

In many cases, HR also reviews relevant [Director’s Reviews](http://www.hr.wa.gov/more/DirectorsReviewsAppeals/DirectorsReviews/Pages/DirectorsReviewDecisions.aspx), [Personnel Resources Board decisions](https://fortress.wa.gov/dop/prb/) and [additional guidance](http://www.hr.wa.gov/CompClass/Pages/default.aspx) available on State HR’s website.

Pursuant to [State HR’s instruction](http://www.hr.wa.gov/CompClass/Allocation/Pages/DetermineAppropriateAllocation.aspx), Western HR does not consider:

* Volume of work
* Performance of work
* Desired salary
* Comparisons of other employees’ positions (except in terms of determining level of authority of incumbent’s position, supervisory/lead responsibility, etc.)
* Expertise & training (unless a required qualification)
* Seniority

1. HR reviews the category concept (if one exists) for a class series. This is often referred to as a “class series concept” in a specification. It is found in the specification for the first level of a class series. Many of the class series concepts utilize words that are specifically defined by State HR in its [Glossary of Classification Terms](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/ClassificationGlossary.pdf). The State’s intent behind the class series concepts are also further described in [State Director’s Reviews](http://www.hr.wa.gov/more/DirectorsReviewsAppeals/DirectorsReviews/Pages/DirectorsReviewDecisions.aspx) and [Personnel Resource Board decisions](https://ofm.wa.gov/state-human-resources/reviews-appeals/personnel-resources-board-appeals).

If the position does not fit into the class series concept, HR reviews additional class series concepts until the appropriate class series is identified. Once the appropriate class series is identified, HR moves to Step 2.

1. HR reviews the definitions of the various specifications of a class series to determine which specification is most appropriate for the position. Again, the [Glossary of Classification Terms](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/ClassificationGlossary.pdf) can be useful to determine if any of State HR’s words in the definition have a specific or intended meaning. The position must meet the entirety of the definition.

If none of the class definitions fit, HR will look back to the class series concept and may review additional class series concepts to determine if there is a more appropriate class series for the position.

1. Once HR finds the most appropriate definition, HR reviews the distinguishing characteristics, again utilizing the [Glossary of Classification Terms](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/ClassificationGlossary.pdf). The position must meet all of the distinguishing characteristics. If the distinguishing characteristics are not met, HR I may review additional specifications within the class or may review additional class series concepts. For positions without distinguishing characteristics, the classification determination is made based upon the definition.
2. Although “typical work” is not allocating criteria, it is useful to review to determine typical duties performed by positions within the classification. 5
3. Once the appropriate classification is determined for the position, HR will issue a written decision. If an employee disagrees with the decision, the employee may request a [Director's Review](http://www.hr.wa.gov/more/DirectorsReviewsAppeals/DirectorsReviews/Pages/Howshouldexhibitsbepreparedforthereview.aspx) of the decision from the Director of the Office of Human Resources within thirty (30) calendar days of being provided the results of the position review via email.

Example: A new position comes in for recruitment. The position appears to be fiscal in nature. HR discusses the position description with the department. HR reviews the Fiscal Analyst class series concept (found in the Fiscal Analyst 1 Class Specification). After review, HR determines that the class series does not fit the position. HR reviews the Fiscal Specialist class series concept for Fiscal Specialist and determines it fits the position. HR reviews the definitions for Fiscal Specialist 1 and 2 and Fiscal Specialist Supervisor and determines that the majority of the position’s meet the Fiscal Specialist 2 definition and distinguishing characteristics and allocates the position to that classification. In reviewing the typical work of the Fiscal Specialist 2, HR determines the position’s work is similar to the typical work performed by a Fiscal Specialist 2. HR makes its allocation determination, completes the PageUp position description, and the recruitment proceeds forward.

