

Position Classification Standard for Coding Series, 0357

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SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions engaged in supervising, verifying, or performing work involved in coding information from schedules, questionnaires, reports, documents, and other written source material, according to codes involving numerical and alphabetical symbols, and performing other incidental clerical tasks. This series includes those positions that require some knowledge of the information being coded in addition to procedural knowledge, as well as those positions that require only procedural coding knowledge.

This standard supersedes the standard for the Statistical Coding Series, GS-1532, issued in March 1944 and December 1953 under the code CAF-1530, subsequently recoded to GS-1532.

EXCLUSIONS

1. Positions which require the knowledge and application of statistical methods, procedures, and techniques, whether or not in combination with coding work. (See [Statistical Clerical and Administrative Series, GS-1531](#).)
2. Positions where card punch training and experience is the paramount qualification requirement. (See [Data Transcriber Series, GS-0356](#).)
3. Positions involving the use of algebra, logarithms, trigonometric functions, and higher mathematics in the computation of experimental and theoretical data. (See [Mathematics Technician Series, GS-1521](#).)
4. Positions involving the conversion of generalized or detailed plans and flow charts of operational sequences into flow charts for machine solution and subsequently into completely detailed machine instructional steps coded into a language acceptable to a digital computer, and the development of test data and routines to verify the completeness and adequacy of computer programs.
5. Positions which involve coding as an incidental function to the paramount duties. For example, positions responsible for clerical work involved in the documentary control of the receipt, storage, transfer, replenishment, adjustment, disposition, and/or issue of stock (supplies, materials, equipment, parts, etc.) or property items, where coding is incidental to the primary purpose of the work, are classified in the Stock Control Clerical Series, GS-2040. Included in the Coding Series are positions involving coding in a subject-matter area, such as positions coding medical or industrial information, where the coding function is the primary reason for the position's existence.

NATURE OF THE OCCUPATION

Coding clerks in the Federal Government are engaged in coding many different types of information under a variety of coding systems or situations. The information coded in a given agency depends on the agency's mission and is generally coded to facilitate its use for statistical purposes or maintenance of efficient records. Most of the information coded by incumbents of positions in this series is used in coded form for automatic data processing.

The proper coding of information has a significant impact on vital agency programs, and incorrect coding could lead to errors of serious dimension. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that coding clerks be accurate and that they understand the purpose of their work. In some coding situations, a certain production record must be maintained, requiring both speed and accuracy. A good learning ability is required in order to grasp the application of coding instructions or procedures, and for some positions, to require substantive or subject-matter knowledge.

The following are some of the kinds of information coded by positions in this series. Whether or not they require substantive knowledge depends upon the interpretations required of the coding clerk in a particular coding situation.

1. Industry classifications, assigned on the basis of the nature of business descriptions submitted by employers from which are derived economic statistics.
2. Medical and non-medical items pertaining to disability determinations on which disability benefit payments are based.
3. Causes of death which are used in vital statistics reports and various research programs.
4. Records of medical treatment or other medical care of individuals, including diagnostic data, descriptions of injuries, residual disabilities, surgical procedures, other therapeutic or prophylactic (disease-preventing) procedures, etc.
5. Medical pictures, slides, x-rays, etc., which are kept on record according to the anatomical site that is the subject of the picture.
6. Vessel (ship) utilization and movement records, including cargo, trade routes, and ports that are used in the development of waterborne commerce statistics and maritime reports.
7. Personnel data used in reports on military and civilian personnel strength and various other reports and records.
8. Data on equipment, supplies, etc., for use in such documents as inventory reports and contracts.
9. Data on transportation, freight, accidents, and miscellaneous administrative data.

While some positions in this series are responsible for the application of specific coding instructions only, many of them require the ability to acquire and apply subject-matter or substantive knowledge of the information being coded.

Those positions requiring procedural knowledge, where the nature of the information being coded and application of the coding procedure can be understood with a limited amount of instruction, are found primarily at the lower grade levels, GS-2 and GS-3. This type of coding involves translation of an item into a code according to rather well-defined procedures. Although application of a few rules and simple arithmetical computation may be required, the coding clerk is not required to do extensive work with reference books or complicated regulations before determining the proper code.

