

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 2.04, Wis. Adm. Code, for making classification decisions relative to present and future paraprofessional positions within the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) at the Department of Workforce Development. Positions allocated to this classification are responsible for specialized program support in order to provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible persons with disabilities. This classification specification is not intended to identify every duty that may be assigned to positions, but is intended to serve as a framework for classification decision-making in this occupational area.

Classification decisions must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (i.e., more than 50%) of the work assigned to and performed by the position when compared to the class concepts and definition of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusions

The positions in this classification are paraprofessional program support positions located within the Department of Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation assisting the Division in providing vocational rehabilitation services to eligible persons with disabilities.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification are the following types of positions:

1. Positions that meet the statutory definition(s) of confidential, supervisor and/or management as defined in s. 111.81(7), (19) and (13), Wis. Stats., as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.
2. Positions that are, for a majority of the time, engaged in professional counseling in accordance with Chapter 457, Wis. Stats., specific to vocational rehabilitation services and are more appropriately classified as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.
3. Positions that are located in the DVR central office that for the majority of the time are responsible for providing accounting services for the Division and are engaged in

processing invoice vouchers and direct pay vouchers and are more appropriately classified as Financial Specialists.

4. Positions that provide paraprofessional administrative support to the DVR, but are not required to have specialized DVR program knowledge and are more appropriately classified as Operations Program Associate.
 5. Positions that perform professional duties as defined in s. 111.81(15), Wis. Stats., for the majority of time (more than 50%) that include the full scope and accountability of a complex program area.
 6. All other positions that are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.
- D. Entrance Into This Classification

Employees enter positions in this classification by competitive examination.

E. Terminology Used in this Classification Specification

Close Supervision: Implies that the work is performed according to detailed instructions and that supervision is available on short notice.

General Supervision: Implies that the work is performed independently. The incumbent seldom refers matters to supervisor except for clarification of policy.

Limited Supervision: Implies that the incumbent proceeds on his or her own initiative while complying with policies, practices and procedures prescribed by the supervisor. The supervisor generally answers questions only on the more important phases of the work.

Paraprofessional: Work that is similar to professional work but does not have the breadth and depth of true professional work. A paraprofessional employee may perform duties that are a narrow, specialized subset of the professional employee's duties. A paraprofessional employee does not perform the full range of duties assigned to professional employees, or performs duties of lesser scope, impact, and complexity than duties assigned to professional employees. Paraprofessional duties tend to support the work of professional employees. A paraprofessional employee may carry out or implement plans or projects that are developed, planned, and managed by professional employees. The paraprofessional employee carries out or implements plans or projects based on extensive experience and supplemental on-the-job training rather than on formal academic education in the discipline itself. Paraprofessional work is performed in a narrow or highly specialized area of the overall occupation and requires a high degree of practical knowledge and skill. The experienced paraprofessional employee often works with considerable independence for significant periods of time. This independence, however, does not alter the nature and character of the work, which is to support a professional discipline.

Professional: Wisconsin statute s. 111.81(15) states, "Professional employee means: (a) Any employee in the classified service who is engaged in work: 1. predominantly intellectual and varied in character as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work; 2. Involving the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment in its performance; 3. Of such a character that the output produced or the result accomplished cannot be standardized in relation to a given period of time; 4. Requiring knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction and

study in an institution of higher learning or a hospital, as distinguished from a general academic education or from an apprenticeship or from training in the performance of routine mental, manual or physical processes; or (b) Any employee in the classified service who: 1. Has completed the courses of specialized intellectual instruction and study described in par. (a)(4); and 2. Is performing related work under the supervision of a professional person to qualify to become a professional employee as defined in par. (a).”

Professional work cannot be standardized or routinized and requires independent judgment and discretion. Professional work involves many gray areas that require substantial analysis and judgment to reach the appropriate conclusion. Work classified as professional requires education and training in the principles, concepts, and theories of the occupational area. These are often gained through the completion of a four-year degree in a specified curriculum at a college or university. In a limited number of circumstances, such knowledge may be gained through on-the-job experience.

Professional work requires creativity, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation. It involves applying or interpreting natural law, principles, or theory; evaluating the research of others; and assessing the need for and validity of proposed changes and improvements in procedures and methods. Professional responsibility involves the ability to reason from existing knowledge to unexplored areas; to adapt methods to circumstances that deviate from the standards; and to stay abreast of and evaluate technical subjects, analyses, and proposals.

Professional work requires a high order of analytical ability combined with a comprehensive knowledge of (1) the functions, processes, theories, and principles of the occupational area; and (2) the methods used to gather, analyze, and evaluate information.

II. DEFINITIONS

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

Under close to limited supervision, this position involves regular contact with vocational rehabilitation consumers. Duties are scheduling and arranging appointments for consumers for a wide variety of diagnostic and other service needs; assisting consumers in filling out agency forms; keeping consumers aware of their status with the agency; completing case notes for consumer case files; serving as a primary contact with vendors and clients to respond to inquiries and resolve problems regarding invoices; obtaining quotes from vendors; and suggesting and/or assisting consumers in applying at other partnership agencies where they may be eligible for services. Positions also compose letters and other necessary correspondence to consumers, referral sources and service vendors.

After gaining experience in these duties, this position works under general supervision and spends a majority of the time performing duties involving more in-depth analysis and decision-making responsibilities while providing vocational rehabilitation services to eligible persons with disabilities. Positions complete initial interviews and organize and recommend Eligibility/Order of Selection and Individual Plans for Employment to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Positions develop and manage caseloads of persons with disabilities, documenting all casework activity to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. Positions also participate in the job placement and follow-up of job-ready clients. In addition to providing services for vocational rehabilitation consumers, positions speak to community groups regarding services of the agency; contact community agencies and resources to monitor consumer progress; and develop relationships with employers who are interested in hiring individuals with disabilities.

III. QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work, or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This classification was created effective July 24, 2005 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0071-MRS-SC as a result of the Administrative Support Unit Survey for some positions formerly classified in the Program Assistant series. The classification was abolished and recreated effective October 12, 2008, and announced in Bulletin OSER-0225-MRS/SC to remove the A/B pay designations from the title as a result of ASU 2007-2009 bargaining.

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