

Occupation-based Classification System [19]

NOTE: The content of this document has not been reviewed by legal counsel, nor does it represent a consensus view of the Design Team or indicate any kind of preference among options presented to the Senior Review Committee.

Summary Description:

The Occupation-Based Work Valuation System (OWVS – “oh-vis”) groups work into four broad categories:

- Homeland Defense and Protection (all enforcement, compliance, investigation, and inspection work, plus fire and police);
- Scientist/Engineer;
- Supervisory/Managerial (establishes supervisory and managerial work as a distinct occupation); and
- Program/Other (all work that does not fall into the other three categories).

For each occupational category, OWVIS uses four factors to evaluate the work of a position. The factors include a combination of competencies and other factors that are tailored to the critical aspects of the work and measure the work and outcomes important to DHS. OWVS can be used with either a GS-like system or a pay banding model.

OWVS moves away from the concept of one- and two-grade interval work and views work in a continuum of complexity and impact for each occupational group, as illustrated in figure 1.

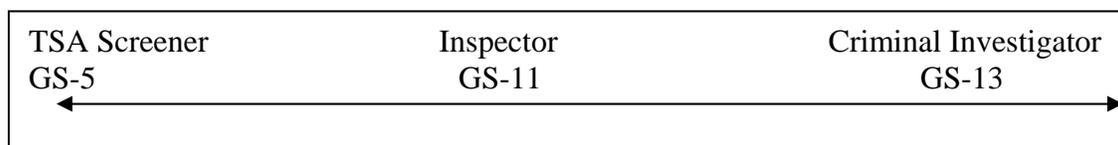


Figure 1

Key Features:

Coverage

OWVS would cover DHS employees currently covered by the General Schedule (GS) classification system.

Classification System

- Uses the current GS occupational series.
- Focuses the work evaluation factors on aspects important to DHS mission.
- Uses competencies to evaluate work and sets the stage for establishing competency-based qualification requirements (reference to OPM's MOSAIC studies).
- If used with a GS-like system, would be tied to the statutory grading criteria found in 5 U.S.C. chapter 51.
- If used with a market based or broad banding option would not be tied to statutory grading criteria found in 5 U.S.C. chapter 51.
- Union involvement limited to bargaining over implementation relating to bargaining unit employees.
- Managers and supervisors would have classification authority.

Sub-Options:

Suboption: Propose enactment of legislation to place all non-GS DHS white-collar employees (below executive/senior level ranks) under the DHS classification system.

Suboption: Propose enactment of legislation to place all non-GS DHS employees (white-collar and blue-collar below executive/senior level ranks) under the DHS classification system.

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Suboption: Full collective bargaining in the design and implementation of OWVS, that is, identifying categories, placing occupations into categories, initial placement of jobs into occupations and categories, identifying competencies, periodically reconfirming that competencies continue to be valid, planning the phase-in/implementation of the new system, and conducting periodic evaluations to ensure positions are correctly placed in occupations and categories.

Relation to Other Options:

- Would work with any pay, performance management, labor relations, discipline, or appeals system option that requires a strong classification component.
- This option can be tailored to support the pay and performance systems that are selected.
 - If a pay band system is selected, this option would have to be designed to reflect bands rather than grade levels. In a band system, the system does not need to define work as narrowly or make fine distinctions between levels of work.
 - If a GS-like system (for example, with 15 grades) is selected, there would be a need to make finer distinctions between levels of work.

Implications (This section contains "possible advantages/benefits" and "possible problems/challenges" and "other implications" suggested by design team members. The views expressed in these "implications" represent the opinions of one or more members of the design team and therefore reflect sometimes opposing points of view. These opinions do not reflect the collective judgment of the entire design team on any of the issues addressed, nor have they been reviewed by legal counsel.):

