

What is a classification study

A classification study is a process of reviewing the classification plan for an organization, including the formal class descriptions and the employees who occupy the study positions. The objective is to obtain information which either confirms the current class allocations or recommends a modification. The modifications usually involve reallocation of the study position to another existing classification, by creating a new class, or by modifying an existing class. Like any other analytical process, the study involves collecting and assessing reliable and verifiable information.

Why conduct classification studies

Studies help to ensure that the organizational official classification plan is up-to-date and accurate. A contemporaneous plan means that employees are being paid properly for the work that they perform, selection programs are based on actual job duties and necessary qualifications, and training and evaluation are appropriate to the job duties.

What are the steps of a classification study

Typically, a study has four major phases, including

1. Identification of study positions and employees
2. Orientation of employees to the process
3. Collection of data, typically by questionnaire and/or interview
4. Analysis of the collected data
5. Generation of recommendations and conclusions

Often the recommendations and conclusions involve modifying the current classification plan, descriptions, and/or the current allocation of positions.

Will employees and supervisors be required to complete job questionnaires

Questionnaires are the most common method by which to obtain position information. They provide a common tool when evaluating job information. Normally they are completed by employees in the study positions, and confirmed by supervisors. Without this critical information from study subjects, there is no basis for an objective and thorough analysis.

Will employees and supervisors be interviewed

Some employees and supervisors will be interviewed. Typically, for the majority of study positions interviews are not required and do not generate added information sufficient to justify the time and cost. However, interviews are essential to help clarify and better understand study positions.

What is the result of the study

When the study is completed the consultants will deliver drafts of their report, including findings and recommendations, to their client. After that, the client may generate comments and questions, which the consultants will answer. A final report is generated after all reviews are completed.

Implementation of study recommendations is at the sole discretion of the organization, and not the consultants. The consultants can help with implementation, but ultimately the employer must decide how and when to implement the results of the study.