Those positions requiring subject-matter or substantive knowledge of the information being coded, where the nature of the information as it is given to the coding clerk requires that he or she have this subject-matter knowledge in order to apply the coding procedures, are found primarily at the higher grade levels in this series, GS-3 and above. Coding work requiring knowledge of the information being coded generally requires extensive work with reference books or regulations before the proper code can be determined. Whether a coding position does or does not involve substantive knowledge is determined on the basis of the particular coding situation, i.e., the kind of knowledge and interpretation required of the coding clerk, and not solely on the basis of the type of information coded.

Some coding work requires that the coding clerk do a considerable amount of preliminary work in going over forms giving supporting data on the information to be coded, or working with reference books or regulations, before the proper code can be determined. It may require that the papers be checked to see whether information is complete and consistent and whether further details should be requested from the source of information before it is coded. Therefore, the coding clerk may have to take several procedural steps before arriving at the proper code. The review of forms for such aspects as completeness and consistency and the performance of other clerical tasks preparatory to coding do not form a valid basis for excluding positions from the Coding Series.

Some coding clerks are engaged in the verification of coding work. They may verify on a full-time basis, or they may spend a portion of their time coding. Verifiers are generally required to have the same knowledge and ability as the coding clerks whose work they are verifying. In some coding situations, verifiers select cards on a sample basis, code them, compare them to the original coding, and resolve differences. However, in many coding situations, automatic data processing equipment selects a sample of cards to be verified, and the sample is coded by the verifier. The automatic data processing equipment then compares the verification coding with the original coding and automatically identifies and sorts inconsistencies. The error rate can then be determined. In most coding situations, in cases where the error rate is high, cards are recoded and verified on a 100 percent basis. Whether or not the verification process will be carried out and, if so, how it will be done is a management decision. A coding clerk who is coding on a sample basis and correcting inconsistencies (whether identified by the coding clerk or the machine) is performing the verification function.

TITLES

The title of non-supervisory positions in this series is Coding Clerk. For supervisory positions, the word "Supervisory" is prefixed.

No specializations are established in this series. Certain coding positions require substantive knowledge of the information being coded. This is true, for example, of some positions engaged in coding medical and business information. However, this substantive knowledge is usually acquired through on-the-job training and is generally not a recruitment factor. Because this knowledge is so closely related to the coding procedures or instructions which must be learned anew with each new coding situation, it does not constitute the kind of knowledge that warrants establishment of specializations.

GRADE-LEVEL CRITERIA

Non-supervisory positions

Positions in this series are closely related to clerical positions in other occupations. Coding is performed within a framework of procedures, regulations, precedents, and instructions, and the qualification requirements for these positions, in terms of general knowledge and skills, are essentially the same as those required for general clerical positions. The substantive knowledge required in coding is closely tied to general clerical ability. Therefore, the grade-distinguishing elements for general clerical positions are appropriate criteria for the evaluation of coding positions.

Non-supervisory positions in the Coding Series are evaluated by reference to the [Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work](#); however, they are to be coded to the GS-0357 series

NOTE

Most coding clerks performing the verification function are classified at the same grade level as those performing the original coding. However, positions of verifiers reviewing coding work performed at GS-3 and above, who have final responsibility for correcting coding errors, are classifiable one grade higher than the positions responsible for the original coding work and/or verification without final responsibility.

Supervisory positions

Supervisory positions are evaluated by reference to the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#).

REVISION SUMMARY

This standard has been revised as follows:

- All references to the obsolete General Grade Evaluation Guide for Nonsupervisory Clerical Positions, GS-0301, have been removed. This includes the entire section entitled “Notes on Degrees Found at the Higher Grade Levels.”
- Information on the grading of the verification work has been included in a “NOTE” under the Grade-Level Criteria for non-supervisory positions.
- The date of revision has been added to the cover page and page headers.
- A Revision Summary has been added to document changes.
- Minor edits (e.g., commas, semicolons, and colons) were made for grammatical consistency.