Possible Advantages/Benefits

- Managers and supervisors may be in the best position to classify/evaluate jobs.
- Eliminates the artificial ceiling the current 9 factor system has created for some jobs by tailoring the evaluation factors to occupations.
- By operating like the current GS classification system, it could –
 - Take advantage of supervisory and employee familiarity with the current system.
 - Minimize retraining or education.
 - Minimize apprehension of a new system.
 - Facilitate a crosswalk between the two systems.
- Might be transparent for employees and justifiable since the system is point-based and quantifiable.
- Could promote consistency among the legacy agencies by applying a single set of work evaluation factors to each occupational category.
- Could meld the enforcement/inspection/investigative/compliance occupations into a single occupational grouping and promotes a cohesive DHS culture.
- Might streamline the classification process by reducing the number of factors, making it easier to automate and evaluate.
- Could be simple to understand and use.
- Might provide increased flexibility and agility to shift employees as needed to accomplish the DHS mission by using competencies and broad occupational grouping.
- Evaluates aspects of the work – that is, competencies and other factors – that may be more reflective of the actual duties and responsibilities of jobs.
- The four occupational categories are intended to reflect the importance of the mission-critical competencies to the DHS mission.
- Could provide a basis to –
 - Move from time-driven to competency-driven decisions across the employment life cycle.
 - Create integrated occupational standards for classification and qualifications based on the duties of the position and related competencies.
 - Improve human capital management by aligning human resources functions, including (recruitment, selection, compensation, career development and training, performance management, and workforce and succession planning).

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- Consistently define what is important for high performance.
- Move to a “no minimum qualifications system” and category ranking system.
- Slot jobs into categories as the current GS classification system does when jobs are classified into an occupational series and grade.
- Might increase flexibility in work design and career paths (for example, job mobility, dual career tracks).

Possible Problems/Challenges

- The flexibility of OWVS may be overlooked because it closely resembles the current system which has been described as too rigid.
- It may not provide the specificity needed to evaluate work as the current 9-factor system.
- Managers, supervisors, and employees might be apprehensive about and resist changing to a new system. An extensive education effort may be needed to help employees and managers understand the reasoning behind—
 - Grouping different jobs into the four occupational categories;
 - Eliminating the designation of one-grade versus two-grade interval job; and
 - Viewing jobs as a continuum of complexity and impact for each occupational group, *although each job may not reach the full breadth of the broad category.*
- Changing the way jobs are classified or evaluated and implementing the new system could disrupt the accomplishment of work.
- Some managers and supervisors may not have time to perform classification functions.
- Some managers and supervisors may not want the responsibility of classifying/evaluating positions under their authority, may not want responsibility for explaining or justifying classification decisions, and may feel burdened by a task that has traditionally been performed by human resources offices.
- Some managers, supervisors, and employees may be concerned about possible manipulation of the new system. (This may be less of a concern if the pay system, not the classification system, sets the pay level.)
- Variations/inconsistencies could result if managers and supervisors classify/evaluate jobs. An evaluation, review, or appeal process could look at variations or inconsistencies in job grades across the department.
- Apparently similar jobs may be evaluated/classified differently because they emphasize one or more competencies over other competencies. Management might need to be prepared to articulate reasons for such differences.
- Some concerns may be addressed by publishing information and statistics on the DHS intranet, for example, how categories were identified, definitions of categories, criteria used to place jobs into categories, number of jobs in each category, and demographic information such as race, sex, age, length of service, along with the results of any evaluations or reviews.
- A reduced number of factors do not permit fine distinctions between levels of work.
- “Lumping” jobs into a small number of categories may reduce morale for some employees.
- Under the full union involvement suboption, DHS could wind up with differences between bargaining unit positions and non-bargaining unit positions.

Other Implications

- The work evaluation standards would need to be revised and put into the new, simplified format. Since the factors in most of the groups will change, it will require a study and validation period which DHS must fund.
- If a pay band system is selected, this option will determine where in a band a position would be slotted, after that movement through the band would be based on the pay progression option.
- Implementation should be done on a pilot basis, e.g., one category, certain jobs, a limited geographic area, or a specific organization.
- Pre-implementation will require comprehensive communication, education, and training until the system is fully implemented. After full implementation, a continuing program of communication, education, training, and evaluation to ensure that managers, supervisors, and employees understand how the system works and its effect on their own positions.
- Competencies must be periodically evaluated to reconfirm that they are still valid.
- HR will work in partnership with management in making classification decisions rather than acting as a gatekeeper.

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Cost

- Minimal cost unless choose to develop broad work evaluation guides and qualification standards. Cost can be reduced by partnering with OPM's Standards, Competencies and Assessment Development Group that has conducted competency studies.
- There will be costs associated with the development and implementation of OWVS and the training needed by managers, supervisors, and employees.
- There will be a significant cost to adapt existing automated classification systems to OWVS.
- Depending on the pay system adopted, grouping jobs into four categories could result in some jobs having a higher pay potential than they would have under the current GS system.

