

Classification and Compensation Proposals

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When should I contact State HR?

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Contact State HR **before** you begin developing your classification & compensation proposal.

What is a classification & compensation proposal?

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A classification & compensation proposal is a request to change Washington General Service job class specifications and/or compensation.

Examples of the types of proposals submitted :

- A proposal to **change** existing job class specifications and/or compensation
- A proposal to **create** a new job class

Other examples are requests for establishing, revising or abolishing assignment pay references that may not be tied to job class specification updates.

What criteria are used to evaluate a compensation & classification proposal?

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[RCW 41.06.152](#) specifies the director shall adopt only those job class revisions, class studies and salary adjustments under [RCW 41.06.157](#) that are due to:

- Documented recruitment or retention difficulties
- Salary compression or inversion
- Classification plan maintenance
- Higher level duties and responsibilities
- Inequities

A proposal must demonstrate how one or more of the criteria are met to be considered for implementation.

Who can initiate a classification & compensation proposal?

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A classification & compensation proposal can be initiated by:

- A state agency or higher education institution
- A union (labor organization)
- State HR

When can a classification & compensation proposal be submitted?

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There are 2 cycles for which a proposal can be submitted: the collective bargaining/budget cycle or the interim cycle:

Collective bargaining/budget cycle – is for represented and nonrepresented class proposals.

- Represented positions:
 - Salaries for proposals are negotiated by State HR, Labor Relations Section
 - Must go through collective bargaining process for funding/pay impacts
- Nonrepresented positions:
 - Salaries for proposals are not negotiated
 - Must go through Governor's budget process for funding

The proposal must meet criteria in RCW 41.06.152 to be submitted.

When can a classification & compensation proposal be submitted?

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Interim cycle – for proposals submitted outside the collective bargaining/budget cycle, a proposal must meet one of the following criteria *in addition to* the criteria identified in RCW 41.06.152:

- **Bargaining unit proposal** – Employer must be able to absorb the cost as authorized by OFM and meet one of the following criteria: legislative mandate, governor’s initiative, new legal mandate.
- **Nonbargaining unit proposal** – Employer must be able to absorb the cost as authorized by OFM. There cannot be any represented positions in the class statewide.
- **Class plan maintenance proposal** – Proposal has no pay or allocation impact.

How is a classification & compensation proposal submitted to State HR?

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To initiate a proposal, the agency/institution must complete a [Classification & Compensation Needs Assessment form](#) available on hr.wa.gov and submit it [to State HR](#) at classandcomp@ofm.wa.gov.

Union-initiated compensation proposals must be submitted through the appropriate State HR labor negotiator for consideration during collective bargaining.

What happens to a proposal once State HR receives it?

