

# Position Classification Flysheet for Technical Writing and Editing Series, GS-1083

## Table of Contents

<b>SERIES DEFINITION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>EXCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TITLES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EVALUATING POSITIONS .....</b>	<b>4</b>

## SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions that involve writing or editing technical materials, such as reports of research findings; scientific or technical articles, news releases, and periodicals; regulations in technical areas; technical manuals, specifications, brochures, and pamphlets; or speeches or scripts on scientific or technical subjects. Technical writers and technical editors draw on a substantial knowledge of a particular subject-matter area, such as the natural or social sciences, engineering, law, or other fields. The work involves the development of information and analysis to select and present information on the specialized subject in a form and at a level suitable for the intended audience.

This series coverage standard supersedes the standard for this series issued in April 1960.

## EXCLUSIONS

1. Classify positions that involve writing and editing work that does not require substantial subject-matter knowledge but requires the development of knowledge about the subject of each assignment in the course of completing it, in the [Writing and Editing Series, GS-1082](#).
2. Classify positions that involve advising management on the possible public reaction to proposed policy, identifying communication needs, developing informational materials, and evaluating public information programs in the [Public Affairs Series, GS-1035](#).
3. Classify positions that involve writing and editing materials where the paramount qualification requirements for the work and the career patterns are primarily in a subject-matter field in the appropriate subject-matter series.
4. Classify positions that primarily involve editorial support work in verifying obvious factual information in manuscripts and preparing them for publication in the [Editorial Assistance Series, GS-1087](#). This series also includes positions that primarily involve routine and repetitive composition of factual material, or revision of sentences and paragraph order, with a focus on grammar and format rather than on content and style.
5. Classify positions that communicate information primarily through visual means, such as illustrations, photographs, diagrams, graphs, charts, or slides, rather than primarily through the written word, in the [Visual Information Series, GS-1084](#).

## OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Technical writers and technical editors apply writing or editing skills and substantial knowledge of the basic principles and specialized vocabulary of appropriate subject-matter fields to the accurate communication of scientific and technological developments to expert and other interested audiences. Technical writers and technical editors may also apply writing and editing

skills and an understanding of the appropriate equipment and systems to the development of specifications showing the characteristics and capabilities or the design and test requirements of equipment and systems; or to the development of training, operating, or maintenance manuals associated with equipment and systems.

Technical writers and technical editors usually are found in Government activities that sponsor or perform research, conduct investigations, or carry out operations in such fields as the natural and social sciences, engineering, and law. Such activities ordinarily disseminate their findings and decisions to the scientific community, the administrative and policy-making community, those who might apply the information, and the general public.

Technical writers and technical editors, in addition to reporting research findings and agency decisions, articulate agency policies and explain technical aspects of agency programs to those affected. The materials they present explain technical information in such a way as to make it clear without sacrificing thoroughness and accuracy. Technical writers and technical editors make sure the materials they present are consistent with agency policy and with other information presented by the agency, meet the style requirements of the agency and the publication, and are written at an appropriate level for the intended audience.

Technical writers and technical editors typically use desktop publishing hardware to draft, edit, and lay out material and sometimes to design, print, and distribute it. Technical writers and technical editors may manage individual or serial publications from initial conception and content determination through distribution and coordinate the activities of other publishing personnel. Thus, while the use of desktop publishing technology does not in itself increase the complexity of technical writing and editing work, it does allow the technical writer or technical editor to work more efficiently and to manage projects from start to finish.

Technical writers and technical editors often make final reviews of proposed publications for style, design, layout, and editorial aspects before release.

Technical writers prepare original papers, articles, or reports in scientific, technical, or professional fields based on research, interviews with experts and program officials, and sometimes observation of or participation in tests and experiments. They also may prepare manuals for training in or guidance on the operation or maintenance of technical equipment and systems, or specifications for the development or purchase of such equipment and systems. Technical writers use their knowledge of the language and methods used in the specialized field to understand and work with technical information. Typical work assignments involve: (1) obtaining, analyzing, and selecting the pertinent information; (2) determining the most logical and effective sequence of the narrative; (3) determining the overall length and tone based on the objectives, the medium, and the audience; (4) writing the material; (5) consulting on or selecting illustrative material; and (6) preparing the material for publication.

*Technical editors* prepare manuscripts developed by others for publication by making sure the material conveys what it was intended to say, is arranged logically, presents the facts to support the conclusions drawn, is in accordance with agency policy, and is written clearly and interestingly for the intended audience. Technical editors may also combine the writings of

committees into single coherent works, or prepare abstracts of technical reports. They may also edit for clarity manuals and specifications prepared by others, including contractors. Technical editors (1) advise and assist authors during the writing stage; (2) verify the information using their own knowledge supplemented by research and consultation with other subject experts; (3) examine the organization, length, and tone of the material; (4) edit the text for clarity and accuracy; (5) consult on design and graphics; and (6) prepare material for printing. Technical editors use substantial technical knowledge to understand the technical material. They may be required to do substantial research and rewriting to organize, balance, and complete deficient manuscripts to meet publishing objectives. Technical editors consider policy implications and apply a consistent set of style, grammar, and punctuation practices to manuscripts. They seldom make substantial changes without discussions with the authors. They sometimes plan, manage, edit, and approve writing performed under contract.

## TITLES

*Technical Writer* is the title for positions that primarily involve writing technical materials.

*Technical Editor* is the title for positions that primarily involve editing such materials.

*Technical Writer-Editor* is the title for positions that involve both technical writing and technical editing and neither function predominates.

Agencies may supplement official titles with parenthetical titles to identify further those duties and responsibilities that reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work. For example, they might specify the subject-matter specialization involved by using a parenthetical designator such as Technical Editor (Mechanical Engineering). (See the [Introduction to the Position Classification Standards](#) for more complete guidance on parenthetical titles.)

Use the prefix *Supervisory* for positions that meet the criteria in the appropriate [general schedule supervisory guide](#).

## EVALUATING POSITIONS

Evaluate nonsupervisory positions by reference to the grade level criteria in the [Writing and Editing Grade-Evaluation Guide](#).

Evaluate supervisory positions using the criteria in the appropriate [general schedule supervisory guide](#).