

**STATE OF WISCONSIN  
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION**

**RESEARCH TECHNICIAN  
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 classifying positions with the primary purpose of providing technical support in the collection, analysis, and reporting of quantitative information. Because of the variety of ways in which such positions can be structured, this position standard may not specifically identify every combination of duties and responsibilities that could exist. Rather, it is designed to serve as the basic framework for classification of positions of this type.

B. Inclusions

This classification encompasses positions with the primary purpose of collecting, compiling, and manipulating statistical information, operating statistical information reporting systems or performing other research support work which is considered "technical," rather than clerical or professional in nature. In most instances, these positions will be located in specialized research or statistical information reporting units, and will be providing technical support to professional research staff or to the users of the data. In performing this work, these positions typically apply knowledge of basic statistical concepts and techniques, package computer programs and basic data processing concepts, and/or established guidelines or procedures for the collection, analysis, or reporting of specialized quantitative information, as well as skill in performing statistical or mathematical calculations.

C. Exclusions

Specifically excluded from this classification series are positions which:

1. are professional in nature, as defined in s. 111.81(11), Wis. Stats.
2. provide general administrative or clerical support in research or statistical information reporting units;
3. perform data collection/analysis/reporting as a subordinate part of fiscal control, application processing, grant administration, compliance monitoring, or similar functions;
4. are more appropriately classified in other technical series such as Management Information Technician, Peripheral Equipment Operator, Computer Operator, Psychological Services Technician, or Engineering Technician;

5. are better identified by other classes or class series.

D. Entrance and Progression Through This Series

Entrance into this series will normally be by competition, and may occur at any level, depending on the duties and responsibilities assigned. Progression through the series may be by reclassification or competition, depending on the nature of the changes in the duties and responsibilities, and in accordance with the Rules of the Administrator.

E. Definitions of Terms Used in This Classification Series:

Data Series: a group of measures of a set of variables which describe characteristics of a population of interest to researchers, planners, etc., taken at various points over time.

Full Performance: the situation in which the incumbent is able to perform the full range of duties of the position, under general supervision, having acquired the necessary competence and familiarity with the problems, practices and methods of the work.

Leadworker: an employe whose assigned duties include training, assigning, guiding, and reviewing the work of one or more employes in the work unit on a permanent continuous basis. Leadworkers do not have supervisory authority as defined in s. 111.81(10), Wis. Stats.

Objective Level: the classification level in a series which any employe in any position allocated to a classification series can reasonably expect to achieve at full performance. That maximum class level is then determined to be the objective level for all positions performing that type of work in the series, within the work unit.

Package Programs: also referred to as analytical programs, are computer programs developed (usually by someone other than the user) to carry out a specific type of mathematical or statistical analysis. These packages typically provide for different combinations or variations of analyses and a variety of display and data storage formats and methods, but do not have the flexibility of full programming languages. Examples include Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Statistical Analysis System (SAS) and Table Producing Language (TPL).

Paraprofessional: a type of work closely relating to and resembling professional level work, but with a more limited scope of functions and discretion, and not requiring a professional level of knowledge of the formal principles or theory of the corresponding professional discipline.

Research: the process of defining a set of measurable variables, establishing their level, and specifying their interrelationships, for the purpose of understanding or explaining a particular phenomenon or predicting future states of affairs.

Statistical Information Reporting System: the set of processes and procedures necessary to collect, compile, report and store, on an ongoing basis, quantitative data about a particular population. Typically, these systems utilize electronic data

processing methods and equipment to compile and store data and depend on statistical concepts and methods to guide its collection and interpretation.

Technical Work: work performed in direct support of professional specialists in a discipline or field, utilizing knowledge of fundamental concepts and standardized methods of the specialty to address relatively well-defined problems.

#### F. Classification Factors

Should it be necessary to evaluate a position which is properly allocated to this series, but does not fit any of the specific class definitions presented below, the position should be compared with the types of positions identified by the class definitions using the same classification factors used to establish these definitions. These classification factors are:

1. Scope, including:
  - a. leadwork responsibility
  - b. responsibility for a specific system, data series, or publication; or
  - c. variety of technical support functions performed;
2. Complexity, including intricacy of steps and methods, responsibility for work planning and coordination, and difficulty in deciding what needs to be done;
3. Knowledge, including the degree of technical knowledge of procedures, methods, or concepts required, and knowledge of the subject matter area about which data is collected;
4. Discretion, including the level of supervision received and the degree to which guidelines control the work procedures and results.

## II. DEFINITION

### RESEARCH TECHNICIAN 1

This is either an entry or full performance objective level. As an entry level, this encompasses positions which perform duties and responsibilities normally identified at the Research Technician 2 level, but which have been structured to provide their incumbents with the training and experience necessary to function at full performance at the higher level. Work is performed according to specific instructions and detailed guidelines, and under close, progressing to limited, supervision.

