

MCP: Plan Design

For Out-of-Scope Employees

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This document is will be used to explain the Points allocated by Degree Level to each factor

Points by Degree Level for Each Factor

Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Factor										
Role	200	560	920	1280	1640	2000				
Impact	100	250	450	700	1000	1350	1750	2200	2700	3250
Communication	100	350	625	925						
Conditions of Work	110	400	200							

MCP: Plan Design

1. Determine the differential worth of jobs and establish a job worth hierarchy throughout the organization.
2. Standard criteria that can be applied to all jobs as opposed factors that assess unique characteristics of any given occupation.
3. Standard composite factors that assess the full range of characteristics related to that factor instead of a separate factor for each characteristic.
4. Conceptual as opposed to literal factor definitions, assessing to assess how a job meets the full intent of a rating level, as opposed to the full literal content of the factor definition.
5. Factors designed to assess the typical nature of jobs, based on the principle of significant difference.
6. Service-wide equity in pay through comparison to:
 - a. Equivalency statements supported by benchmark descriptors, or rating indicators as represented in benchmark descriptors;
 - b. Consistency of application to like work;
 - c. Adherence in both design and application to specific equal pay principles:
 - no duplication of assessment measures;
 - no occupation-specific measures;
 - no assessment of occasional duties;
 - no assessment of common features of jobs, performance behaviors nor
 - d. Maintenance of plan integrity through ongoing monitoring of job and organizational change;
7. Due process through regular orientation and training, departmental involvement, and employee access to appeal processes.
8. Occupational-specific coding to enable research into job market, recruitment/retention, etc.

Personal Versus Corporate Value

Individuals from different cultural backgrounds, levels of education and learning styles, usually have different personal value systems and place different emphasis or more importance on certain attributes of work and value work differently.

Individuals and often organizational units have a pre-disposition, or value, for or against something derived from life experiences and these often change over time. Many individuals are unaware of their pre-

dispositions and subconsciously bring these pre-dispositions to bear on their view of what should be valued and the degree to which it should be valued.

One example of this is the way individuals perceive words that have been traditionally used in job evaluation plans, such as “complex” or “basic” to describe a level of work within a factor. Such words have different meanings for different people and contribute to differences of opinion regarding the value of jobs. As such, this plan discourages the use of value-laden words such as these.

The use of generic, standard, criteria across the organization is fundamental to ensure jobs are not classified based on personal and arbitrary opinion. Ensuring equitable treatment of like jobs is important to prevent interdepartmental raiding and unnecessary churn within the organization.

Job Evaluation is Not a Reward and Recognition System

Government departments are generally organized in a manner that is somewhat occupation-specific and therefore employ individuals with relatively similar value systems. It is not uncommon for a department to identify specific values they would like to see recognized and rewarded.

However, job evaluation plans are for the purpose of establishing base pay, not providing pay as a form of reward and recognition for specific behaviors. They are not intended to encourage cultural change, but are for the purpose of establishing the relative value of job assignments.

Behavioral goals, such as innovation, etc. should be recognized through the performance management system or an informal reward and recognition program. Base pay, as determined through job evaluation, establishes the fixed relative value of jobs so they can subsequently be connected to market and so the job evaluation plan can provide for responsibility-based career progression.

Composite Factors and Alignment with Equal Pay Principles

In the mid-1990s the Government of Saskatchewan adopted the Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value and Pay Equity Policy Framework that now governs the introduction of job evaluation plans in the broader public sector. A significant body of knowledge had been established associated with the need to address system gender equity issues arising in wage setting. Our policy framework is similar to legislation and/or policy framework in much of the western world.

A primary feature of the policy is that all jobs within a bargaining unit or excluded groups of the organization are, through a set of common factors, to be assessed against the criteria of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. Many organizations have attempted to create an array of factors to assess the finite details of jobs in relation to these criteria.

There is no specific requirement to independently assess these criteria. For example, when evaluating a job, it is difficult to separate the level of responsibility associated with communication expectations from the level of skill associated with communication. As these processes have unfolded there is new, emerging wisdom with respect to how these criteria can and should be assessed. The policy framework enables the organization to

determine how to assess these criteria and attach its own value to their assessment factors.

Assessing work against multiple factors detracts from equity as a result of the difficulty in preventing the reassessment of the same attributes of work over again. Because the use of job evaluation factors requires separation of job content specific to the factor, care must be taken to prevent transference between factors to ensure there is no duplication of measures (bias). Most people have difficulty thinking of jobs in a compartmentalized way.

The more factors there are, the more jobs have to be thought of in a fragmented way, and the more difficult this process becomes. This increases the likelihood of biasing the evaluation by double-crediting attributes of work through re-assessment of the same thing.

For this reason, rather than having multiple factors, a fundamental principle of job evaluation and equal pay is to have composite factors which assess the full range of characteristics related to that factor, and keep the number of factors to a minimum. For example, public involvement (involving the public in the decision-making process of government) is a responsibility involving communication skill and a level of responsibility but is neither necessary nor appropriate to turn it into a job evaluation factor. Rather, it is a role that would typically be assessed in a communication factor.

Differential Worth vs Occupation-Specific Responsibilities

While employees may expect to see the responsibilities of their specific job reflected in the job evaluation factors, attempting to reflect the full range of public sector responsibilities in job evaluation factors is both impossible and inappropriate given that hundreds of responsibilities exist.

