

Part I. Instructions for Supervisors and Managers

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. The time you spend doing so will help you to make appropriate determinations, in consultation with your Servicing Personnel Office (SPO), both about the proper description and classification of resources management positions in your unit, 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 your park, be mindful of management's obligation to inform the union *before* implementing this policy for using Benchmark Position Descriptions and the defined career ladder for professional resources management positions. In doing so, you should afford the union 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. If you receive a request from the union to bargain on implementation, contact the Personnel Officer in your SPO immediately for appropriate guidance and assistance.

Position Classification

After any labor-management relations obligations are fulfilled, you should work towards determining the appropriate classification of each resources management position currently classified at or below the GS-11 level.

Review your positions to determine the appropriate PD to use.

You should start by doing a position-by-position review of the Benchmark PDs, including the interdisciplinary PDs, for the most likely correct series for each position in your unit. You should do so in constant reference to employees' current PDs, awareness of the work that needs to be done, and these instructions. Once you have tentatively identified the series, read all the relevant Benchmark PDs in their entirety.

Take a very close look at the Factor Evaluation System (FES) factors (and the evaluation statement) that follow the major duties in the Benchmark PD. Look at, and carefully compare those factor descriptions with those for the Benchmark PDs at both the next lower and next higher grades (if there are Benchmark PDs written for higher and/or lower grades in that series). This comparison will allow you to distinguish more readily the differences between the various grade levels in a particular series, and thus to determine which Benchmark PD *most accurately* describes the *actual* work and level of responsibility of the position.

Determine whether the Benchmark PD meets the *80% criterion* found on page 6 of the *Position Management Guidance* section. The Benchmark PDs should be used *as long as the 80% criterion is met and the primary purpose of the position is resources management*.

The classification determinations on the Benchmark PDs have been certified and approved by the Washington Office (WASO). However, you will need to complete certain of the remaining blocks on the accompanying Optional Form-8 (OF-8) Position Description coversheet. Specifically, you should complete items 1, 4, 5, 15 (as applicable for Interdisciplinary Positions), 16 (optional), 18.b-e (as applicable, depending upon how many organizational levels the position is below the bureau level), 20.a, and 20.b (optional according to local classification practice). Sign the supervisory certification below item 20.a, confirming the accuracy of the PD. If the Benchmark PD is adequate

for use without any further supplementation, you should submit it "as is" (including use of the WASO-certified OF-8) to the Servicing Personnel Office for implementation of the position and staffing actions necessary to establish and fill the position.

What if there are other duties that are not described in the Benchmark PD that should be included?

Obviously, no single PD can cover every conceivable work situation. However, Attachment 2: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Other Duties, may be used, as needed, for inclusion of other duties that you consider important enough to be documented in the employee's PD. Remember, however, that the "other duties" cannot account for more than 20% of the incumbent's work.

When used, Attachment 2 is to be appended to the selected Benchmark PD, and submitted to the SPO for final classification review. However, either separately or in combination, the "other duties" that you list on Attachment 2 *must not* affect the title, series or grade of the selected Benchmark PD. If the additional duties would affect the title, series, and/or grade, the position does not fit the Benchmark PD, and the position must be specifically described in its entirety and submitted to the SPO for individual classification review.

What about situations in which it is determined that a professional position will not go beyond the GS-9 level at our 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."

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

The existing 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*)."

(Note: The establishment of the career ladder GS-5/7/9/11 for professional Resources Careers positions establish a normal line of progression and a normal pattern of advancement.)

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 OPM General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG). 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 first-level 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, and you are the supervisor of the supervisory position, you must prepare and sign a new OF-8. (Note: Although you may use the applicable Benchmark PD for the description of the position's technical duties and responsibilities, you should not use the WASO-certified OF-8 in this instance because a further classification review at the Servicing Personnel Office level is required to determine the final title and grade of the position under these circumstances. Several other items on the form, including the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) coverage, supervisory/managerial/neither position type, financial disclosure requirements, etc., may also change as a result.).