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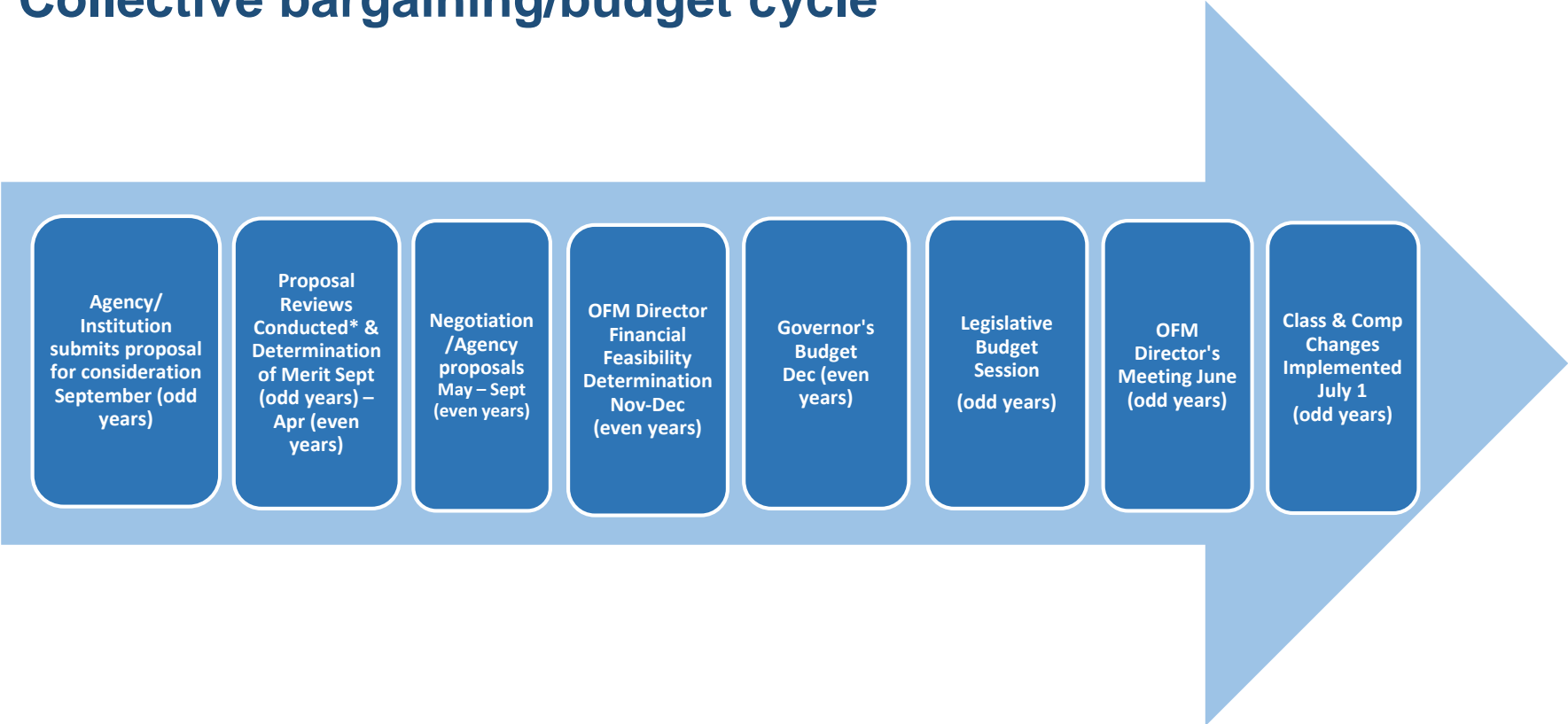
Needs Assessment
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After the submittal of the needs assessment(s), the agency/institution may be contacted by State HR to provide additional information and documentation to further define the request.

Collective bargaining/budget cycle



Collective bargaining/budget cycle

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Has an extensive timeline with multiple, set deadlines.

State HR will communicate deadlines for each biennial budget cycle.

- If agency/institution is unable to meet established deadlines, proposals may not be considered due to time constraints.
- Reviews must occur in preparation for bargaining. If the information and data are incomplete:
 - Analysis and costing cannot be completed
 - Proposal may not move forward in the process to be considered for bargaining

Collective bargaining/budget cycle

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Agencies/institutions will need to ensure staff resources are available to assist in the proposal review process to meet deadlines.

These are the HR contact and subject matter expert you identified on the Needs Assessment form you submitted.

Please be as responsive as possible when additional information is requested by State HR.

Needs assessment form components

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- General information
- Selecting the appropriate proposal criteria
- Class title(s) and representation
- Describe the issue(s)
- What efforts have been made to address the issue?
- What are the proposed changes?
- How does the proposal resolve the issue?
- What are impacts on services?
- Director or designated approving authority signature

General information

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Agency/HE Institution Enter text. <div style="text-align: center;">1</div>	Agency/HE HR Contact Name Enter text. Phone Enter text. 2 Email Enter text.
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1. The agency/institution is the name of the employer submitting the classification & compensation proposal.
2. The primary HR contact with knowledge of the proposal and can speak on behalf of the agency.

General information

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Agency/HE Subject Matter Expert (Must be Non-Rep)	Agency/HE Budget Contact
3	4
Name Enter text.	Name Enter text.
Phone Enter text.	Phone Enter text.
Email Enter text.	Email Enter text.

