

PERSONNEL COMMISSION

Achieving Excellence Through Merit

The Basics of Position Classification

This guide will provide a basic introduction of position classification, address the most frequently asked questions, and explain the role of the Personnel Commission in maintaining the classification plan for the classified service of the Los Angeles Unified School District, as required by the Education Code.

BRIEF HISTORY:

The Personnel Commission (PC) is the merit system agency of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), operating in cooperation with, but not under the jurisdiction of, the Board of Education. It came into existence on June 15, 1936, as the first legally sanctioned Personnel Commission in the country to administer a personnel program under a merit system for non-certificated employees of a school system. Its primary purposes were to ensure that employees are selected for employment and promotion solely on the basis of merit and separated from employment for just cause. It also provided for an impartial body to adjudicate employee appeals of discipline, medical and examination disqualifications.

The PC is comprised of three persons who have been appointed to serve three-year terms. One member of the PC shall be appointed by the governing board of LAUSD and one member nominated by the classified employees of LAUSD. Those two members shall, in turn, appoint the third member. The PC meetings, typically held twice a month at the Beaudry Building, are open to the public.

The Commission employs a Personnel Director and staff to serve LAUSD employees by assuring that their positions are correctly classified. The Commission staff studies duties and responsibilities of classified positions and makes recommendations to the Commission regarding the proper classification and compensation. For more information on the PC, please visit <https://www.lausd.org/Page/2135>.

KEY TERMS

A **position** is a group of duties and responsibilities assigned by authority requiring the full- or part-time employment of one person.

A **classification** (or more commonly, **class**) is a category of positions with similar duties and responsibilities, to which the same title, entrance qualifications, and tests of fitness apply.

A **class description** is a document approved by the Personnel Commission, detailing the nature and level of duties and the employment requirements of a class. Current class descriptions are available online at the Personnel Commission's website at <https://www.lausd.org/Page/18661>.

A **duties statement**, unlike a class description, is a list of the specific duties assigned to an individual position. Also known as a position description. ***Note:*** *When preparing duties statements, the class description should not be copied since it is intended as a general description of the entire job class, not the individual position.*

CONDUCTING CLASSIFICATION AND POSITION STUDIES

One of the ways the Personnel Commission serves LAUSD is by ensuring that all positions are consistently and equitably classified. This is achieved through the conduct of classification and position studies. A study should be initiated whenever there is a concern that an employee is being assigned permanent duties that fall outside their current job classification.

► **How can a study be initiated?**

There are two instances when a study is initiated:

1. By Personnel Commission staff, if a change in organization, goals, technology or equipment causes concern about the classification of a single position or group of positions.
2. By administrators, employees, and employee organizations as a result of changes in organizational structure, or equipment used which causes substantial changes in duties and responsibilities.

A Position Information Form (PIF) must be completed and submitted to initiate the process. This form is available online: [Position Information Form](#)

Note: *Any disputes over assigned duties must first be addressed directly between the employee and supervisor. Supervisors are not required to sign off on the PIF if they disagree with the duties. A study can still be initiated by an employee without their supervisor's signature. In such cases, a written rebuttal by the supervisor is required.*

► **How is the study conducted?**

Personnel Commission staff typically conduct a job audit of the position by interviewing the incumbent, observing work processes when appropriate, reviewing submitted work samples/project lists, and comparing the duties and responsibilities of the incumbent and other employees in related positions. Following the audit, staff will verify the collected information with the employee's supervisor(s). In cases where a large number of positions are under review, only a representative sample of positions will be audited.

► **What happens during the job audit?**

Once a case has been assigned, an HR Specialist will contact the incumbent and/or their supervisor to coordinate and schedule the job audit. The audit typically lasts between one to two hours and involves questions designed to clarify the type and level of work performed, as outlined on the Position Information Form. There is no requirement to prepare written responses in advance. However, incumbents may find it helpful to prepare personal notes to ensure that all relevant information is communicated during the audit. Examples of

completed assignments and work samples are also useful and may be provided to assist the HR Specialist in understanding the scope and nature of the work.

Examples of questions that staff may ask include (if not provided in the Position Information Form):

- What is the function of your department?
- Who is your immediate supervisor?
- What are your primary duties and responsibilities?
- When did your responsibilities in the position change?
- What percentage of time do you spend performing a duty?
- What is the consequence if the work is not performed?
- What tools and technologies do you use to complete your tasks?