As a full performance objective level, this encompasses positions which execute specific data collection, compilation, analysis, and/or reporting procedures to assist professional research staff on specific projects or assist in the operation of statistical information reporting systems. Positions require that the majority of time be spent in activities such as:

- calculating basic statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, frequencies, ratios)
- conduct phone/in-person interviews, using established formats, to collect information
- editing questionnaires or similar reporting forms to ensure completeness, relevance, and consistency

- contacting data originators to correct or clarify reported information and explain proper procedures
- reviewing error listings or edit computer print-outs, using specialized knowledge of the information reported and/or the guidelines to correct errors and inconsistencies
- explains instructions, codes, or forms to data originators or users to ensure proper applications
- guiding and directing the work of clerical assistants performing routine tabulations, coding, or editing of data
- developing tables, graphs, or other means of presenting data
- writing simple narratives describing results of compilations or calculations
- contacting data processing staff to schedule computer runs and resolve problems in data entry or processing
- maintaining a library of computer printouts, raw data files, computer tapes, or similar data to facilitate data retrieval
- assisting in developing new procedures to collect or process information

Positions at this level may also use package or utility programs to set up or add to files, manipulate data, or produce reports, but would not require performing these functions the majority of the time.

Positions at this level typically require some knowledge of statistical or data processing techniques and concepts, or of utility or package programs. They also require knowledge of the specific guidelines and procedures governing the collection and reporting of the data.

Work is performed according to specific, detailed guidelines that cover almost all aspects of the work.

## **RESEARCH TECHNICIAN 2**

This is either an entry or full performance objective level. As an entry level, this encompasses positions which perform duties and responsibilities normally identified at the Research Technician 3 level, but which have been structured to provide their incumbents with the training and experience necessary to function at full performance at the higher level. Work is performed under close, progressing to limited, supervision.

As a full performance objective level, this encompasses positions which execute a variety of specific data collection, compilation, analysis, and/or reporting procedures to assist professional research staff or assist in the operation of statistical information reporting systems. Positions require that the majority of time be spent in activities such as:

- developing data entry programs, formats, or codes from instructions or guidelines to facilitate proper data entry
- responding to special information requests which require considerable manipulation of data or explanation of its meaning
- developing specific operations and procedures for the collection, compilation, and reporting of data (e.g., edits, internal consistency checks, look-up tables)
- designing draft survey or reporting forms
- applying package and utility computer programs to compile, tabulate, manipulate, and report data

- guiding and directing Research Technician 1's in the collection, compilation, and analysis of data on a particular project, for a particular system, or on an aspect or phase of a variety of systems
- developing narratives which explain circumstances not evident in the data themselves or require applying knowledge of the subject matter under study (e.g., mental health, labor markets) to interpret the data
- performing more advanced statistical calculations (e.g., tests of significance, correlation coefficients) or complex estimating procedures, according to established guidelines or under the direction of professional staff
- revising historical data based on changes in methodology or definitions of variables to enable comparison with current data
- recommending new reports to promote wider use of collected data

Positions at this level typically require applying working knowledge of package or utility programs, basic statistical or data processing concepts, as well as knowledge of the specific guidelines/procedures used in data collection and reporting. Some knowledge of the subject matter area under study may also be required.

Work is performed under general supervision, and according to specific guidelines which cover most technical aspects of the work.

### **RESEARCH TECHNICIAN 3**

This is either lead or paraprofessional, technical research support work. As a leadwork level, this encompasses positions functioning as leadworkers of an organizational unit of Research Technician 2 positions (2 or more) which are providing technical support to professional staff or assisting in the operation of statistical information reporting systems. Positions typically report to professional supervisors and are responsible for all technical support activities in that work unit. Work is performed under general supervision.

As the full performance objective level for paraprofessional positions, this encompasses positions which spend the majority of time in functions such as:

- operating a small, well-established statistical information reporting system, or a well-defined part of a larger system, including planning activities needed to collect and compile data, modifying procedures, working with data processing unit staff to further automate the system, and interpreting results.
- Producing an ongoing series of reports or publications, including compiling the data, developing the form of presentation, utilizing package programs to manipulate data and develop tables or charts, and writing narratives to describe the results.
- Performing the most advanced technical support work, typically involving adapting and applying a variety of package computer program or utility routines to perform complex data manipulations (e.g., setting up data files, manipulating data to develop special reports, perform a variety of statistical analyses as requested by professional staff).

Positions of this type may lead the work of other staff on an ad hoc basis to complete specific projects.

The work is more complex than that identified at the Research Technician 2 level due to the more extensive responsibility for work planning and coordination, the greater intricacy of

procedures, methods or problems, and/or the greater degree to which the examination and evaluation of data approaches professional-level analysis.

Positions at this level require working knowledge of statistical or data processing concepts and procedures, but, in addition, require a greater degree of knowledge than positions at the Research Technician 2 level, in the form of: an extensive or expert knowledge of the guidelines or procedures governing the collection and reporting of a particular data series, a greater degree of subject matter knowledge, or considerable knowledge of package or utility program systems.

Work is performed according to specific guidelines, but the number and variety of guidelines and work situations require the employe to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate procedure or guideline to apply and making minor deviations to adapt guidelines to specific cases. Situations where existing guidelines can't be applied or major deviations are necessary are referred to supervisor or authorizing agency. Work is performed under general supervision.

#### **RESEARCH TECHNICIAN 4**

Positions identified at this level lead the work of Research Technician 3 positions, and are typically responsible for operating and maintaining a well-established statistical information reporting system, overseeing the production of an ongoing series of statistical reports or publications, or the maintenance of an ongoing data series. The technician is considered accountable for the accuracy, reliability, and timeliness of data reported, as well as for the work of subordinates.

Knowledge required is similar to that described at the Research Technician 3 level. Work is performed under general supervision and according to guidelines as described for the Research Technician 3 level.

### **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(s) which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired.

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