3. The primary subject matter expert who can provide detailed information specific to the proposal. **The SME must be nonrepresented.**
4. The agency budget contact who will be working with SHR on any costing or budget questions.

Selection criteria

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Select Criteria

Select choice(s) below.

Class Plan Maintenance Compression Higher Level Duties Inversion
Inequities Recruitment Retention

For descriptions and examples go to [Classification and Compensation Proposal Process 2021-23](#).

Please check all the proposal criteria that apply to your issue, as outlined in RCW 41.06.152 and RCW 41.06.157:

- documented recruitment and/or retention difficulties
- salary compression or inversion
- class plan maintenance
- higher-level duties and responsibilities
- inequities

Class title(s)

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Class Title(s) – Complete a separate assessment for each Class Series

Class Title(s) and Class Code(s) *Enter text.*

Positions represented by a Master Agreement? Yes No If **yes**, list Master Agreement(s):

Choose Agreement.

Choose Agreement.

The affected class titles and class codes are the official WGS job class titles and assigned codes on the hr.ofm.wa.gov website, [Job Classes and Salaries](#) page.

Example: Administrative Assistant 1, 105E.

You will need to identify all master agreements these positions are represented by, including nonrepresented.

Identify the issue(s)

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Describe the Issue(s)

What is the issue(s) you are trying to resolve or business need(s) you are trying to meet? Be specific and descriptive. What services are provided and how they are being adversely affected?

Clearly identify the issue you are trying to resolve. This is a narrative description of how the issue is adversely impacting the business of the agency/institution.

You will want to:

- Work with your senior leadership to clearly identify the issue
- Work with your State HR analyst to determine potential impacts
- Use your internal resources to help you in gathering necessary information and data

Identify the issue(s)

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Describe the Issue(s)

What is the issue(s) you are trying to resolve or business need(s) you are trying to meet? Be specific and descriptive. What services are provided and how they are being adversely affected?

Description of any special conditions or other factors that provide context to the identified issue such as:

- new or changes to legislation
- accreditation changes
- loss of funding

Describe efforts to address issue(s)

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What Efforts Have Been Made to Address the Issue(s)?

Explain what you have tried and the results achieved (e.g. revised agency/HE work processes, organizational structures, or enhanced recruitment efforts).

Describe any remedies you have tried to resolve or mitigate the issue(s) and how you were unable to achieve the results you were seeking.

What alternative remedies have you considered?

Examples of remedies:

- extensive recruitment efforts
- reorganization for workload balance
- updated staffing models
- additional staffing or FTEs
- assignment pay or other types of special pay

Describe the proposed changes

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What are the Proposed Changes?

Describe the proposed classification(s) and salary changes. Provide specific examples.

Identify how this class change aligns with the employer's strategic priorities. You will want to explain:

- what you want to do
- outcome you want

Indicate if an increase in compensation is requested. Do not identify an amount or percentage increase.

(Addressing specific compensation will come later in the process.)

How does the proposal resolve the issue

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How Does the Proposal Resolve the Issue(s)?

Describe the service improvements you expect to see if this proposal is implemented.

Describe how the proposed solution would resolve or mitigate the issue.

Example: Due to federal rule changes and the state's implementation of them, this job series has taken on higher-level duties with additional complexity. The salary adjustment is requested to accurately compensate for the level of work performed which will mitigate the retention issue.

How does the proposal resolve the issue (cont)

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How Does the Proposal Resolve the Issue(s)?

Describe the service improvements you expect to see if this proposal is implemented.

Describe why this proposal is the most effective solution.

Example: This new lead level within the existing Widget Audit Specialist series will result in more efficiencies and better management of personnel as well as enhanced employee and public safety.

Impacts on agency services

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What are the Impacts on Services?

Identify potential consequences if the issue(s) is not resolved. (e.g. impact on agency/HE priorities, service delivery, risk, or liability).

Describe existing and potential negative consequences to the business. The resolution to the issue must meet the definition of the criteria outlined in statute.

