

Part II. Instructions for Servicing Personnel Office Staff

Getting Started.....Read the Instructions!

As with any other multi-step process, it is a good idea to start by reading the instructions. You should first carefully read through this section, and familiarize yourself with all supporting materials contained in this Resources Careers Manual, including the Professional Development Program. We especially recommend that you carefully read the Implementing Instructions for Supervisors and Managers. The time you spend acquainting yourself with all these materials will help you to guide your serviced supervisors and managers in making appropriate determinations, both about the proper description and classification of resources management positions, and about the means by which personnel actions will be processed to implement Resources Careers.

Labor-Management Relations

If there is a bargaining unit at any of your serviced parks, be mindful of management's obligation to inform the union *before* implementing this policy for using Benchmark PDs and the defined career ladder for professional resources management positions. Consult with the appropriate Superintendent(s), and ensure that the Superintendent is aware of these responsibilities. Remind the Superintendent that the union should be given sufficient time to review and comment on changes that will occur in bargaining unit employees' working conditions as a result of the implementation of this policy. Provide appropriate guidance and assistance to any Superintendent who receives a request from the union to bargain on implementation.

Position Classification

After labor-management relations obligations, if any, are fulfilled, you should work with your serviced supervisors and managers towards determining the appropriate classification of each resources management position currently classified at or below the GS-11 level. At a minimum, you should assist supervisors and managers with any questions they may have as they attempt to determine the appropriate PD to use in a given situation. To be effective in providing such guidance, you will need to familiarize yourself with the various Benchmark PDs and related evaluations, and to develop a thorough familiarity with the guiding concepts of the Resources Careers program as documented in this Manual.

In most cases, it is anticipated that the supervisors and managers will find an appropriate Benchmark PD that can be utilized with little or no supplementation. Consequently, it is expected that most requested position actions will require only minimal or cursory review for classification purposes.

(Note: Special emphasis should be placed on the review of current GS-1016 Museum Specialists for possible inclusion in the GS-1015 Museum Curator Series. Museum curators are required to perform the full range of research and curatorial functions defined in the classification standard. The research function can include scholarly, technical or applied research. The GS-1015-11 benchmark position description defines the minimum scope of research duties for NPS positions. If these duties are not performed, positions should not be placed in the GS-1015 Museum Curator Series. Similar to other resource career occupations, a full performance (GS-11 or higher) resources management subject-matter professional must provide technical supervision to any museum technician/specialist position below GS-11. The full-performance level professional providing the supervision may be either on-site or shared with another NPS unit. This supervision must be documented with Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description—Technical Supervision Agreement, which should be appended to the PD of the employee receiving such supervision.)

Are these benchmark positions exempt or nonexempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act?

The positions are described at the GS-5, GS-7, GS-9, and GS-11 levels. Under the criteria covering professional positions, all benchmarks were found to be nonexempt through the GS-9 level, and exempt at the GS-11 level. Supervisory positions are covered under the executive exemption criteria. Due to the trainee nature of the work assignment at the GS-5 through GS-9 levels, the position (whether nonsupervisory or supervisory) does not customarily and regularly exercise the discretion and independent judgement characteristic of exempt work assignments. See the classification evaluation for a complete discussion of the rationale behind these FLSA determinations.

How will "other duties" be addressed when using a Benchmark PD?

Obviously, no single PD can cover every conceivable work situation. A form, Attachment 2: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Other Duties, has been developed for the specific purpose of giving supervisors the flexibility to use a Benchmark PD which meets the *80% criterion* (see page 6 of *Position Management Guidance*), and yet supplement it with other non-grade-determining duties, as needed. The form provides some sample "collateral duties" that might commonly be assigned to employees working in resources management positions, and a space for the supervisor to indicate the percentage of the incumbent's time devoted to such other duties. It also provides an option for supervisors to include other unique, non-grade-determining duties, and indicate the percentage of time spent on each of them. (Note: The total time spent on such "other duties" *must not* total more than 20%, or the Benchmark PD will *not* meet the 80% criterion and so *cannot* be used.)

When used, Attachment 2 is to be appended to the selected Benchmark PD, and submitted to your office for final classification review. The "other duties" that supervisors list on Attachment 2 *must not* affect the title, series or grade of the selected Benchmark PD either separately or in combination. If the additional duties to be performed would affect the title, series, and/or grade, the position does not fit the Benchmark PD. In that case, work with the supervisor to determine another, more appropriate Benchmark PD, or to develop an appropriate non-Benchmark PD. Conduct and document an individual position evaluation to determine the correct position title, series, and grade of such non-Benchmark PDs.

