

Position Classification Flysheet for Exhibit Specialist Series, GS-1010

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SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions which supervise or perform work involved in planning, constructing, installing, and operating exhibits, the preparation of gallery space for exhibits, the preservation of historic buildings, or the restoration or preparation of items to be exhibited. The work requires a combination of artistic abilities, technical knowledge and skills, and ability to understand the subject matter concepts which assigned exhibits projects are intended to convey.

This series coverage standard supersedes the position classification standard for this series, issued in April 1962.

EXCLUSIONS

1. Classify in the [Visual Information Series, GS-1084](#), positions that involve planning and designing the use of visual materials to communicate information by means of exhibits up to the stage of production, as opposed to translating exhibit plans and designs into physical form.
2. Classify in the [Illustrating Series, GS-1020](#), positions that involve the layout and execution of illustrations requiring artistic ability, the ability to draw freehand or with drawing instruments, and the ability to use the common art media.
3. Classify in the [Museum Specialist and Technician Series, GS-1016](#), positions that involve the provision of direct assistance to museum curators through subordinate technical work related to investigating, collecting, preparing, preserving, recording, and cataloging museum materials.
4. Classify in the [Equipment Services Series, GS-1670](#), positions that involve the development of training devices based primarily on knowledge of specialized equipment and skill in its assembly, maintenance, and operation.
5. Classify in the [Interior Design Series, GS-1008](#), positions that involve the design of interior environments to promote the productivity, health, and welfare of employees or the public.
6. Classify in the most appropriate occupational series under the [Federal Wage System](#), positions that involve the construction, installation, and maintenance of visual displays, training aids, or exhibits when the paramount requirement is skill and experience in a trade or craft, rather than knowledge of the subject matter being displayed or knowledge of the principles, methods, and techniques of artifact conservation.

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

This series covers positions involved in the production of models or exhibits for cultural, educational, informational, scientific, or technical purposes.

Exhibits specialists:

- (1) construct and operate museum or educational exhibits and galleries for displays;
- (2) construct informational exhibits or models used as training aids;
- (3) construct exhibits and accurate scale models used as evidence in the courts or as special equipment items in support of scientific experiments or other operating activities of an agency; and
- (4) construct informational exhibits and models for public events or special programs.

Generally, the work of exhibits specialists is governed by the following considerations:

- Exhibits must attract and maintain the attention of the viewer.
- Exhibits must be constructed to withstand vandalism and weathering, and be reinforced at points of wear and strain to reduce the need for maintenance.
- Exhibits must be adequately and aesthetically lighted.
- Susceptible items must be protected from damage caused by temperature changes or chemical reactions.
- Valuable items must be secure from loss.
- Exhibits must be designed to allow an orderly traffic flow and accessibility by the disabled and viewers of varying heights.
- Portable exhibits must be designed and built for sturdiness and for ease of disassembly, packing, shipping, and reassembly.
- Drawings must be maintained on the original design and any changes made so that repairs may be made quickly and accurately.

The exhibits specialist does not select the concepts to be covered. That is the task of the museum curator, program official, or subject matter specialist. Neither does the exhibits specialist develop the general design. A designer or visual information specialist does that. Working closely with these individuals, the exhibits specialist transforms subject matter and

design ideas into physical form within the limits of available space and budget. However, the exhibits specialist must understand the subject matter being presented sufficient to reconstruct display items or fabricate accurate representations of them.

Exhibits vary in their physical complexity. They may consist of a series of illustrations or objects displayed on a single wall or a few items in a simple case displayed in a lobby. On the other hand, they may have components that are three-dimensional, free-standing, taller than conventional room ceilings, and relatively permanent, such as those found in museums. Some exhibits involve fragile and irreplaceable items or artifacts displayed in virtually dust-free cases and supported by brackets and other hardware. Other exhibits involve murals, factually accurate sculpted foregrounds, lighting for visibility and special effects, video displays, audience-activated working models, or interactive computer programs.

Depending on the scale of the exhibits program and the degree to which actual fabrication is accomplished in-house, an exhibits specialist may work in one of the following typical areas:

- Model making or sculpting in various media to small, full, or greatly enlarged scale. Models include human and animal figures, vegetation, buildings, weapons, machinery, vehicles, etc. Working models can be made to demonstrate, for example, principles of motion, flight, weaving, or the action of the heart.
- Designing and painting backgrounds, comprehensive sketches, and finished renderings of flat painting. These range from spot illustrations to complex murals and may involve highly specialized techniques, such as painting full color scenes on curved backgrounds to tie into three-dimensional foregrounds. This work also includes execution of maps, diagrams, and illustrations as integral parts of exhibits.
- Skinning animals or birds, preserving skins, sculpting forms, mounting skins on forms in a lifelike attitude, and occasionally making field trips to collect needed specimens.
- Restoring exhibit items such as old tools and equipment, glass and ceramic objects, or aircraft and other vehicles, using techniques and materials that range from modern to very old and nearly forgotten. Restoration work on art objects, including paintings and sculpture, is not included.
- Investigating the physical condition of historic buildings and other structures, identifying the architectural style and craftsmanship associated with the historical periods represented, and planning and designing the construction work needed to preserve the structures, remove modern alterations, and restore original design features.
- Planning the details of and producing screen printed labels, signs, and panels of textual material; fabricating common and highly specialized brackets from metal

and other materials; matting and mounting illustrations and documents; and creating three-dimensional foregrounds from a variety of materials.

- Installing the mechanical and electronic aspects of exhibits, such as exhibit cases and structures, audiovisual equipment, animated displays, visitor participation devices, special lighting effects, display racks or screens, or gallery furnishings.

TITLES

Title nonsupervisory positions covered by this series as Exhibits Specialist. Agencies may add parenthetical titles of their choosing where further distinctions in the work are necessary for personnel management. (See the [Introduction to the Position Classification Standards](#) for more complete guidance on parenthetical titles.)

Use the title Supervisory Exhibits Specialist for positions that meet the definition of supervisor in the appropriate [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#).

GRADING OF POSITIONS

Evaluate nonsupervisory positions by reference to the [Grade-Evaluation Guide for Visual Arts Work](#).

Evaluate supervisory positions by reference to the appropriate [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#).