Example 1: Instead of responding within the hour, responses will take 24 hours.

Example 2: The constant turnover is negatively affecting customer service in an office that serves the largest metropolitan area in the state, impacting the ability of staff to respond to emergencies in a timely manner.

Impacts on agency services

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What are the Impacts on Services?

Identify potential consequences if the issue(s) is not resolved. (e.g. impact on agency/HE priorities, service delivery, risk, or liability).

Remember, you will need to articulate how this negative consequence ties to one of the criteria specified in the RCW.

Example 3: The constant turnover is negatively affecting customer service in an office that serves the largest metropolitan area in the state, impacting the ability of staff to respond to emergencies in a timely manner. **Instead of responding within the hour, responses will take 24 hours.**

Agency/institution director or designated approving authority signature

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Agency/HE Institution Director or Designated Approving Authority Signature	
Date Enter a date.	Name/Title Enter text. Signature Enter text.

The agency/institution head or designee is required to sign all submitted proposals. A designated approving authority signs on behalf of the director for the agency/institution.

Signatures of lower-level managers will not be accepted.

Allocation crosswalk

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Agencies/institutions will be requested to provide an allocation crosswalk when:

- significant changes are being made to a class or an entire class series, or
- a new class or class series is being established.

A crosswalk will not be required when all positions within the class automatically transition, in their entirety, to the new or revised classes and levels.

Allocation crosswalk

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Agency	Current Class Code	Current Class Title	Total # of Positions	New Class Code	New Class Title	# of Positions transitioned
DOC	112J	Forms and Records Analyst 2	12	TBD	Health Records Technician 1	12
DOC	112K	Forms and Records Analyst 3	7	TBD	Health Records Technician 2	6
DOC	112K	Forms and Records Analyst 3	1	112K	Forms and Records Analyst 3 (no changes anticipated)	1
WDVA	112K	Forms and Records Analyst 3	4	TBD	Health Records Technician 2	4
WDVA	112J	Forms and Records Analyst 2	3	TBD	Health Records Technician 1	3
WSU	112J	Forms and Records Analyst 2	2	TBD	Health Record Technician 1	2
DSHS	112J	Forms and Records Analyst 2	34	112J	Forms and Records Analyst 2	22
DSHS	112J	Forms and Records Analyst 2		TBD	Health Record Technician 1	12
DSHS	112K	Forms and Records Analyst 3	29	TBD	Health Record Technician 2	10
DSHS	112K	Forms and Records Analyst 3	12	112K	Forms and Records Analyst 3 (no changes anticipated)	12

This is an example of a crosswalk where positions in current job classes are cross-walking to both current and new job classes.

Allocation crosswalk

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Agency	Current Class Code	Current Class Title	Total # of Positions	New Class Code	New Class Title	# of Positions Transitioned
DNR	521G	Natural Resource Worker 1	24	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 1	24
DNR	521H	Natural Resource Worker 2	9	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 1	9
DNR	521P	Forest Crew Supervisor 1	1	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 1	1
DNR	521H	Natural Resource Worker 2	12	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 2	12
DNR	521P	Forest Crew Supervisor 1	12	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 2	12
DNR	521Q	Forest Crew Supervisor 2	3	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 2	3
DNR	519G	Forest Technician	13	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 2	13
DNR	517E	Natural Resource Operations Supervisor 1	2	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 3	2
DNR	523S	Natural Resource Specialist 1	14	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 3	14
DNR	523T	Natural Resource Specialist 2	19	TBD	Wildland Fire Operations Technician 4	19
DNR	523T	Natural Resource Specialist 2	2	TBD	Wildland Fire Program Coordinator 1	2
DNR	523U	Natural Resource Specialist 3	22	TBD	Wildland Fire Program Coordinator 1	22
DNR	523V	Natural Resource Specialist 4	5	TBD	Wildland Fire Program Coordinator 2	5
DNR	523W	Natural Resource Specialist 5	1	TBD	Wildland Fire Program Coordinator 2	1

This is an example of a crosswalk where some positions in current job classes are cross-walking to new job classes.

