

**STATE OF WISCONSIN  
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION**

**ECONOMIST  
CLASSIFICATION SERIES**

**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 professional positions that perform economic analysis. This classification specification will not specifically identify every eventuality or combination of duties and responsibilities of positions that currently exist, or those that result from changing program emphasis in the future; rather, it is designed 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

This classification encompasses professional positions as defined in s. 111.81(15), Wis. Stats., that that apply the principles and practices of economics; research and analyze economic issues and problems in their areas of specialization; compile and present results; provide economic consultation and recommendations to agency management, the legislature, the public, media, private industry, and/or others.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification are the following types of positions:

1. Positions which, for a majority of the time, perform non-professional economist duties.
2. Positions which, for a majority of the time, develop, analyze and interpret data which although closely related to economics, or as part of a larger economic study, requires specialized training in areas other than economics, such as statistics and are more appropriately classified as a Research Analyst.
3. Positions which for a majority of the time, perform labor analysis functions and are more appropriately classified as a Labor Market Analyst.

4. Positions that meet the statutory definition(s) of supervisor and/or management as defined in s. 111.81(19) and (13) as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.
5. Positions which spend the majority of the time performing specialized analytic functions such as budget analysis, program and policy analysis, information systems programming and systems analysis, or fiscal analysis and which are more appropriately classified pursuant to a classification that specifically describes the duties and responsibilities of the position.
6. All other positions that are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance Into and Progression Through This Classification Series

Employees enter this classification series by competitive examination. Progression to the advanced level will occur through competition except that reclassification to the advanced level will be permitted only when it can be demonstrated that the change in duties and responsibilities justifying the class change is a logical and gradual outgrowth of the position's previous duties and responsibilities. Positions with formal leadworker duties will be filled by competition.

E. Definitions Used in This Classification Specification

Complexity – The difficulty inherent in performing the work often measured by both the variety of worker activities (number and related or unrelated) and the type (simple, singular, recurring, predictable, non-controversial, etc. vs. intensive, multifaceted, sporadic, unpredictable, controversial, etc.). Complexity is frequently influenced by or interacts with scope.

Economic Analysis – The systematic study of scarce resources designed to provide decision-makers with information on the optimum use of resources, costs, benefits, and consequences of alternative courses of action.

Knowledge, Depth of – The depth of detailed understanding needed and the proficiency needed to complete the work at the objective level usually consists of information or facts such as work practices, rules and regulations, policies, theories and concepts, principles, and processes which an employee must know and understand to be able to do the work. The degrees of knowledge include: (1) Considerable Knowledge – implies enough knowledge of the subject to enable the employee to work effectively in normal work situations of the class and with little direct supervision; (2) Extensive Knowledge – implies an advanced knowledge of the subject matter so as to permit solution of unusual as well as commonplace work problems, advising on technical questions and planning methods for difficult work situations.

Impact of work – The extent of the effect of the properly performed work on other functions both internal and external to the work unit.

General Supervision – The work is performed independently. The incumbent refers matters to the supervisor only in exceptional situations.

Leadworker – A position whose assigned duties include training, assisting, guiding, instructing, and assigning and reviewing the work of two or more employees in the work unit. Leadworkers do not have supervisory authority as defined under s. 111.81(19), Wis. Stats.

Scope – A quantifiable job characteristic that ascribes value to a job. The range (number and variety) of job responsibilities. Scope is most often measured by depth and breadth. Scope is frequently influenced by or interacts with complexity.

Statistic – A measure computed from observations.

Statistics – The body of theory and methods used in the collection, classification, and evaluation of quantitative facts as a basis for inference. Basic to statistical theory are the theories of probability and sampling.

## II. DEFINITIONS

### ECONOMIST

Positions allocated to this classification level function as entry, developmental, or objective level Economists. Economists at this level have considerable knowledge of economic theory and the projects range in complexity. The duties have a broad scope and the impact of work varies by project. Economists conduct economic analysis and identify market trends, use statistical theory and methods, make projections, present results to a variety of audiences, provide consultation and make recommendations, and create reports and other communications. Work is conducted under limited supervision.

