

EQUITABLE CLASSIFICATION PLAN

GROUP 2

**PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST EVALUATION SYSTEM
GUIDE**

*Michigan Civil Service Commission
Revised October 25, 2015*

Introduction

This guide assists with the evaluation of professional specialist positions at the 13, 14, and 15 levels. The predominant and essential function of a professional specialist is to serve as the agency's designated technical expert in a particular specialty area.

These positions (1) are designated as specialists by the appointing authority; (2) are accepted and classified by Civil Service; (3) require advanced knowledge in the field of work; (4) are responsible for highly complex assignments; (5) have a significant scope of responsibility; and (6) have job functions with considerable impact within the department. Use of a committee of experts within the agency to evaluate professional specialist positions is recommended.

Agency Designation of Specialist Position

The Michigan Civil Service Commission cannot designate a position as a specialist, only the appointing authority can do so. Agency designation is the essential requirement of any specialist position. This requirement has been affirmed repeatedly by the Civil Service Commission (see, e.g., CSC 2001-001, affirmed by Ingham Co. Circuit Court, No. 01-93407-AA). Although agency designation does not guarantee approval of a specialist position, it is a prerequisite to Civil Service's review and potential approval.

Appointing authorities have the exclusive authority to (1) assign job duties and (2) designate a position as a specialist. Because departmental officials are in the best position to judge the relative worth, value, and significance of their program areas, significant weight is given to a department's recommendation to establish or reclassify a professional specialist position. Therefore, it is recommended that each agency establish an internal specialist review committee of experts knowledgeable about the mission, goals, and programs of the agency. This will ensure that positions are fairly and consistently rated using a comparative analysis to determine their relative value when compared to 12-level professional positions or other specialist positions within the organization.

While specialist positions are no longer required to be "one-of-a-kind" positions within the department or agency, specialists must still be recognized as the persons most knowledgeable about a particular professional area and as subject matter experts for a difficult, complex, or highly technical specialty area. The specialist assignments should comprise the preponderance (greatest percentage of time) of the position's ongoing activities.

When considering establishing or reclassifying a specialist position, the committee or appointing authority should consider a number of variables, such as the following:

1. level of financial responsibility;

2. financial, material, or environmental impact;
3. impact on the population;
4. consequences of error;
5. complexity of scientific or other research necessary to perform the job;
6. size of the specialty area;
7. impact on other operations within the department or other organizational entities;
8. impact on the agency's mission and policies;
9. the relative stability of the specialty area;
10. the technical difficulty of the work being performed; and
11. the scope of the specialty.

Specialists must be designated as such by the appointing authority; it is not a responsibility one assumes.

Organizational Structure

Level allocation of professional specialist positions will consider the organizational placement and reporting relationship of a position. Specialist positions cannot be classified at a level equal to or higher than that of a properly classified supervisor in the immediate chain of command. (See Glossary: Structural Consideration).

Specialist Definitions

Professional Specialist: Positions that are designated by the appointing authority and accepted by Civil Service staff as requiring advanced knowledge in the field of work and (1) are responsible for highly complex assignments, (2) have significant scope of responsibility, and (3) have considerable impact within the department.

Specialty Area: Functions administered by an agency to provide a product or service to the agency's constituency. Specialty areas must be of significant breadth, depth, complexity, and importance to the agency. Such positions are typically responsible for providing expert advice in the area of specialty to department management, outside entities, or the public; directing and conducting highly complex studies and analyses without technical direction; and developing and monitoring procedures, guidelines, and policies that are the foundation of the program or specialty area.

13-Level Specialist Positions

The 13-level specialist differs from the 12 or P11-level professional positions in that the scope, depth, breadth, and responsibility for assignments are of greater significance, sensitivity, and importance to the department or agency. Specialist 13-level positions are no longer rated (factored) on the Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System. Rather, appointing authority designation as a specialist and Civil Service acceptance as such determines allocation of the specialist position at the 13-level.

To determine if a position merits designation as a 13-level specialist, the committee or appointing authority will consider and identify how the position differs from the 12 or P11-level positions in the organization and how it compares to other specialist positions classified at the same or higher levels. The specialist position should be clearly distinguishable from other professional levels and categories such as the experienced level, recognized resource, or any other non-specialist, advanced level concepts.