Criteria and definitions for a proposal

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- class plan maintenance
- compression
- higher-level duties and responsibilities
- inequities
- inversion
- recruitment difficulties
- retention difficulties

Classification plan maintenance

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Classification plan maintenance provides an opportunity to make updates to WGS job class specification language.

These are changes that do not typically affect compensation or result in position allocation changes or actions.

Classification plan maintenance

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Requests that meet this criterion generally:

- Identify outdated language
- Provide clarifying language to ensure proper interpretation
- Correct errors such as punctuation

Requestors should be prepared to provide draft class specification(s) with the proposed language, when asked.

Classification plan maintenance

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Class plan maintenance may also be used when there is a need to establish a new class or class series. In most cases, however, class plan maintenance is used in conjunction with one of the other RCW criteria to support changes to current job class specifications such as definitions, distinguishing characteristics, typical work, etc.

If there is a need to modify (or create new) job class specifications as a result of other RCW criteria, class plan maintenance should also be identified on your Needs Assessment form.

Classification plan maintenance – job specification

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When submitting changes to a class specification, show what you are adding and what you are deleting:

- Submit your changes in a Word document
- Submit the draft job specifications in legislative format.
 - When you want to add language, underline to show that this is new language.
 - When you want to remove language, ~~strike-through~~ the language to be deleted.
- Do not rewrite the class specification the way you want it to read. You must use the required format to show what you are adding and/or deleting.

Classification plan maintenance – job specification

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Things to keep in mind:

- If new language is being added in place of language you are removing, the additional language should be inserted after the language that is being deleted.
- If you are proposing a new class or a new level within the current class series, preface the specification with “NEW.” Do not underline this language.
- If you are proposing a level within a class series be abolished, preface the specification with “Abolish.” Do not strike through the language.

Classification plan maintenance – job specification

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Here are examples of what the draft job specifications should look like when submitting to SHR:

- Assists with hand placement of high explosives and blasting caps; ~~fires recoilless rifle, avalauncher~~ assists with artillery missions;
- ~~Incumbents in positions allocated to this class perform senior level technical or entry level professional technical and scientific fish culture duties~~ Examples of these duties are: Positions at this level coordinate with federal, state, tribal and local agencies and entities; and act as the agency liaison and project manager for contract fish marking crews.

Compression

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Compression occurs when there is an insufficient salary differential between the subordinate and the supervisor.

Compression may also occur between class levels within a series where classes do not necessarily report to each other, but there is insufficient differential between levels.

Compression

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Compression is not always an issue. There may be times when compression is appropriate such as reporting relationships, expertise of a position/class and/or required licensure.

The differential between the supervisor and subordinate may vary and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Compression

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Remember, if you are claiming compression as the basis of your proposal you will need to:

- Identify the job classes and salaries in question
- Identify and explain the cause of the compression
- Identify and explain problems caused by the compression
- Identify if the proposed salary adjustment adversely impacts other classes/series

Compression

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Example of an appropriate supervisory salary differential within a job class series:

Class Code	Class Title	Salary Range	Range Difference in Steps to next level in class (each step = approx. 2.5%)	Approximate % Differential Between Class
W02A	Widget Maker 1	32	3	7.5%
W02B	Widget Maker 2	35	4	10%
W02C	Widget Maker 3	39	4	10%
W02D	Widget Maker 4	43	4 range (approx. 10%) differential between supervisor & senior/specialist level job class	

Higher-level duties and responsibilities

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Higher-level duties and responsibilities are changes in duties and responsibilities that are identified as:

- being at a higher level and
- have the potential for affecting the salary of the job class specification.

Duties should reflect an overall increase beyond what is currently identified in the scope of the class.

This would not include increased workload/caseload issues.

Higher-level duties and responsibilities

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Changes should be substantive, rather than incidental, and reflect a higher-level of responsibility in terms of compensable classification factors such as:

- scope of control
- impact of job
- task complexity
- degree of technical skills
- significant increases in staffing and/or budget levels that result in a significant increase in complexity

An increase in workload (same level of work, higher volume) does not equate to higher-level duties or responsibilities.