What about situations in which it is determined that a professional position will not go beyond the GS-9 level at a particular park?

It is recognized that, in *rare* cases, a position in one of the covered professional series will not go beyond the GS-9 level in a specific location. In these rare cases, the following statement must be added to the "Remarks" section on the OF-8:

"The full performance level for this position is GS-9. Technical supervision is provided by a resources management subject-matter professional (GS-11 or higher) located on-site or at another NPS unit."

Again, if the supervisor has not included the above statement on the OF-8 for any such professional PD, add the remark to the OF-8, and provide a copy to the requesting office.

What if none of the Benchmark PDs meets the 80% criterion?

The existing GS-11 PD may be used in such situations provided it accurately describes the actual duties and responsibilities assigned. The PD used (whether an existing PD or a newly written non-Benchmark PD) must state the full-performance level of the position. In such cases, the following statement must be included in the "Remarks" section of the OF-8:

"The full-performance level for professional positions in this series is (*Insert appropriate grade level, e.g., GS-9, GS-11, GS-12*)."

You must prepare an individual classification evaluation if a Benchmark PD is not used. If the existing PD is used in these circumstances, and the existing evaluation statement is still valid, you may document the position review by simply including the following statement at the end of the evaluation, along with your signature and the date of your review:

"This evaluation has been reviewed and remains valid."

Additionally, if the supervisor has not included the remark about career ladders on the OF-8 for the affected non-Benchmark professional PD, add the remark to the OF-8, and provide a copy to the requesting office after you have signed it as the Classifier.

What about positions involving supervisory work?

Some positions may supervise paid or unpaid employees. If supervisory duties occupy 25% or more of the employee's time, his or her PD must be evaluated under the General Schedule Supervisory Guide. We have attempted, in Attachment 1: Amendment to GS-11 Benchmark Position Description--Supervisory Duties and Evaluation Factors, to develop a form which should serve as the GSSG evaluation for most professional positions involving both technical and administrative supervision of multiple full-performance level professional positions. This form, when completed, will reflect the number and kind of employees supervised by the incumbent, the percentage of time spent supervising such employees, and other factors that may affect the title and/or grade of the position.

If Attachment 1 is appropriate for use, the requesting second-level (or higher) supervisor must prepare and sign a new OF-8; attach the applicable Benchmark PD, a completed Attachment 1, and a current organization chart; and forward the entire package to your office. You will then need to review all these materials for completeness and accuracy, and confirm the evaluation of the position with reference to the GSSG and this Manual.

In the event that a supervisory position does not fit *all* of the conditions described in Attachment 1, the attachment is not appropriate for use. You will, in that case, need to work closely with the incumbent's supervisor to guide him or her in developing an appropriate non-Benchmark supervisory PD, including accurately described GSSG evaluation factors.

Regardless of whether using a Benchmark PD supplemented by Attachment 1 or using an individually described supervisory PD, for any position for which at least 25% of the incumbent's time is spent on supervisory duties, assign an appropriate supervisory title. Document the OF-8 with respect to the position classification standards used in your evaluation of the position. Sign and date the classifier's certification on the OF-8.

(Note: The implementation of Resources Careers offers an opportunity for improved position management, particularly with respect to the potential for reducing the layers of supervision without adversely affecting incumbents' current grades. You should carefully advise serviced Superintendents about the ratio of supervisors to non-supervisory employees, and help them to determine whether the number of supervisors might be reduced by withdrawing supervisory duties from some existing GS-11 positions and reassigning the incumbents non-competitively to appropriate GS-11 non-supervisory Benchmark PDs. Of course, if in reducing the number of supervisory positions at a park, one or more upgraded (and likely interdisciplinary) supervisory positions will be established, and incumbents of other affected supervisory positions will be

converted to non-supervisory GS-11 professional positions, the filling of the upgraded supervisory position must be done competitively. On the other hand, it may be that first-level supervisory duties included in positions currently classified at the GS-11 level could readily be absorbed by existing GS-12 or higher graded supervisors at the same location without necessitating any supervisory position upgrades.)

How do we evaluate positions involving technical supervision that is provided from a source other than the employee's regular supervisor (e.g., in those situations in which there is no GS-11 professional position of an appropriate specialty at the park or in the employee's unit at the park)?

Management is responsible for arranging for technical supervision to be provided from a qualified professional in the same park or at another park. This arrangement will be documented through use of Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Technical Supervision Agreement, which supervisors and managers have been instructed to submit along with the employee's PD when this situation exists. In evaluating any supervisory position, you should review the PDs of the subordinate positions to ensure that you are crediting, in the calculation of the base level supervised (GSSG Evaluation Factor 5), only those positions over which the position exercises both administrative and technical supervision.

