

Open House on Classification

Flash Presentation

September 2005

Introduction

Welcome to the Classification Open House of the Human Resources Management Modernization Branch part of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada.

As part of the broader government agenda to strengthen and modernize the public sector management, classification modernization is a long-term program that includes modernizing occupational group standards, providing classification policy leadership, rebuilding system capacity, and monitoring to ensure the integrity of the classification system.

This modernized classification system will lie at the heart of the seamless, integrated, equitable, and progressive human resources management.

This system will simplify the process of getting the right people into the right jobs at the right time; a faster, smarter system that creates pathways for the development of future public service leaders and contributes directly to the operation of a well-structured, well-managed organization.

To learn a little more about classification, please come in and enjoy the Classification Open House!

Policy Development

With managers shouldering greater accountability for human resources decisions and human resources professionals playing a more complex advisory role, it is essential to provide classification policies that are easy to understand, can be used with a minimum of guidance and are aligned with other human resources policies. To this end, we focus our attention on developing, updating and simplifying classification policies and accompanying guidelines that provide advice, explanation and best practices.

We are also responsible for managing the occupational group structure and updating or drafting new occupational group and sub-group definitions.

Business Case Analysis

The Business Case Analysis team leads the investigation and identification of business problems encountered by departments and agencies, and identifies the specific classification, human resources and/or management issues involved. Afterwards, the implications on Human Resources Management and the potential impact of systematic reforms are analyzed prior to providing a recommendation.

The program also provides advice to departments and agencies on the diagnosis and resolution of business problems and advises on the implications of business cases for the classification reform process.

Standards Design

Another important component of the classification program is Standards Design. A classification standard describes the value placed on a job, depending on the scope of responsibility and the complexity of its various tasks. A new classification standard is produced in three phases. In the first phase, we conduct a feasibility study in which we analyze the business case for modernizing or updating a classification standard. In the second phase, we undertake the design and testing of the standard. Job characteristics are identified and described, and then linked to the level structure, which is the basis for compensation. The standard is tested for the language clarity, gender neutrality and the ability to produce meaningful results. When Treasury Board ministers approve the standard, we move to the third stage in which we implement the standard.

Standards Implementation

Once the Treasury Board of Canada has approved a new classification standard, the Standards Implementation team works collaboratively with impacted departments and agencies to ensure a successful implementation.

Implementation includes the training provided to departmental HR professionals and managers on the intent and use of the new standard. It also ensures that departments and agencies are ready for a conversion from both a people and HR systems perspective.

An Advance Personal Notification is sent to inform employees of their position's proposed new classification. The Advance Personal Notification is then followed by an Official Personal Notification, which confirms an employee's new classification group and level, his or her new salary and the effective date of the classification conversion.

Qualifications Standards

While classification standards describe the relative value of work characteristics within an occupational group and determine the levels of jobs in the hierarchy of the group, qualification standards set out the minimum qualifications that managers must respect when appointing an employee to a position.

When the *Public Service Employment Act* comes into force, accountability for qualification standards will be transferred from the Public Service Commission to the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada.

In conjunction with the implementation of the *Public Service Employment Act* and in consultation with the Public Service Commission, we have begun preparations for the transfer of this accountability.

Data Management and Analysis

Next is the Data Management and Analysis component, which is responsible for analyzing classification information, trends and developing applications for new reform initiatives to ensure the consistent application of the classification standards and the National Occupational Classification or NOC codes. The program provides several online applications and tools developed to support departments and agencies in implementing classification reform initiatives, while ensuring overall integrity of the classification system.

Some of the tools and applications include the Position Classification Information System Query tool and the NOC customized reports. These tools and applications provide the classification community direct access to job related information from all departments and agencies to conduct relativity comparisons and assist in the formulation of generic work descriptions.

And finally, to increase transparency, the Position Reclassification Data Capture application has been developed to facilitate the new government requirements for departmental posting of reclassification activity on websites.

Classification Monitoring

For sustainability and integrity of the overall classification system an important step in the process is the establishment of a systematic classification monitoring and risk assessment to identify early warning of potential risks. Through this integrated methodology, several monitoring activities of the existing classification system have been conducted with a particular focus on horizontal reviews of Group Relativity Studies and examining a number of small departments and agencies.

The Agency's oversight role in supporting departments and agencies in meeting their delegated classification accountability has established the monitoring framework for examining classification activities, capacity and outcomes to provide assurance that classification decisions are conducted in a manner to:

- Ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the classification system,
- Identify areas of strength and weakness in the classification system and administration, including unacceptable risks, and
- Ensure departments follow-up with corrective actions if needed.

Community Development

We are now visiting the Community Development section, which has made a commitment to members of the organization and classification community to design a new training and learning curriculum that meets the expectations of managers and the needs of classification advisors in re-building the classification system capacity. The Canada School of Public Service and the members of the Community Development team are working together to develop the various components of this new curriculum. The Community Development team:

- Develops and manages a Short Learning Events Program,
- Identifies and addresses training needs linked to classification reform, and learning events,
- Develops initiatives linked to a recruitment and retention plan to meet the demands of the Classification Community,
- Creates and manages an awards and recognition program, and
- Develops and maintains *Linnaeus*, an online Centre of Practice.

Classification Grievances

The Agency is represented at all grievance hearings in departments and agencies for which the Treasury Board is the employer. We make sure that the policy and procedures governing the resolution of classification grievances are properly applied and that classifications standards are used as intended.

In recent years, a number of adjudication and court decisions have indicated that the existing policy and procedures, which date from 1994, may need to be reviewed and updated. Therefore, we are beginning our review of the *Classification Grievance Policy* and the *Classification Grievance Procedure*, within the context of the new *Public Service Modernization Act* and the current body of jurisprudence that impacts classification grievances.

Interpretation and Advice

The final stop in the Organization and Classification Open House is the Interpretation and Advice section. Interpretation and Advice is primarily responsible for responding to inquiries from departments, agencies and the public in general on classification issues, on the PCIS Query Tool and on the Position Reclassification Data Capture Application. Interpretation and Advice also promotes awareness of classification issues facing departments and agencies and does job matching with other public sector organizations.

Apart from these services to the Organization and Classification community, Interpretation and Advice is involved in special projects such as Description Plus, an application that facilitates the writing of work descriptions, and in implementing and supporting other government-wide classification initiatives.

Conclusion

This concludes the Classification Open House of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada.

We hope you enjoyed the tour of Classification Open House and found it informative and fun!

Please come and visit us again!