The appointing authority may consider creating a standard, similar to a senior standard, outlining the critical difference in the depth, breadth, and scope of the assignments between the 12 and the specialist 13-level. The standard can be specific to a specialist classification located in a division, bureau, or administration or can be broadly used within the agency or department for all specialist classifications. Any standard created must be reviewed and approved by Civil Service before use by the department or agency.

An example of a specialist standard approved by Civil Service is a standard developed by the Michigan Department of Transportation for positions in the Transportation Engineering Licensed Specialist (TELS) classification. The TELS standard identifies how the levels vary in decision-making authority, project management, scope of impact, technical expertise, and customer diversity.

After identifying and analyzing all relevant variables, the appointing authority prepares a written recommendation to Civil Service requesting establishment of or reclassification to a 13-level specialist position.

The written recommendation from the Appointing Authority must include:

- ✓ Agency designation of the position as a specialist
- ✓ Identification of the specialty function
- ✓ A thorough description of the specialty area of responsibility
- ✓ A comparative analysis of how this position differs from 12-level positions within the division in terms of the scope, depth, breadth, and importance to the department or agency

- ✓ A description of how the position has grown and changed since the position was last reviewed, if reclassification is sought
- ✓ Identification of any other positions assigned the same specialty function

14 and 15-Level Specialist Positions

If the committee or appointing authority believes that the complexity, scope, and impact of the designated specialist position exceeds the 13-level, it must then rate the position using the three factors defined in the Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System to determine the appropriate level of the specialty function.

PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST POSITION EVALUATION SYSTEM:

- I. Job Complexity
- II. Specialty Scope
- III. Impact

FACTOR I: JOB COMPLEXITY

This factor measures the guidelines, objectives, and direction the position has available to it, and the range of complexity and job variables associated with the work.

Guidelines, Objectives, and Direction:

If the position has established guidelines that are fairly well defined (e.g., policies, procedures, reference materials), etc., it will typically receive Element 1. This is the standard rating for most specialist positions. Positions of this type are usually housed within a division or section and receive direction from a manager or division administrator. Positions of this type are usually responsible for relatively well-defined, developed, and stable programs or specialty areas.

If the position must develop and maintain the guidelines, departmental policies, procedures, and other related documents of a program or specialty area, in accordance with general or broader operational (nonspecific) policy guidance provided by an executive official (bureau director or higher), it should be rated Element 2.

While the position's reporting relationship influences its factor assignment, it does not result in an automatic assignment of either Element 1 or 2. Some positions housed in divisions may develop and implement programs that are highly complex in nature and are created in accordance with broad policy directives issued by executive officials. A position may have frequent contact with

executive staff or a “dotted line” reporting relationship to the executive official. Under these circumstances, a position may receive Element 2. Conversely, some positions reporting to executive officials have specific and well-defined program criteria and guidelines and therefore should be assigned Element 1.

Range of Complexity and Job Variables:

The complexity of the work and the number of variables or subject areas are evaluated using comparative analysis of the relative technical difficulty of the subject matter associated with the position’s assignment and the relative diversity of tasks associated with the work. This can be rated by comparing the duties to those of other specialist positions within the respective professional discipline or to those of other professional disciplines used by the department. For example, a departmental specialist that has responsibility for developing a program for a division would not normally have the same level of complexity or number of variables as a position that has responsibility for developing a program that crosses multiple or all departmental lines and areas. In this situation, the rating of the job complexity and number of variables for the division specialist would receive a rating of either Element A or B, depending on the department’s relative analysis of the difficulty of the division’s program areas. (The majority of specialties are rated Element B.) A position responsible for development of a highly complex departmental program would typically be rated Element C.

FACTOR II: SPECIALTY SCOPE

This factor rates the extent of the specialist’s responsibility for the completed work product, the diversity of program areas, the size and complexity of the program or service being provided, and the position’s interaction with other specialty areas.

Specialist Management Responsibility:

Within the specialist management responsibility considerations, if a position serves as a technical consultant to others by advising on the proper methods used to accomplish the program objectives, then it is typically rated Element 3.

If a position not only provides consultation on the specialty area, but has the authority to countermand the decisions of others to ensure that program standards and goals are maintained, then it may be appropriate to assign an element rating of 4. The assignment of Element 4 implies that the position is assigned responsibility for ensuring that proper methods, procedures, or processes are being used by others *and* has direct responsibility for the completed product.