What about career ladders for technician positions?

No Servicewide career ladder has been defined for technician positions, and the technician Benchmark PDs that have been provided for optional use have all been written at a variety of full-performance grade levels. No "developmental" Benchmark PDs were developed for the technician occupations. This does not preclude supervisors and managers from establishing local career ladders for such positions through the development and use of "Statement of Differences" PDs. If supervisors wish to establish and fill "trainee" technician positions with promotion potential to one of the full-performance level technician Benchmark PDs, you should assist them to develop a "Statement of Differences" PD for the proposed level of entry, and for each intervening grade level between the entry-level and the full-performance level, in accordance with your region's classification practices.

Staffing

Supervisors and managers will request your assistance in determining the nature of personnel actions that will be necessary to implement the final classification decisions, incumbents' eligibility for placement into the new positions, and whether such placement may be done non-competitively or will require announcement and competition. In reaching such staffing determinations, you will be guided by the DOI Merit Promotion Plan and the information contained in this Manual.

First, look at the qualifications of current staff in comparison to the applicable qualification standard from U.S. Office of Personnel Management Operating Manual: Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions.

Determine whether affected employees meet the basic qualification and time-in-grade requirements for the positions, and, in the case of professional positions, whether they meet the positive education requirements for the series. Determine whether the incumbent's movement into the new PD may be processed non-competitively or will require the use of competitive merit promotion procedures.

Are there circumstances in which promotion or reassignment to a position with higher promotion potential will be done non-competitively?

Yes! An employee may move between professional positions covered by Resources Careers non-competitively (either by promotion or reassignment) when the position they are moving to has the same or lower full performance level and they meet all qualification requirements for the new

position. An employee must compete when moving into a different position with a higher career ladder (i.e., higher full performance level) or when moving from a one-grade interval technician position to a two-grade interval professional position. Such positions should be processed either competitively or, when appropriate, on the basis of gradual assumption of duties.

Additionally, an employee who encumbers a technician position that is already classified with a full-performance level of GS-11 may be non-competitively reassigned into a professional career ladder if otherwise qualified (i.e., if he or she meets the experience and education requirements).

Movement from an existing technician PD to a technician Benchmark PD or individually written and classified technician PD of higher grade/promotion potential *may* be done non-competitively *only* if the circumstances meet one of the identified exceptions to the Merit Promotion Plan. These include correction of a classification error, and in some cases, assignment of higher grade duties.

Be aware, however, that movement of employees from technician positions with a full-performance level of less than GS-11 into professional career ladder positions *must* be done under competitive merit promotion procedures.

The existing organizational structure is often a factor in determining whether competition is required. For instance, if there are a number of similarly graded positions in the immediate work unit, and higher graded duties and responsibilities are being added to some, but not all, such positions, then competition will likely be required to determine which employee(s) will be assigned to the higher graded position(s), and which employees will remain at their present grade. On the other hand, if all similarly situated positions in the immediate work unit (i.e., reporting to the same immediate supervisor) were being upgraded, competition would generally not be required in order to promote the incumbent or to reassign him or her in a developmental-level PD.

What about conversions from technician positions to professional positions?

If the position review resulted in a determination that the park needs are for a professional position, but the current position is classified as a technician, the incumbent may be non-competitively reassigned to the new professional PD **only** if the full-performance level of the existing technician position was GS-11 or higher *and* he or she meets qualification requirements, including the positive education requirements, for the professional position.

If the affected technician does not meet qualification requirements (particularly the positive education requirements), you will need to advise supervisors and managers about their options for addressing the situation. Options include, but may not be limited to:

- Establishing a "bridge" technician position and development program under "Upward Mobility" to prepare a technician for subsequent assignment into the professional career ladder, and announcing this developmental opportunity under competitive merit promotion procedures.
- Directing the reassignment of the affected technician employee into another vacant position for which he or she meets the qualification requirements, and which is of the same grade or promotion potential currently held.
- Delaying the conversion to, and filling of, a professional position until the technician position is vacated through normal attrition.

Consult with the serviced supervisor or manager to identify additional options and select the most appropriate action to take in specific cases.

Process electronic Standard Forms 52: Request for Personnel Action.

Regardless of the specific staffing/placement actions determined necessary through the consultation process, supervisors must submit appropriate electronic SF-52s through the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS) in order to set the position and staffing actions in motion. At the same time that they submit the electronic SF-52s through FPPS, supervisors will send you hard copies of the related PDs (including any required attachments), to support the requested actions.