Generally, incidental, infrequent, or emergency assignments will not be considered in classifying positions. The position will be evaluated based upon all the information made available, while also considering the percentage of time performing the duties.

► What happens after the job audit?

Further steps may be required depending on the specific circumstances of each case. A survey of other employers may be conducted to compare the duties and responsibilities of the subject position with similar roles, and to assess alignment in classification titles, salaries, entrance qualifications, and other relevant factors. Following the job audit, the HR Specialist will evaluate the collected data and discuss their findings and recommendations with Personnel Commission management. Several potential outcomes may result from this process, including but not limited to the following:

1. Reclassification upward: The duties assigned to the subject position are evaluated to be at a higher-level than the current classification. The subject position may be reclassified upward.
2. Reclassification to a lateral classification: The duties assigned to the subject position are evaluated to be at a lateral classification at similar pay scale, but different job concept. The subject position may be reclassified laterally.
3. No change: The duties performed are evaluated to be within the classification concept of the current class. No action will be taken.
4. Reclassification downward: The duties performed are evaluated to be at a lower-level than the current classification and will be reclassified downward.
5. In some cases, if the position is found to be assigned duties that fall outside the scope of the subject class concept, the department may choose to remove those out-of-class duties to correct and/or realign the position's functions with the department's needs. Alternatively, if the position is found to be assigned lower-level duties, the department

may opt to add more complex duties and responsibilities to ensure alignment with the subject class concept. In either scenario, the outcome of the study will be classified as a “no change.” If the position is currently filled, and the audit indicates that the incumbent was performing duties above their current classification, the employee may be entitled to backpay. This backpay process must be initiated by the department and is subject to review and approval by the District.

Recommendations are typically discussed with the administration and the incumbents of affected positions prior to any formal action by the Personnel Commission. The results of the audit may be presented to the Personnel Commission in the form of a report. If no change in classification is recommended, staff will provide written notification to the incumbent, the supervisor, and the administrator.

► **What information will the reclassification report contain?**

A reclassification report typically includes a recommendation specifying the job classification to which the position will be reclassified, along with other relevant information such as salary, position number, and the justification for the recommendation. All classification changes are formally reported to and acted upon by the Personnel Commission during an open meeting. At that time, administrators, employees, and employee representatives are given the opportunity to express their views on the recommendation before a final decision is made by the Commissioners.

► **What factors are NOT considered in a classification or position study?**

- Individual employee’s job performance.
- Individual employee’s qualifications and certifications.
- The number of employees in a classification assigned to a site.
- The number of hours an employee is assigned to work in an assignment.
- How long the incumbent has held the position or worked for LAUSD.
- The quantity or volume of work performed by an individual or group
- How much the employee currently earns.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- The Personnel Commission can determine the appropriate classification of a position only after the administration has determined the specific duties that are to be assigned to a position.
- A class description contains a list of the “typical duties” assigned to a class and does **not** prevent the assignment of other duties. It may be construed as insubordination when an employee refuses to perform a duty simply because it is not listed on the class description.
- A change in a position’s duties and responsibilities does not automatically lead to a change in classification or salary. Sometimes, new duties—though differing in complexity—may still align with the current classification concept, requiring only a revision to the class description.

- ▶ When a position is reclassified, the current incumbent must be eligible for appointment to the recommended classification or be otherwise assigned. In most cases, the incumbent must:
 - Meet the Entrance Qualifications (EQs) — the minimum required education, experience, training, licenses, or certificates necessary to compete;
 - Participate in the examination for the classification, as appropriate; and
 - Be reachable on the resulting eligibility list (typically within Ranks 1, 2, or 3) to qualify for appointment.

EQs are established to ensure that all candidates meet the baseline qualifications before being allowed to participate in the examination process.

Note: *Being on an eligibility list does not guarantee that a position will be reclassified to the corresponding classification. Reclassification decisions are based on the duties and responsibilities assigned to the position, not solely on the qualifications or eligibility of the incumbent.*

- ▶ Permanent classified employees are to receive annual performance evaluations. As part of this process, both the employee and the supervisor must indicate whether the position is properly classified. If it is determined that the position may not be properly classified, a classification study should be requested at that time.

For additional information or if you have questions, you may contact the Personnel Commission at (213) 241-7800 or via email at perscomm@lausd.net.

Last updated 08/14/25