Evaluation in Terms of Guiding/Design Principles:

Mission Centered

- Recognizes the importance of the law enforcement and inspection function and attempts to measure it realistically.
- Establishes core competencies needed to perform mission-critical work.
- Tailors and focuses the evaluation factors on aspects that are critical to the work.
- May provide flexibility to move employees among jobs requiring similar competencies.
- Because OWVS values work as it relates to the DHS mission, it could result in higher pay for certain jobs which are more critical to the mission.
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Performance Focused

- Competency-based standards should ensure a high quality workforce by supporting hiring, career development and training, compensation, and performance management.

Contemporary and Excellent

- Quantifiable point-based system is easily automated and supports e-Gov initiatives.
- Simplified work evaluation guides allow first-line supervisors to quickly evaluate positions.

Generate Trust and Respect

- Might garner trust by being transparent and quantifiable.
- Might be readily accepted by DHS employees because OWVS is similar to the current factor evaluation system.

Based on Merit System Principles and Fairness

- This option can promote the principle of equal pay for work of equal value by focusing on factors tailored to the work and the competencies required by the DHS mission.
- OWVS focuses on internal equity but would work well with a pay system that is market-based to determine grade level for market comparison.
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Transition & Implementation:

- New classification standards would need to be developed, consistent with the pay system.
- An automated classification system would need to be developed.
- Positions would need to be redescribed and reclassified.
- OWVS would be subject to collective bargaining prior to implementation.

**Detailed Description
By System Component and System Element**

C		Classification System
System elements:		Summary description:
1	Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Facilitate recruitment, staffing, and performance by identifying the significant aspects of the work. •Determine the competencies, i.e., the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics needed to perform the job and produce results and outcomes. •Determine the initial pay level of a position, whether in a GS-like system or a pay band system. •Facilitate organizational and succession planning.
2	Categorization of type of work	<p>GS series would be grouped into 4 occupational categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Homeland Defense and Protection (all enforcement, compliance, investigation, and inspection work, plus fire and police); 2. Scientist/Engineer; 3. Supervisory/Managerial (establishes supervisory and managerial work as a distinct occupation); and 4. Program/Other (all work that does not fall into the other three categories).
3	Work valuation method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This option is based on factors that have points assigned at incremental levels. The more points a position is awarded through an evaluation, the higher the grade or position in the band. •The number of incremental levels depends on the type pay system adopted. More levels are needed to make finer distinctions for a GS-like system; fewer levels are required by a banded model. • The four factors for each occupational group could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protection, Inspection, Investigation, and Enforcement (PIIE) (all enforcement, compliance, investigation, and inspection work, plus fire and police) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competencies, knowledge, and skills 2. Complexity and job controls 3. Impact of work and decisions 4. Hazard and risk ○ Scientist/Engineers(This would be loosely patterned off the Research Grade Evaluation Guide [RGEG]) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competencies, knowledge, and skills 2. <i>Research or Projects Assigned</i> 3. Complexity and job controls 4. Stature and impact of research or projects ○ Supervisor/Manager (This would be loosely patterned off the General Schedule Supervisory Guide [GSSG]) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sphere of influence (mission-criticality and organizational impact) 2. Supervisory and managerial competencies (for example, achieving results, developing and leading people, managing resources) 3. Difficulty of typical work directed and results achieved 4. Strategic planning and accountability ○ Program/Other <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competencies, knowledge, and skills