The **scope** of work is defined by the size and complexity of their project. Data to be used in economic studies is accessible and findings may be used by other program staff in larger projects or reports. Positions may have a regional focus or spend more time on analytical activities and compilation of materials for publication rather than researching new data, methodologies, or consulting with external parties.

The **impact** of positions at this level is often limited to a specific phase or sub-section of a broader agency program. Positions primarily provide information, analyses, or technical assistance to internal agency staff or individual business entities. The consequence of error affects a smaller group of customers or the error can be easily resolved (e.g., re-run a report with corrected data, etc.).

The **complexity** of positions at this level involves studies requiring the analyst to use a variety of general or established standards, policies, or methodologies. Objectives are defined and interested parties often have a common goal. Positions research and analyze program data to develop recommendations to various parties or individuals.

### ECONOMIST – ADVANCED

Positions allocated to this classification level perform economist work that requires extensive knowledge of statistics and economic theory to enable the employee to work effectively and independently in a wide range of situations. Projects have a high level of complexity as evidenced by the scope and impact. Positions have a significant role and responsibility to make complex independent judgments and decisions within the scope of their responsibility as a result of delegated authority. Positions at this level may function as leadworkers.

The **scope** of work maybe provided in broad terms from a supervisor or it may be requested from other external sources (i.e. the media, private industry, etc.). Positions are responsible for: deciding what studies or research should be conducted to obtain data for a large project; research new methodologies or tools; and represent the program to outside organizations. Positions serve as the technical expert and provide authoritative consultation to agency management or external entities. Work includes providing input on program area policies and/or statutes.

The **impact** of positions at this level is significant, with the consequence of errors wide ranging (e.g., agency-wide, statewide, or affecting a broad pool of external customers or industry groups). Positions at

this level provide recommendations impacting financial allocations or resources, which may include expenditures by a business entity or industry in reaching project consensus (e.g., use of energy, building structures to preserve natural resources or agricultural operations, etc.).

The **complexity** of positions at this level is in-depth with the expectation of serving as a program resource or expert to interpret economic conditions on a regular basis. The objectives of work assignments are often not well defined, novel, high-profile, or influenced by conflicting goals of various parties. The information evaluated is often in conflict. Positions may need to negotiate, serve as a mediator to reach consensus, or testify.

#### **Representative Position:**

Public Service Commission, Electric Division Economist: This position identifies major economic and financial issues, events, and trends in the electric utility industry and performs highly complex economic and financial analysis of a variety of broad regulatory issues in the regulation of electric utilities. This position leads and conducts highly complex special studies involving the development, recommendation, and implementation of broad Commission regulatory policy affecting the entire electric utility industry in Wisconsin and influencing policies in other states; plays a key role in the analysis of various proposals to restructure the electric industry in Wisconsin and in the agency's review of major merger proposals; conducts reliability assessments of the Wisconsin supply and demand for electricity; conducts cost reviews of power purchase agreements between public utilities and independent power producers; analyzes horizontal market power issues in competitive electricity markets; analyzes capital requirements and trends in capital structures of electric utilities, refinement, and maintenance of financial models; develops appropriate portfolio allocation for the utilities' nuclear decommissioning trusts; analyzes short- and long-range economic forecasts; participates in the review and analysis of alternative proposals for meeting electric system resource needs in the Commission's CPCN process and the strategic energy assessment, including the use of highly complex economic and financial models.

### **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 series was created effective February 1983 as a result of the Investment, Rate and Loan Analysis Survey. This classification specification was modified effective May 18, 2003 and announced in Bulletin MRS-SC-159 as a result of the PERSA Class Collapsing Study. This classification series Economist and Economist 4-6 was abolished and the Economist and Economist - Advanced class series created effective November 8, 2009 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0252-CLR/SC as a result of the Personnel Management Survey of Economists and Research Analysts which facilitated PERSA class collapsing within the series in conjunction with the introduction of broad banding to the PERSA bargaining unit.