Example: A new position comes in for recruitment. The position has previously been allocated to the Secretary Supervisor classification. However, when HR reviews the class series concept for the Secretary class series, HR determines that the class series no longer meets the majority of duties for the position. Given that the majority of the position’s duties and responsibilities relate to customer service, HR reviews the Customer Service Specialist class series and determines that the position meets the class series concept. After further review of the definitions and distinguishing characteristics of the specifications within the Customer Service Specialist class series, HR determines that the Customer Service Specialist 1 classification is the best fit for the position. HR provides its classification determination to the department and the recruitment proceeds at the new classification.

Example: Due to a re-structure, a supervisor submits a position review for a filled position that is currently allocated to the Office Assistant 3 classification. After reviewing the position with the supervisor and the employee, HR determines there are no “majority of duties,” and looks for a “best fit” allocation. HR reviews the Office Assistant class series and determines the position no longer fits the class series. HR reviews potentially applicable class series and determines that the position best fits the Communications Consultant class series. HR reviews the class definitions and distinguishing characteristics and determines that the position best fits the Communications Consultant 3 specification. HR provides the employee and supervisor with a written report regarding the change in classification. The department submits a personnel action form with the revised position classification to complete the process. The employee has the right to appeal this decision.

Example: An employee whose position is currently classified as a Program Coordinator submits a position review because they believe they have taken on a significant amount of new duties in the past 8 months and now may be a Program Manager. HR interviews the employee and their supervisor. HR reviews the Program Assistant/Coordinator class concept series and the Program Manager class series concept as well as the State’s definition of a “program” in the Glossary of Classification Terms and determines that there is a program that the position serves and that the position remains properly allocated to the Program Coordinator class series. HR reviews the definition and the distinguishing characteristics for the Program Coordinator classification and confirms that the Program Coordinator classification remains the appropriate classification. HR reviews the definition for the Program Manager and confirms that the position does not meet the definition of the classification. HR provides a written report to the employee detailing its analysis and allocation decision. The employee now has the right to appeal.

For IT positions, HR utilizes State HR’s IT allocation tool to determine a position’s allocation. This tool determines:

* Whether the position is an IT User or Worker
* Whether the position is an IT Professional or Paraprofessional
* Whether the position is a Staff or Supervisor
* The position’s Technical Know How
* The position’s Scope
* The position’s Impact
* The position’s Problem Solving
* The position’s overall level

With this information, the tool then provides the position’s salary grade.

**Employee Questions Regarding the Position Allocation and Review Process**

*For IT positions, you will need to submit the IT position description form attached to the PageUp position description.*

**Q: I don’t think my current classification is right. What are my options?**

A: You can submit a position description in PageUp and attach the required [Position Review Request](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/EmployeePortionPosnRevwReqst.docx). Before submitting a Position Review Request, HR suggests that the employee discuss their Position Review Request with their supervisor. The employee can also consult with their union representative.

**Q: I have researched State HR’s website and I think that my position fits more than one classification. Which one is right?**

First, the classifications on State HR’s website have been further interpreted by the [Glossary of Classification Terms](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/ClassificationGlossary.pdf) as well as Director’s Reviews and PRB decisions, so your interpretation of them may not be the same as State’s interpretation of them. That said, most positions perform duties that appear in more than one classification, and [State requires](http://www.hr.wa.gov/CompClass/Allocation/Pages/DetermineAppropriateAllocation.aspx) that positions are allocated to the most specific classification possible, so your position has been allocated accordingly. Additionally, a position is allocated based upon the majority of duties, so your position is allocated based upon those duties, even if the remainder of your duties are most appropriately allocated to another classification.

**Q: [Person A] is a [classification] and my job is the same as theirs, but when I put my position in for review, HR determined that my position was not a [classification].**

A: The allocation or misallocation of a similar position cannot be a determining factor in the allocation of another position. Equity between similar positions at Western, and around the state, cannot be a basis for allocation. While comparing positions may be useful to understand the duties performed and the level of responsibility of a position, the allocation decision must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual position compared to existing classifications.

