

OPERATIONS AND POLICY ANALYST

Job Family Definition

Operations and Policy Analysts are members of the Business and Financial Operations job family. There are four broad classifications included in this occupational category, Operations and Policy Analyst 1, 2, 3 and 4. The classification series describes professional-level analytical, planning, and evaluative work.

Positions provide line managers with objectively based information for making decisions on the administrative, policy, programmatic and management aspects of agency operations. Positions require a high degree of analytical skills, the skill to research problems and issues, and strong written and oral communication skills. Typically, employees work as individual contributors and supervision of others is not the main focus of position work.

Employees apply knowledge of administrative or management analysis, theory, and principles to the unique requirements of a particular program or agency operations. The Operations and Policy Analyst requires a high degree of analytical ability combined with a comprehensive knowledge of (1) the functions, processes, theories and principles of management; and (2) the methods used to gather, analyze, and evaluate information.

Significant Task Areas

Due to the broad nature of the classification series, it is not possible to list all categories of illustrative duties here or within the classification specifications. Listed below, are the most typical. The classification specification lists duties characteristic to each level of the series. ***Work not listed does not preclude classification in the series.*** The occupational category, nature of the work, required knowledge and skills, and distinguishing characteristics is the better indicator of classification assignment. ***Classifiers should strive to match the intent of the different factor levels and seek to locate concepts and examples which are comparable.***

Management and Program Analysis

Analyze and evaluate (on a quantitative or qualitative basis) the effectiveness of line program operations in meeting established goals and objectives. Develop new or modified administrative policies, goals or objectives. Develop project life cycle cost analyses, or evaluate the benefit or economic feasibility of current or proposed programs. Analyze work production data to create performance standards or work measurements. Coordinate the collection and preparation of operating reports such as budget expenditures or statistical records of performance data. Evaluate through comprehensive study, organizational efficiency and productivity; recommend changes or improvements in organization, staffing, work methods and procedures. Develop strategic, managerial, workflow, process improvement, operations or structural plans. Identify and develop required data for use in the management and direction of programs.

Business Systems Improvement

Employees give advice on the potential benefits or uses of automation to improve the efficiency of administrative or program operations. Evaluate and advise on the operating practices, organization, methods and procedures of administrative systems. Analyze management information requirements. Develop program or administrative reporting systems including the systems' specifications. Design methodology and evaluate system effectiveness. Survey and evaluate agency systems for compliance with regulations, procedures, and sound management practices. Evaluate the feasibility and cost of system proposals. Collaborate with Information Systems Specialists to design and implement system improvements. Define user and systems' requirements; document specifications for evaluating vendor proposals.

Policy and Legislative Analysis

Analyze new or proposed legislation or regulations and evaluate the impact on program operations and management. Evaluate policy issues and proposals and formulate policies and strategies to achieve agency program goals. Apply decision models; develop and interpret information that assists management with decision-making, policy formulation or other managerial functions. Analyze federal regulations and legislation for agency or program impact, and plan methods of implementation. Develop and recommend solutions to situations in which the lack of written policy poses a potential risk to the agency. Develop legislative proposals. Track legislative activity; coordinate and explain organizational needs to state and federal legislative representatives.

Administrative Rule Coordination and Communication

Employees coordinate, schedule and direct the administrative rule-making process; and review proposed rules to make certain they comply with legal requirements. Other related areas include contested case and public records activities; evaluating communication materials for compliance with readability standards; composing technical material appropriate to the audience; and giving technical advice to staff on how to comply with readability requirements.

Administrative Coordination

Some positions support a small agency, commission or board, or organizational subsection by coordinating or doing vital administrative functions or services at the professional level. In this situation, the position is a generalist with no primary administrative area forming a basis for the required skills. Work tasks vary tremendously between many administrative areas. Some of these functions include management analysis, procurement, contract administration, property management, space management, security administration, reports management, data processing, human resource processing and other related activities. This classification series will allow an agency to recruit for an individual with broad analytical skills.