Higher-level duties and responsibilities

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While it may appear new duties increase the level of responsibility when compared with other job classes performing similar work, they may still fall within the existing scope of the job class. This may result in job class specification revisions, but may not support a salary increase.

A [resource document](#) has been created to assist agencies/institutions in gathering the necessary data and information.

This document includes general questions that need to be addressed and a comparison chart to assist you in identifying higher-level duties.

Inequities

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Inequities occur when there are salary variances between different **job classes** performing substantially similar work. It does not apply to different *class* levels within the same series.

Substantially similar work not only means similar duties and responsibilities, but also similar levels of decision making, problem solving and impact of results, as well as other components of the job class which may be similar (e.g., similar licensing requirements, working conditions, etc.)

If inequities exist, consolidation of the job classes may be considered.

Inequities

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This criterion is used to remedy situations where separate classes, at different salary ranges, are performing not only substantially similar duties and responsibilities, but also have equally similar levels of decision making, problem solving and expected results.

A [resource document](#) has been created to assist agencies/institutions in gathering the necessary data and information.

This document includes general questions that need to be addressed and a comparison chart to assist you in identifying inequities.

Inequities – submitting a proposal

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When submitting a proposal or providing supporting documentation for inequities:

- Identify the job classes and salaries in question
- Identify and explain the similarities in the duties, decision making, problem solving and results, impact of error, level of responsibility, etc.
- Offer details about why the inequity is causing problems
- Identify whether the salary adjustment adversely impacts other classes/series. If yes, what other classes/series?

Inequities - example

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Department X and Department of Y each has a unique job class for its Widget Maker X and Fidget Maker Y analysts who perform similar duties while providing agency-specific services for their clients.

However, the salary range for the Widget Maker class is 4 ranges (approximately 10%) higher than the Fidget Maker Y class.

After a review, it becomes clear that both job classes are performing substantially similar work a majority of the time and the classes should be aligned.

Inequities - example

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In this case, both Widget Maker and Fidget Maker job classes:

- Are responsible for collecting and analyzing specialized data, interpreting and applying policies and rules, and designing and developing management plans and service delivery improvements
- Report to equivalent-level supervisors in their organization and are fully accountable for their service delivery outcomes.
- Would experience the same impacts from errors in performing the scope of work.
- Have knowledge, skills and qualification requirements to perform the work that could easily be transferred from one job class to the other

Inversion

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Inversion occurs when the salary range of the subordinate is higher than the supervisor.

If inversion is identified, then a comprehensive analysis of the circumstances that led to the inversion will be reviewed.

In some cases, an inversion may be appropriate, such as when specialized and/or highly technical skill sets are required.

While all options to resolve the inversion will be explored, a compensation increase may not result.

Inversion - examples

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A physician reporting to a nonlicensed administrator or a high-level technical computer specialist reporting to a general manager are examples of appropriate inversion.

In these cases, the technical skills of the subordinate are valued at a higher salary range than the management duties of the supervisor.

Inversion - examples

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Example 1: The salary range of the subordinate may be higher than the supervisor if the subordinate is at a higher step in a lower salary range. This would not be considered inversion because the supervisor will continue to advance to the top step of the higher-level salary range, eliminating the disparity.

Example 2: There is sufficient differential between the subordinate job class and the supervisory level, but because the employee in the lower-level job class is overtime eligible and routinely receives overtime, the total compensation received by the subordinate may be higher than the supervisor, who may not receive additional compensation beyond salary.

Inversion

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When submitting a proposal or providing supporting documentation for inversion, provide the following information and/or answer the following questions:

- Identify the job classes and salaries in question
- Explain the circumstances that caused the salary of the subordinate to surpass the supervisor's and why this inversion is not appropriate
- Identify if the salary adjustment adversely impacts other classes/series. If yes, what are other classes/series and how will they be affected?

Recruitment difficulties

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This is when recruitment efforts are unsuccessful or failing as a direct result of compensation. Data needs to show ongoing unsuccessful and/or failed recruitment efforts.

