

Position Classification Flysheet for Sociology Series, GS-0184

Table of Contents

SERIES DEFINITION.....	2
SPECIALIZED AREAS OF STUDY.....	2
SOCIOLOGIST POSITIONS DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER POSITIONS.....	3
EVALUATION OF POSITIONS	5

SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions that involve professional work requiring a knowledge of sociology and sociological methods specifically related to the establishment, validation, interpretation, and application of knowledge about social processes. Sociologists and study specialized areas such as: changes in the character, size, distribution, and composition of the population; social mechanisms for enforcing compliance with widely accepted norms and for controlling deviance; social phenomena having to do with human health and disease; the structure and operation of organizations; and the complex interrelationship of the individual and society.

Sociologists are concerned primarily with the study of patterns of group and organizational behavior, social interaction, and social situations in which interaction occurs. The emphasis is on the patterns of behavior that are characteristic of social groups, organizations, institutions, and nations. Some sociologists perform sociological research, others apply sociological principles and findings, and some perform a combination of both kinds of work.

This standards supersedes the flysheet for this series, dated June 1965 (TS-57).

SPECIALIZED AREAS OF STUDY

The field of sociology consists of several specialized areas of study including:

- Demography
- Law and Social Control
- Medical Sociology
- Organizational Analysis
- Social Psychology

All of these areas require similar qualitative and quantitative methodology, so there is no need to classify sociologists into discrete specializations. Organizational needs make it desirable to retain the flexibility to utilize sociologists with varying types of expertise. The following definitions are provided for illustrative purposes:

DEMOGRAPHY is the study of populations. It focuses on their character, size, distribution, and composition (e.g., age, race, and gender). Of key concern are the nature of fertility, mortality, migration, and structure of populations, and factors affecting their evolution. Demography deals with such topics as urban growth, population redistribution, reproductive behavior, morbidity, household and family composition, patterns of labor force participation, regional growth forecasting, and population projections.

LAW AND SOCIAL CONTROL encompasses those areas of sociology that investigate societal mechanisms for enforcing compliance with widely accepted norms. Criminology, deviant behavior, and juvenile delinquency and justice are among the traditional core concerns in this field, as are the nature of social problems and social disorganization. In addition, the area includes such topics as penology, probation and parole, corrections, law enforcement, judicial processes, law and justice, law and society, conflict resolution, and criminal justice.

MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY applies the concepts, perspectives, theories, and methods of sociology to phenomena having to do with human health and disease. Included are theories relating to the spread and distribution of diseases among various population groups; the behaviors or actions taken by groups to maintain, enhance, or restore health or cope with illnesses, disease, or disability; people's attitudes and beliefs about health, disease, disability, and medical care providers and organizations; medical occupations or professions and the organization, financing, and delivery of medical care services; medicine as a social institution and its relationship to other social institutions; cultural values and societal responses with respect to health, illness, and disability; the role of social factors in the causes of disease, especially functional and emotion-related disorders and stress-related diseases; the role of social factors in environmental and occupational health and safety; the relationship between social and physiological processes; and the relationship of age, health, and behavior.

ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS focuses on the nature of social organizations. Traditionally, the field has focuses on two areas: the nature of bureaucracy, and industrial sociology (also known as the sociology of work). In addition, it includes numerous other topics, of which the following are illustrative: decision making and management, occupations and professions, voluntary organizations, community organizations, organizational structures and effectiveness, and organizational conflict.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY encompasses a broad area which focuses on the complex interrelationship of the individual and society. The field today includes a number of substantive areas, such as: personality, personality and social structure, socialization and human development, self-concept, interpersonal behavior, social interaction, small groups, group dynamics, intergroup relations, and attitudes and behavior. Social psychology is also an important dimension in the study of many other areas of sociological inquiry, such as: deviance; mental health; mass media and communications; sociology of education; family sociology; popular culture; collective behavior and social movements; public opinion and mass communication; leisure, sports, and recreation; sociology of aging/social gerontology; and gender.

SOCIOLOGIST POSITIONS DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER POSITIONS

Positions in the Sociology Series are distinguished from other social science positions by the purpose of their assignments and the qualifications required for their performance. For example:

PSYCHOLOGISTS are concerned primarily with individual behavior. They examine the behavior, traits, interests and activities of human and animal organisms, rather than the social interactions of individuals and groups. (See the [Psychology Series, GS-0180](#)).

ANTHROPOLOGISTS are concerned primarily with ethnology, physical anthropology, and linguistics as well as cultural anthropology. In cultural anthropology, the emphasis is on human cultural values, and the work requires a knowledge of the evolution and transmission of ideas and values in human cultures, rather than on social structure and change. (See the [General Anthropology Series, GS-0190](#).)

ECONOMISTS are concerned primarily with laws and conditions that affect the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth, rather than the economic factors that affect family structure employment patterns, social organization, deviance, etc. (See the [Economist Series, GS-0110](#).)

STATISTICIANS are concerned primarily with collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting masses of numerical data. Sociologists often employ statistical techniques in their work as tools in explaining sociological phenomena. If the primary purpose of a position is to render statistical services to a sociologist, the position should be classified in the [Statistician Series, GS-1530](#), with a subject-matter specialization, or in the [Statistical Assistant Series, GS-1531](#), as appropriate.

In addition to sociologists, other occupations that may apply a working knowledge of sociology include:

- [GS-0020, Community Planning Series](#)
- [GS-0101, Social Science Series](#)
- [GS-0130, Foreign Affairs Series](#)
- [GS-0131, International Relations Series](#)
- [GS-0135, Foreign Agricultural Affairs Series](#)
- [GS-0140, Manpower Research and Analysis Series](#)
- [GS-0142, Manpower Development Series](#)
- [GS-0160, Civil Rights Analysis Series](#)
- [GS-0185, Social Work Series](#)
- [GS-0685, Public Health Program Specialist Series](#)
- [GS-0696, Consumer Safety Series](#)

- [GS-1150, Industrial Special Series](#)

If a specific type of knowledge, other than sociology, is more important to the position, it is appropriately classified in one of the series identified above, or in another series.

EVALUATION OF POSITIONS

This material does not include grade level criteria. Positions classified to this series should be evaluated by reference to position classification standards for related kinds of work. (See guidance in the [Introduction to the Position Classification Standards](#) on selecting standards for classifying positions in series for which no specific grade level criteria have been published.)

Positions in this series that meet the definition in the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) for classification as supervisors are to be evaluated by that guide.