**Q: Why am I in the same classification as [Person A] when I have so much more work to do than they do and/or my performance is so much better than theirs?**

A: Each specification represents a range of work. A classification decision does not measure the volume of work performed nor is it an evaluation of the person’s quality of work performance. Whether or not someone else is properly allocated is also not a determining factor in the review and classification of your position.

**Q: What is the relevant time period HR is looking at when reviewing my position?**

A: An employee-requested position review is based upon the work you performed during the six months prior to filing the request. A supervisor-requested position review is generally prospective, though it can be retrospective as well.

**Q: Can I contact HR before I submit my Position Review Request to find out what my classification would be if I submitted my position for review?**

A: You can always contact HR to discuss the position review process and your current position. However, HR does not issue “advisory opinions” for employee-requested position reviews, so HR would be unable to make an allocation determination based solely upon those discussions. You can also discuss your Position Review Request with your supervisor and union representative prior to submission.

**Q: What are the ways that I can assist HR with the position review process to ensure that HR understands my position?**

A: The position description is the most important document in the position review process. An employee can greatly assist HR by ensuring that the position description includes all of their duties and responsibilities and accurately reflects the job that they are currently performing. The other important assistance an employee can provide is during the employee interview. The interview is the time that the employee has to bring to HR’s attention any special circumstances, critical duties or other key information regarding their position.

**Q: When I submit a position review, what outcome can I expect?**

A: The allocation process can result in an upward or downward classification or may result in no change to your classification. HR encourages all employees to review their union’s collective bargaining agreement for information regarding the allocation process (Article 29.4 – PSE; Article 42.3-42.4 –WFSE).

**Q: I submitted my Position Review Request… now what?**

A: HR will send you an intake email letting you know that we’ve received your materials and letting you know the next steps in the process. HR will then schedule meetings with you and your supervisor to discuss your position. The focus of this meetings are to discuss the intent and purpose of your position as well as the information you provided in your position review request. You are welcome to bring your union representative to the meeting. After these meetings, HR will prepare interview summaries for each of you to review. Once the interview summaries are returned to HR, HR will conduct a thorough analysis of your position, make a classification determination, and issue a written position review. The process is typically completed within 60 days of submission of your position review request.

**Q: Once I submit a position review, can I withdraw it?**

A: You can withdraw a position review request until the final determination is made by HR. The withdraw request must be submitted in writing.

**Q: If my classification changes, will my job title change?**

A: Classified employees often have two job titles at Western—their classification (i.e. Program Support Supervisor) and their working title (i.e. Robots Program Supervisor). While an employee’s classification is determined by the State’s position allocation process, an employee’s working title is determined by their supervisor or their department. After a change in classification through a position review, the *classification* of the position will change but the *working title* may remain the same.

**Q: My position was allocated to a classification at a higher salary range. How do I receive the higher salary?**

A: At the bottom of the Position Review will be a “Reallocation Information” section that provides you with the information regarding your new classification, class code and salary range. Your new salary is calculated in accordance with your union’s collective bargaining agreement. Your increment date and the effective date of the position review are also included.

Sometimes, as a result of a reallocation, you will be moving bargaining units. This information will be provided to you in this section, if applicable, and your old and new union representatives will be copied on the email notifying you of the allocation decision.

To effectuate the change in salary and classification, your supervisor must submit a Personnel Action e-sign form through the usual signatures. Your Position Review must be attached to the PA to ensure proper processing.

**Q: My position was allocated to a classification at a lower salary range. What happens now?**

The next steps will be governed by your union’s collective bargaining agreement.

WFSE: Reallocation to a lower salary range maximum is governed by Article 42.4(c). You will be paid an amount equal to your current salary provided it is within the salary range of the new position. If your current salary exceeds the maximum of amount of the new salary range, you will be compensated at the salary you were receiving prior to the reallocation until such time as you vacate your position or your salary falls within the new salary range.

PSE: Reallocation to a lower salary range maximum is governed by Article 29.4(e). If the lower classification has a greater than five percent (5%) pay differential, you may exercise full options under Article 32, Reduction in Force/Layoff.