Once you have completed the new OF-8, attach the applicable Benchmark PD, a completed Attachment 1, and a current organization chart, and forward the entire package to the SPO. SPO staff 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 or if the position is higher than a first-level supervisor, Attachment 1 is not appropriate for use. You will, in that case, need to work closely with the Servicing Personnel Office staff 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, an appropriate supervisory title will be assigned by the Classifier in the SPO.

The Classifier will also review Fair Labor Standards Act status, make an appropriate FLSA determination, and document the appropriate FLSA code on the OF-8. The Classifier will do the same for the supervisory code item and the item reflecting the position classification standards used in the evaluation of the position. The Classifier will sign and date item 23 on the OF-8 to certify as to the accuracy of the final classification.

(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 consider the ratio of supervisors to non-supervisory employees, and 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. If in reducing the number of supervisory positions at a park, one or more upgraded (and likely interdisciplinary) supervisory positions will be established and 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 I arrange technical supervision for my resources management positions if there is no GS-11 professional position of an appropriate specialty established at this park?

In such a case, the Superintendent must arrange for *technical* supervision for the resources management staff to be provided by a professional employee of appropriate specialty at or above the GS-11 level in another park or in another division within the same park. Such "dotted line"

supervisory relationships should be established through partnering activities between the responsible Superintendents/Division Chiefs. When such agreements involve inter-park relationships, they shall be confirmed by having both Superintendents sign the organization charts reflecting the "dotted line" technical supervision relationship. This relationship must also 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.

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 your optional use have all been written at a variety of full-performance grade levels. No "developmental" Benchmark PDs were developed for the technician occupations. However, this does not preclude you from establishing local career ladders for such positions through the development and use of "Statement of Differences" PDs. If for any reason you wish to use a technician Benchmark PD, but need or want to fill the position at a level below the full-performance level, you will need to prepare a "Statement of Differences" PD for the proposed level of entry, and for each intervening grade level between the entry and full-performance levels, in accordance with your region's classification practices. Consult with your Servicing Personnel Office for specific instructions about preparation of "Statement of Differences" PDs.

Staffing

After making the appropriate PD and classification decisions in consultation with your SPO, you will need to consider what personnel actions will be necessary to effect the implementation of the classification decisions.

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.

Consult with your SPO staff to 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. Work with the Servicing Personnel Office staff to determine whether the incumbent's movement into the new PD may be processed non-competitively or will require 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! Employees may move between professional series covered by Resources Careers non-competitively (either by promotion or reassignment) when the series they are moving to has the same full performance level and they meet all qualification requirements for the new series. Employees must compete when moving into a different series 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.

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 Benchmark 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. Furthermore, if additional duties and responsibilities are added to, and result in the upgrading of one (or more), but not all, positions in the normal line of progression in the same unit (i.e., under the direction of the same immediate supervisor), competitive merit promotion procedures *must* be applied to the assignment of employees to the new PD(s).

What about conversions from technician positions to professional positions?

If the position review resulted in a determination that your 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 have a number of options for addressing the situation. Please consult with your SPO before taking any action.

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.

Submit your electronic Standard Form-52: Request for Personnel Action.

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

And, don't hesitate to contact your SPO for guidance or assistance if you are unsure of the procedures and/or documentation that are required in any given situation.

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 work with the employee to develop an Individual Development Plan and training strategy to assist him or her 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

In all cases, you must develop, and discuss with the employee, critical results which reflect the duties in the new Benchmark or other applicable PD to which assigned as a result of Resources Careers.

In those instances involving performance deficiencies in the current position and grade level, you must address the unacceptable performance. If there is no other appropriate position to which the employee may be reassigned at the same grade, you must give the employee the opportunity to improve his or her performance before taking certain Resources Careers personnel actions. Inform the employee of the specific performance deficiencies, work with him or her to develop and implement a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), and take appropriate remedial action if the performance is not improved to an acceptable level. Please consult your SPO before taking any action regarding performance deficiencies.