Key Allocation Factors

The Operations and Policy Analyst classification series describes many different types of administrative - staff work. *Please see the glossary of terms for a definition of administrative work.* Work is in support of line operations rather than directly responsible for delivering the program services. This is the key distinction for the classification series.

Operations and Policy Analysts apply skills in analysis, research, writing, solving business problems and judgment. These skills can easily be transferred to many agency and program settings. People typically gain this skill set through a college-level education or progressively responsible experience. Many types of college degrees and business experiences will help a person build the administrative and management skills needed to do the work of the classification series. This is why the minimum qualification standards are written broadly.

Some positions doing work described within the series for example, policy development may require knowledge of a particular program area or occupational discipline. In this situation, the classifier should first ask him or herself if another classification series occupationally related to the position is available for allocation; for example Natural Resources, Engineering, Information Systems Specialist, Public Health, Human Resources, Accounting. It is usually best to allocate to the classification series that is the most occupationally related to the work. If an occupationally specific class series is not available, then the agency may use the Operations and Policy Analyst series and adapt the degree or experience minimum qualifications to the position under recruitment.

In summary, use the Operations and Policy Analyst classification series in these situations:

- 1) Administrative work in support of line operations that does not require a specialized education in a particular discipline;
- 2) Administrative and policy work for fields that may require a specialized education and the state does not have a classification series for that occupation; (When allocating in this circumstances, the minimum qualification standards should be adapted to reflect the occupational discipline.)

Differences from other Similar Kinds of Work

Technician or assistant work in a support capacity is not included in this classification series. These positions should be classified in the clerical, assistant and technician level classifications such as Office Specialist, Administrative Specialist, Executive Support Specialist. *Please see the glossary of terms for a more complete definition of professional and technical-level work.*

Positions doing policy analysis in an occupational category related to a state class series should be allocated to that series. Positions doing policy work that do not require a particular academic background, or positions in which the knowledge is easily learned through research should also be classified in the Operations and Policy Analyst classification series.

Program Analyst is a broad classification series that describes the work of administering or managing line program services. A program is an on-going agency function that has a clearly identifiable statutory and budget authority. The Operations and Policy Analyst describes administrative-staff work in support of line programs. At times, the work of the two classification series is very similar. If the purpose of the position is *in support of or contributing to the program*, the Operations and Policy Analyst classification series is correct. Many agency functions carry the label of “program”, when in reality the function is administrative in nature and in support of the program. The classifier should carefully consider this when comparing the occupational groupings.

The Operations and Policy Analyst classification series does business and organizational system improvement work. A business process or operation is a type of system. Many organizational systems are automated or can be improved through the use of automation; therefore the work of system improvement includes collaborating with information system staff to implement improvements. The work on the surface may look very similar to that of the Information System Specialist. However, position work requires knowledge of process and system improvement, typical business systems, and enough familiarity and knowledge of information systems to understand the “possible” improvements. These positions frequently act in liaison roles between an agency program area and information system sections because employees can “speak” the language of two occupational areas. The position is better classified in the information system specialist classification series when the position purpose requires knowledge of information systems’ theories, techniques and practices. Please refer to the allocation guide to the Information System Specialist classification series for an in-depth discussion of that classification series.

Distinctions between Classification Levels

- *Knowledge and Skills*

Note: for this classification series, knowledge and skill to apply various analytical and evaluative methods to the organizational and program issues are of greater significance than knowledge of the techniques themselves. For example, positions that apply analytical techniques to identify and solve issues of a factual nature are at the first level; positions that apply analytical techniques to design comprehensive management studies is characteristic of the higher levels. All levels may use similar analytical techniques.

- *Supervisory Controls*
- *Available Guidelines*
- *Analytical complexity and characteristics of the work*
- *Level of responsibility*
- *Scope and effect of the work*

Operations and Policy Analysts compare to the Standard Occupational Category Codes; 13-1199.99, Business Operations Specialist, all other; 13-1111.00, Management Analysts; 11-3011.00, Administrative Services Manager; 15-2031.00, Operations Research Analysts; 19-3094, Political Scientists; 19-3099.99, Social Scientists and related workers, all other.