

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION

DISABILITY PROGRAM ASSOCIATE (A, B)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 2.04, Wis. Adm. Code, for making classification decisions relative to present and future positions responsible for providing paraprofessional support to Disability Examiners in the Disability Determination Bureau, Division of Health Care Financing, Department of Health and Family Services. This classification specification is not intended to identify every duty that may be assigned to position, but is intended to serve as a framework for classification decision-making in this occupational area.

Classification decision must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (i.e. more than 50%) of the work assigned to and performed by the positions when compared to the class concepts and definition of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusion

This classification encompasses positions that are responsible for the full range of paraprofessional **non-medical adjudication** duties, assisting the Disability Claims Reviewers, Disability Claims Specialist, and supervisors, or performing **quality reviews** of the work of Disability Associates.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification are the following types of positions:

1. Positions that meet the statutory definitions of confidential, supervisor and/or management in s. 111.81(7), (19) and (13), Wis. Stats., as interpreted and administered by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.
2. Positions that for a majority of time (more than 50%) are responsible for determining and evaluating disability application appeals, continuing disability reviews, and initial children’s cases, amendments and rulings, and writing determinations and are more appropriately classified as Disability Claims Reviewer.
3. Positions that for a majority of time (more than 50%) are responsible for quality assurance of the Disability Claims Reviewer or administrative hearings for medical adjudications and are more appropriately classified as Disability Claims Specialist.

4. Positions that for a majority of time (more than 50%) are responsible for providing administrative clerical support work in support of disability adjudication functions relating to disability casework and are more appropriately classified as Disability Associate.
5. Positions that for a majority of time (more than 50%) are responsible for providing paraprofessional administrative and program-related support to professional staff in a work unit of an agency, campus, or college that is not in the Disability Determination Bureau and are more appropriately classified as Operations Program Associate.
6. Positions that perform professional duties as defined in s. 111.81(15), Wis. Stats., for the majority of time (more than 50%) that include the full scope and accountability of a complex program area.
7. All other positions that are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance Into This Classification

Employees enter positions within this classification by competition.

E. Terminology Used in This Classification Specification

Extensive Knowledge: implies an advanced knowledge of the subject matter so as to permit solution of unusual as well as commonplace work problems, advising on technical questions and planning methods for difficult work situations.

Paraprofessional: Work that is similar to professional work but does not have the breadth and depth of true professional work. A paraprofessional employee may perform duties that are a narrow, specialized subset of the professional employee's duties. A paraprofessional employee does not perform the full range of duties assigned to professional employees, or performs duties of lesser scope, impact, and complexity than duties assigned to professional employees. Paraprofessional duties tend to support the work of professional employees. A paraprofessional employee may carry out or implement plans or projects that are developed, planned, and managed by professional employees. The paraprofessional employee carries out or implements plans or projects based on extensive experience and supplemental on-the-job training rather than on formal academic education in the discipline itself. Paraprofessional work is performed in a narrow or highly specialized area of the overall occupation and requires a high degree of practical knowledge and skill. The experienced paraprofessional employee often works with considerable independence for significant periods of time. This independence, however, does not alter the nature and character of the work, which is to support a professional discipline.

Professional: Wisconsin statute s. 111.81(15) states, "Professional employee means: (a) Any employee in the classified service who is engaged in work: 1. predominantly intellectual and varied in character as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work; 2. Involving the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment in its performance; 3. Of such a character that the output produced or the result accomplished cannot be standardized in relation to a given period of time; 4. Requiring knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction and study in an institution of higher learning or a hospital, as distinguished from a general academic education or from an apprenticeship or from training in the performance of routine mental, manual or physical processes; or (b) Any employee in the classified service who: 1. Has completed the courses of specialized intellectual instruction and study described in par. (a)(4); and 2. Is performing related work under the supervision of a professional person to qualify to become a professional employee as defined in par. (a)."

Professional work cannot be standardized or routinized and requires independent judgment and discretion. Professional work involves many gray areas that require substantial analysis and judgment to reach the appropriate conclusion. Work classified as professional requires education and training in the principles, concepts, and theories of the occupational area. These are often gained through the completion of a four-year degree in a specified curriculum at a college or university. In a limited number of circumstances, such knowledge may be gained through on-the-job experience.

Professional work requires creativity, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation. It involves applying or interpreting natural law, principles, or theory; evaluating the research of others; and assessing the need for and validity of proposed changes and improvements in procedures and methods. Professional responsibility involves the ability to reason from existing knowledge to unexplored areas; to adapt methods to circumstances that deviate from the standards; and to stay abreast of and evaluate technical subjects, analyses, and proposals.

Professional work requires a high order of analytical ability combined with a comprehensive knowledge of (1) the functions, processes, theories, and principles of the occupational area; and (2) the methods used to gather, analyze, and evaluate information.

## II. DEFINITIONS

### DISABILITY PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

Positions are responsible for the full range of non-medical adjudication duties in assisting the Disability Claims Reviewers, Disability Claims Specialist, and supervisors, or perform quality reviews of the work of the Disability Associates. Work is performed under general supervision.

Job duties for **non-medical adjudication** are determination of the medical, educational, or other evidence necessary to evaluate the disability under federal regulations and the Social Security Act. Positions evaluate file documentation to determine remaining development activity and case disposition; review materials and reasons for determinations in a previously allowed case; review, analyze and evaluate all evidence in accordance with established office practice and determine if additional information is required. Positions evaluate all data regarding work during the periods of potential disability relative to the standards and document failure to cooperate or whereabouts unknown issues and 301 work incentive provisions. Positions identify the need for additional medical data not available from established records and authorize appropriate consultative examinations and related medical tests and procedures; and manage a caseload in an effective, timely and cost efficient manner.

Job duties for **quality reviews** are performance of technical reviews of representative samples of all case folders produced by professional and support staff. These duties require extensive knowledge of all Social Security Administration laws, rules and regulations, office procedures and Disability Determination Bureau internal procedural manuals, including the Support Unit manuals and the Manual of Adjudicator Procedures; reviewing case folders for errors and omissions. Positions review in detail decision information, including file evidence, forms completion and worksheets for correlation of all items relating to disability decisions. They maintain accurate records of individual and unit status and performance data; identify trends in errors and provide feedback to the Quality & Special Projects supervisor, suggesting special studies if indicated, and maintain confidentiality of studies conducted on individuals. Positions recommend and initiate procedural changes. They provide case support for disability analysts and adjudicators by preparing disability claim development documents for mailing, preparing disability determinations for claimant notification, preparing disability folders for disposition, reviewing incoming correspondence, and identifying proper disposition. Positions perform various quality assurance functions, maintain accurate files and records on case returns; input quality data and prepare quality reports. Positions also provide orientation to new staff; and assist in training new unit personnel.

**III. QUALIFICATIONS**

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed, and by an identification of the education, training, work, or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired.

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

This classification series was created effective July 24, 2005 and announced in bulletin OSER-0071-MRS-SC as a result of the Administrative Support Unit Survey for positions formerly classified in the Program Assistant series.

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