Unsuccessful recruitments are where one of these applies:

- There are no applicants
- Applicants do not meet position qualifications
- Preferred candidates consistently turn down an offer of employment due to compensation

Recruitment difficulties

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Agencies/institutions must provide a summary including comprehensive information detailing recruitment efforts.

Examples of some of the data that will be required:

- advertising efforts
- length of recruitment
- number of applicants
- candidate quality
- length of position vacancy
- time to fill

Recruitment difficulties

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A resource document will help you in gathering necessary data and information.

This document includes a data spreadsheet, a tracking spreadsheet and a sample summary document.

Retention difficulties

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Retention difficulties are when employees leave as a result of compensation.

Analysis should show significant numbers of applicants leaving to accept positions paying higher compensation for similar/same work (as opposed to higher-level work).

Demonstrate that employee loss is a direct result of receiving higher compensation for the same work elsewhere. Describe the hardship this is causing.

Retention difficulties

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This does not mean that employees performing similar work elsewhere (e.g., private sector) are paid more, but that employees are actually leaving because they are being offered these jobs and in such numbers as to adversely affect the program.

To support a salary increase, analysis must clearly show retention difficulties are due to compensation. (Noncompensation factors may be the cause of staff leaving, such as management or work life balance.)

Retention difficulties

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State HR generally uses a 10% turnover threshold, based on the aggregated statewide turnover trend. This percentage is not an absolute, but is used as an initial indicator of where there could be turnover issues.

Retention standards require demonstrated retention difficulties. Turnover percentages are calculated over a 12-month period. State HR typically considers the previous 2 fiscal years of turnover data for class package requests.

Retention difficulties

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References

The turnover rate is a primary factor considered, but is not the only deciding factor.

For example, some job classes, such as clerical classes, traditionally have turnover well above 10%, but a higher turnover rate is expected due to the nature of the work.

Retention difficulties – turnover standard

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For the purposes of analyzing a proposed change to the classification and/or compensation plan, the classification turnover data standard identifies voluntary turnover. This is an indicator that employees are willingly making the decision to leave the employer.

Several factors can contribute to voluntary turnover, such as career path change, more compensation for same work elsewhere, staff conflict or lack of career advancement opportunities.

Classification turnover criteria

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Included Actions:

- abandonment
- conditions not met
- dismissal
- resignation
- reversion
- end of appointment

Excluded Actions:

- death
- disability separation
- layoff
- nonpermanent
- promotion
- retirement
- seasonal employment
- transfer
- voluntary incentive separation

NOTE: The classification turnover data standard is more restrictive than the [aggregated general turnover data](#) posted on the hr.ofm.wa.gov website or in the annual executive branch [Human Resources Management Report](#).

Key points to remember

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- Contact State HR – Enterprise Classification, Compensation & HR Analytics for guidance when developing a proposal
- Clearly identify the issue(s) and provide all pertinent information to support the request
- Discuss with your agency/institution executive management to gain support and determine agency priority

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For agencies that use the central Human Resources Management System, there are standard (canned) reports available in HRMS and WWA that will aid in developing proposals, such as:

- Classification Turnover Report
- Movement/Turnover Report
- *And several more!*

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Additionally, agencies have designated staff who are members of the statewide HRMS data stewards and reporting work groups. These internal resources can assist in compiling the required data.

Higher education institutions have unique systems. HE staff developing proposals should work within their organization to identify data resources.

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References

- [Classification & Compensation Needs Assessment](#)
- [Glossary - Classification](#)
- [State HR Classification and Compensation Web Site](#)
- [List of assigned State HR Consultants](#)
- [List of Resource Documents](#)
- [HRMS Data Definitions](#)
- [HRMS Reports](#)
- [Washington Workforce Analytics](#)
- [Chapter 41.06 RCW](#)
 - [41.06.157](#)
 - [41.06.152](#)
- [Title 357 WAC](#)
 - [WAC 357-13-010](#)
 - [WAC 357-28-015](#)
- [HR Professional Portal](#)