**Supervisor Questions Regarding the Position Allocation process**

*For IT positions, you will need to submit the IT position description form attached to the PageUp position description.*

**Q: I have assigned additional duties to my employee and now I am not certain that their current classification is still accurate. What should I do?**

A: As a supervisor, you can submit an employer-requested position review to HR to have HR review the position and issue an allocation determination. Please contact the Classification/Compensation Manager to discuss your employee’s position prior to submitting any review request.

**Q: What do I need to submit if I want HR to conduct an employer-requested position review?**

A: To conduct an employer-requested review, HR will need you to submit an updated position description through PageUp and an organizational chart.

**Q: What is my role in the position allocation process?**

A: In a supervisor-requested review, once you submit the necessary documentation, HR will meet with you and the employee to discuss the position description. HR will then prepare interview summaries for each of you to review. Once the summaries are returned, HR completes its analysis and makes a classification determination for the position. In an employee-requested review, you will also need to submit the [Supervisor Portion – Employee-Requested Position Review Request Form](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/SupervisorPortionPosnRevwReqst.docx) prior to your meeting with HR.

**Q: My department supports the employee’s employee-requested position review request. What can I do to advocate for my employee?**

A: The four most important things that you can do to assist in the employee-requested review process are to ensure that HR has an updated, accurate and complete PageUp position description for the position; to fill out the [Supervisor Portion-Employee-Requested Position Review Request Form](http://www.wwu.edu/hrdocs/lr/SupervisorPortionPosnRevwReqst.docx) with as much information regarding the position as possible; to provide HR with any additional, relevant information during your interview with HR; and to ensure that the interview summary is as accurate as possible.

**Q: How will HR notify me of the position review decision?**

A: HR notifies the employee, supervisor, supervisory chain, and union of the allocation determination by issuing its decision via email to the employee with a copy to the other parties.

**Q: My employee is appealing HR’s allocation determination. What is my role in the Director’s Review process?**

A: HR will take care of the exchange of exhibits for the Director’s Review and then will be in contact with you to discuss the review process. Generally, the supervisor takes an active role in the review process by attending the telephone conference/hearing held by the Director’s designee in Olympia.

**Questions Regarding the Appeal Process**

**Q: I reviewed my Position Review from HR and I don’t think the classification determination is right. What are my options now?**

A: You may request a [Director's Review](http://www.hr.wa.gov/more/DirectorsReviewsAppeals/DirectorsReviews/Pages/Howshouldexhibitsbepreparedforthereview.aspx) of the results of the position review to the Director of the Office of Human Resources within thirty (30) calendar days of being provided the results of the position review via email. HR encourages employees to discuss their appeal with their union representative well in advance of the thirty (30) day deadline, as your union representative can be a great resource throughout the appeal process.

The Director’s Review is the first step in the appeal process and your request for review must be received (not postmarked) in the Director’s Review Office within 30 days of service of the position review results or reallocation notice. You may file in person, by mail, or by fax (but not by email) to the following address: Office of the State HR Director, Director’s Review Program, Insurance Building, 302 Sid Snyder Ave SW, PO Box 40911, Olympia, Washington 98504-0911/ Fax: 360-586-4694.

After the Director’s Review office receives the request for review, the office reviews the request for timeliness and asks for any clarification, if needed. The office sends an acknowledgement letter to both parties and sets specific dates for exchanging exhibits.

Western HR will send copies of the documents (exhibits) considered during its allocation review to the Director’s Review office and to you via email. You will then review the exhibits and will have an opportunity to submit additional exhibits to the Director’s Review office and Western HR via email. The Director’s Review office will create an exhibit list identifying all documents in the Director’s review file and will provide the list to both parties at the time of scheduling.

**It is important that you redact confidential and/or protected information from any materials shared with your union and State HR. This includes information protected by FERPA and HIPPA.**

The Director’s designee or investigator will conduct the review through written documentation, a telephone conference, or an in-person conference. Subsequently, the Director issues a determination. Either party may appeal to the Personnel Resources Board.

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