Element 4 is rarely used as most specialist positions provide recommendations that a manager or

administrator can overrule.

Specialty Areas:

Within specialty scope considerations, the relative size and scope of the program or specialty area is best determined by making objective comparisons with other specialty areas. If the program or specialty area has relatively few subject areas and has limited interaction with other program areas, it should be rated Element D. If it involves several subject areas and interacts with other program areas, it should be rated Element E. If it has diverse subjects that require complex interaction with multiple program areas, it should be rated Element F. The distinction between, few, several, and diverse subject areas of responsibility is department-specific. The agency committee or designee should establish and consistently apply department specific criteria for this purpose. For example, if a labor relations specialist has responsibility for collective bargaining agreement issues involving several contracts, it should be rated Element E. But, if it has responsibility for all collective bargaining agreements, it would be rated element F because of the diversity in the contracts and the complex interaction involved in negotiating and interpreting them.

FACTOR III: IMPACT

Type of Impact:

This factor measures the type of impact a position has and its relationship (predominant effect of impact) to the mission of the department. If the decisions made by the specialist to accomplish the objectives of the specialty area are of normal magnitude, it should be rated Element 5. If the decisions made by the specialist have unusually critical or significant impact on the department (e.g., result in policy changes or have legal ramifications), it should be rated Element 6.

Predominant Effect of Impact:

The organizational placement of the position should be considered in determining its relative impact on the department's mission and relative value to the department, but similar to the other variables, it should not be used as an absolute overriding consideration. If the work assignments and decisions made only affect divisional program areas, it should be rated Element G. If the decisions made directly impact the program responsibilities of the bureau in which the position is housed, it should be rated Element H. If the position makes decisions and has the authority to take actions that directly and significantly affect the overall mission of the department and its policies, it should be rated Element I. For example, some specialists housed in divisions may make decisions that have significant impact on the department's primary mission and should also

be rated Element I, while other specialists that report to bureau directors may only impact the bureau's program areas and should be rated Element H.

After deciding on factor ratings, the appointing authority prepares a written recommendation to Civil Service requesting establishment of or reclassification to a 14-or 15-level specialist position. The written recommendation must include:

- ✓ Agency designation of the position as a specialist
- ✓ Identification of the specialty function
- ✓ A thorough description of the specialty area of responsibility
- ✓ A comparative analysis of how this position differs from 13-level positions within the division, bureau, department or how it compares to other 14-level positions if the request is for the 15-level.
- ✓ A description of how the position has grown and changed since the position was last reviewed, if reclassification is sought.
- ✓ Identification of any other positions assigned the same specialty function
- ✓ Identification of the PSPES factor ratings and a discussion of how the position meets each element within the factors
- ✓ If an employee occupying a position already designated as a specialist files for a position review (4-2), the agency is required to factor the position and to include rationale supporting each factor in their response to the request.

ECP GROUP 2 PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST SYSTEM FACTORS

Michigan Civil Service

FACTOR I: JOB COMPLEXITY

Guidelines, Objectives, and Direction	Range of Complexity and Job Variables		
	A. Complex in nature, with a limited number of variables.	B. Very complex in nature, with a large number of variables.	C. Highly complex in nature, with a very large number of variables.
1. Guidelines are specific and available. Objectives are subject to administrative goals and policy direction.	25	50	75
2. Guidelines are general and not readily available. Objectives are determined by long-range, executive-level goals and policy direction.	50	75	100

FACTOR II: SPECIALTY SCOPE

Specialist Management Responsibility	Specialty Area		
	D. Few distinct subject areas directed toward a relatively narrow program or specialty area.	E. Several distinct subject areas requiring interaction of activities over a broad program or specialty area.	F. Diverse subject areas requiring complex interaction of program or specialty area activities over very broad or diverse program areas.
3. Planning, organizing, consulting, and advising to achieve objectives and goals.	25	50	75
4. Ensuring that proper methods, procedures, or processes are being used by others, and direct responsibility for the completed product or project.	50	75	100

FACTOR III: IMPACT

Type of Impact	Predominant Effect of Impact		
	G. Division mission, within the overall bureau and departmental missions.	H. Bureau mission, within the overall departmental mission.	I. Primary mission of the department.
5. Direct impact.	25	50	75
6. Substantial direct impact.	50	75	100

Key: 195 – 269 = 14 270 – 300 = 15