Are there standard instructions concerning the Natures of Action, Remarks, etc., that should be used in processing Resources Careers personnel actions?

Yes! Identified below are the Nature of Action Codes (NOAC), Natures of Action (NOA), Authority Codes, Authorities, and Required Remarks to be used in processing personnel actions to implement Resources Careers. We have tried to anticipate as many variables as possible in the process. In the event that you encounter a personnel action not specifically addressed below, first consult U.S. Office of Personnel Management Operating Manual: The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, to locate the necessary information. If unable to find applicable guidance there, contact your Regional Human Resources Manager for advice and assistance.

- ***When the employee is promoted under competitive merit promotion procedures to a professional PD under Resources Careers, use:***

NOAC: 702

NOA: PROMOTION

Authority Code: N3M

Authority: REG 335.102 COMP

Required Remark(s):

SELECTED FROM MPP CERT # (Insert Number), DATED (Insert Date).

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCES CAREERS WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED A CAREER LADDER TO THE GS-11 LEVEL.

For those rare circumstances where a position has a park-specific full-performance level lower than GS-11, add the following remark:

FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE'S POSITION IS (Insert Pay Plan and Grade) AT THIS LOCATION.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may be determined applicable.

- ***When the employee is promoted under competitive merit promotion procedures to a technician PD under Resources Careers, use:***

NOAC: 702

NOA: PROMOTION

Authority Code: N3M

Authority: REG 335.102 COMP

Required Remark(s):

SELECTED FROM MPP CERT #(Insert Number), DATED(Insert Date).

Add either of the following remarks, as applicable:

FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE'S POSITION IS *(Insert Pay Plan and Grade)*.

POSITION IS AT THE FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may be determined applicable.

When a GS-9 professional employee is promoted non-competitively based on the upgrading of the position as a result of a position review, use the following to document the personnel actions:

NOAC: 702

NOA: PROMOTION

Authority Code: N5M

Authority: REG 335.102 UPGRADING

Required Remarks:

RESULT OF POSITION REVIEW.

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCES CAREERS WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED A CAREER LADDER TO THE GS-11 LEVEL.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may be determined applicable.

For reassignment of professional employees not meeting time-in-grade and/or performance requirements for promotion, use the following to effect personnel actions:

NOAC: 721

NOA: REASSIGNMENT

Authority code: N7M

Authority: REG 335.102 RECLASS

Required Remarks:

RESULT OF POSITION REVIEW.

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCES CAREERS WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED A CAREER LADDER TO THE GS-11 LEVEL.

For those rare circumstances where a position has a park-specific full-performance level lower than GS-11, add the following remark:

FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE'S POSITION IS *(Insert Pay Plan and Grade)* AT THIS LOCATION.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may be determined applicable.

When promotions result from accretion of duties (e.g., promotion of technician, etc.) use the following to document the personnel actions:

NOAC: 702
NOA: PROMOTION
Authority Code: N7M
Authority: REG 335.102 RECLASS
Required Remarks:
RESULT OF ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
POSITION IS AT THE FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL.

- *For reassignments at the same grade level with no additional non-competitive promotion potential, use the following to document the personnel actions:*

NOAC: 721
NOA: REASSIGNMENT
Authority Code: N7M
Authority: REG 335.102 RECLASS
Required Remarks:
RESULT OF POSITION REVIEW.

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCE CAREERS.

POSITION IS AT THE FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL.

Don't hesitate to contact your Regional Human Resources Manager for guidance or assistance if you are unsure of the procedures and/or documentation that are required in any given situation.

Position Numbers

A standard position description number has been assigned to each resources careers position description. This number appears on the OF-8 cover sheet in Block #14, "Agency Use". It should be entered into FPPS in the last three spaces of the position allocation number field which is on the Position SF-52/SF-50 Information Screen. The number will appear on the employee's SF-50 in Block #15.

Employee Development

For each employee placed in a position below the full-performance level (regardless of whether the position is a professional or a technician), you should assist the supervisor and employee with the development of an Individual Development Plan and training strategy to assist the employee to reach the full-performance level with the requisite skills and knowledge. Training opportunities may include college-level course work, on-the-job experiences, structured rotational assignments or details, classroom training, shadow assignments, coaching and counseling, etc.

Performance Management

Upon request, assist supervisors and managers with the development of performance standards which reflect the duties in the new Benchmark PD or other applicable PD to which an employee is assigned as a result of Resources Careers. In those instances involving performance deficiencies in the current position and grade level, assist supervisors and managers on how to address unacceptable performance.