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Complexity and job controls 3. Impact of work and decisions 4. Work environment (TBD; not physical environment) <p><u>Suboption:</u> Require DHS to seek OPM approval of competencies</p> <p><u>Suboption:</u> Require DHS to seek OPM approval of competency-based work evaluation guides.</p>
4	Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHS develop competency-based qualification standards that reflect DHS requirements. • Craft integrated occupational standards for classification and qualifications based on the duties of the position and related competencies. <p><u>Sub-option:</u> Use the current OPM qualification standards.</p> <p><u>Suboption:</u> Require DHS to seek OPM approval of competency-based qualification standards.</p>
5	Applying system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate each position based on the mission-related factors for the occupational group. • Managers make classification decisions. HR staff serve as consultants to managers to assist them in identifying the appropriate competencies and determining the appropriate occupational group and job level for new or revised positions. • Create or adopt an automated system to develop position descriptions, evaluate and classifies work, and generate performance management plans.
6	Appeals	<p>Appeals of classification decisions are progressive and may be internal and external.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal (inside chain of command): The employee and supervisor discuss any disagreements regarding the proper classification of position or work assignments. If they cannot resolve the employee's concerns, the employee and the supervisor discuss with the next level manager. • Internal (outside chain of command): If the employee, supervisor, and manager cannot resolve the employee's concerns, the matter is referred to the HR staff at a higher echelon. • If these discussions do not resolve the employee's concerns, the employee may file a formal classification appeal with DHS. The DHS determination on the classification appeal is the final administrative decision. There is no further outside administrative appeal. <p><u>Suboption: Allow for collective bargaining</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An employee may appeal the agency's classification through the agency grievance procedure or, for bargaining unit employees, through the negotiated grievance/arbitration procedures. <p><u>Suboption:</u> Continue the current classification appeal system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal within agency: If an agency has a classification appeals process, General Schedule employees may appeal the classification of their position to their agency. If dissatisfied with the agency's decision on the appeal, the employee may then appeal to OPM. • Appeal to OPM: General Schedule employees may appeal the classification of their position directly to OPM without appealing within their agency. If an employee or agency disagrees with OPM's decision on the classification appeal, the employee or agency may ask OPM to reconsider its decision. OPM may grant the request for

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		<p>reconsideration if the request meets regulatory criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By law, appeals of agency or OPM classification determinations cannot be made through negotiated grievance/arbitration procedures.
7	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The system should be evaluated to determine –<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Whether employees are performing work described in their position descriptions, managers and employees perceive the system as fair and transparent, and whether employees understand how it operates.○ How well OWVS supports the DHS mission and workforce and strategic planning○ Whether the work evaluation factors for each occupational category continue to address the correct aspects of the work in relation to the DHS mission;○ How well the system is being operated within established guidelines.• Adjustments should be made to the system, as appropriate• DHS will monitor distribution of job by occupation.• DHS will conduct surveys on the perceived fairness of OWVS.

Current Series in DHS and Proposed Grouping under OWVS

Attachment

Occupation	Title	GS- series
<i>Homeland Defense and Protection</i>		
Screeners	Safety Technician	0019
Law Enforcement	Aircraft Operation	2181
	Border Patrol Agent	1896
	Criminal Investigator	1811
	Investigation Student Trainee	1899
	Fire Protection And Prevention	0081
	Police	0083
	Security Administration	0080
Inspector	Customs Aid	1897
	Customs Entry And Liquidating Specialist	1894
	Customs Inspector	1890
	Immigration Inspector	1816
	Plant Protection And Quarantine Inspector	0436
	Plant Protection Technician	0421
Intel	Intelligence Specialist	0132
<i>Scientist/Engineer</i>		
Science & Engineering	Social Science	0101
	General Engineering	0801
	Chemistry	1320
	Environmental Protection Specialist	0028
	Civil Engineering	0810
<i>Program / Other</i>		
Management, Analysis & Support	Accounting	0510
	Accounting Technician	0525
	Administrative Officer	0341
	Auditor	0511
	Contractor	1102
	Financial Admin. And Program	0501
	Funeral Director	0050
	Human Resources Assistant	0203
	Human Resources Management Specialist	0201
	Management And Program Analyst	0343
	Office Automation Clerical And Assistant	0326
	Program Management	0340
	Secretary	0318
	Management & Program Clerical & Assistance	0344
	Transportation Specialist	2101
	Contact Representative	0962
Supply Clerical and Technician	2005	

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Occupation	Title	GS- series
	Language Specialist	1040
	Budget Analyst	0560
	General Business & Industry	1101
	Mail & File Clerk	0305
	Import Specialist	1889
	Admin And Office Support Student Trainee	0399
	Public Affairs Specialist	1035
	Supply Program Management	2003
	Purchasing	1105
	Security Clerical And Assistant	0086
	Inventory Management Specialist	2010
	Logistics Management Specialist	0346
	Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist	0260
	Equipment Specialist	1670
Training	Training Instructor	1712
	Education And Training Technician	1702
Health	Health Aid And Technician	0640
	Medical Officer	0602
	Nurse	0610
	Dental Officer	0680
	Physician's Assistant	0603
	Pharmacist	0660
	Veterinary Medical Science	0701
Legal	General Attorney	0905
	Hearings And Appeals	0930
	Legal Assistance	0986
	Paralegal Specialist	0950
IT	Information Technology Management	2210
	Telecommunications Specialist	0391
	Electronics Technician	0856
	Computer Specialist	0334