It is important to understand that job evaluation factors must be sufficiently broad and generic to enable assessment of all types of responsibilities. Job evaluation factors are designed to assess the broad level of responsibility, not responsibilities in and of themselves.

Adding a specific factor that relates to occupation specific responsibilities, such as social work or financial aspects, represents a form of bias towards those jobs which have those characteristics. To have a factor that assesses occupation-responsibilities, specifically, would then penalize all the jobs that do not have that type of responsibility.

This would ultimately require specific factors for all the different kinds of work performed by various occupations, and words within each level determinant of a factor to capture the various levels of work in each occupation. This would create an inordinately complex plan and lead to significant dispute regarding how to value each such factor.

Determining differential worth means assessing the level of the job's worth, not distinguishing the characteristics of different occupations. In fact, differential worth becomes more difficult to assess if the job evaluation factors incorporate attributes of work that are specific to an occupation and leads to bias in design and assessment.

The more factors that exist to measure characteristics of specific occupations, the more jobs are assessed at

intermediate rating levels, ultimately compressing pay, and undervaluing, in particular, market sensitive jobs that typically require a depth of expertise but have a narrow range of responsibilities.

Equivalencies and Principle Features

To assess the level of the job's worth, each job evaluation factor has a number of level determinants. Traditionally, level determinants have used extensive wording trying to capture numerous possible scenarios that might occur and the process of job evaluation has required the full content of these definitions be met.

This unfortunately has led to literal interpretation of the definition statements instead of conceptualizing intent, leading to rigidity in application where the factors are not necessarily intended to be applied in that manner.

This, in turn, brings about requirements for too much documentation, high standards of proof, complaints about "buzz words", belief that the factors do not measure aspects of work, and belief that those with exceptional writing skills and those that use the plan most frequently achieve better outcomes. While these issues cannot be avoided entirely, they can be mitigated.

The job evaluation factors must be designed in a manner, and be understood to be about, assessing full intent, not full content. This is not to say that documentation and evidence of level should not exist. There is a need for a certain test of reasonableness to occur to ensure the job meets the spirit of intent. The intent of the standards still has to be met and the decisions must be sufficiently transparent such that they can be explained if challenged.

Full Intent Not Full Content

Because certain responsibilities are not specifically spoken to in the factors, raters will sometimes desire the addition of new job evaluation factors. Such an approach is not only unnecessary, it leads to excessive wording.

Many words and phrases in the English language can be interpreted in different ways. More wording tends to result in differential interpretations, ultimately resulting in more literal application of the factors and creation of interpretation "rules" which may often be unwritten. These are "coping strategies" adopted by raters and may be unknown to each other.

In order to ensure the application of the level determinants are about determining how a job meets full intent of the rating level, this plan uses the concept of equivalencies, or alternately indicators. Each level with each factor consists of either a set of 2 equivalency statements supported by benchmark examples or, alternately, the level is determined by straight comparison of specific indicators to benchmark examples. This latter approach means there will be no written level determinants in the factor. This method is not new to job evaluation, nor to pay equity plans.

The use of indicators with benchmarks is the method used in the impact factor to assess the job's overall level of responsibility in comparison to other jobs. There are other methods to assess these indicators:

- a) Creation of independent factors for each of the indicators. This would require 6 additional factors, each with a number of level descriptions and requires the job to be assessed 6 times, fragmenting the job content into pieces along the lines of the specific responsibility. In this model, each level within each of the sub-factors has to be independently weighted. As some jobs involve more of some responsibility than others, and other jobs the reverse, there is generally widespread disagreement about the weighting equity.
- b) creation of definitions in each level that capture all the variable combinations of each of the indicators that could occur at each level. Each level would consist of several “OR” statements to capture the possibilities. Such an approach is used in the decision-making factor in the in-scope plan. With only 3 variables being assessed it has become difficult to understand.

These two alternatives are both more literal, more difficult to apply and tend to occupation-specific examples, increase documentation requirements, and lead to documentation and assessment of detail instead of intent.

The use of equivalence or indicators supported by benchmark descriptors enables the rater to determine under which factor an aspect of work should be assessed and enables the full assessment of all principle features of a job. In this style of plan there is no such thing as “the plan doesn’t measure that”.

Typical Nature and the Principle of Significant Difference

Jobs will not necessarily have the same types of roles indicated in the equivalency statement.

Jobs are designed to fill a particular set of responsibilities the organization needs performed and, as such, not all of the duties will be at same rating level within a job evaluation factor. It is therefore necessary to assess the level that reflects the typical nature or principle features of the job.

For example, some duties may require level 3 expertise while others perhaps level 4 or 5. While there is often a desire to evaluate a job at higher or lower levels based on occasional duties, a fundamental principle of job evaluation is to assess the typical nature of the job. There may also be instances where a job is assigned duties that only occur once in a while, such as year end activities or project work which consume a small aspect of the job’s time.

Despite the fact that in some cases these occasional duties may be at a lower level of work and in others a higher level, the overall level of the job should not fluctuate throughout the year.

In order to be more clear about how a job fits within a rating level, the level determinants must be as distinctly different from each other as possible. While this makes it somewhat easier to assess jobs, the downside is that jobs that are quite different may be rated only one level apart, on a given factor, and employees may see this as an inadequate difference.

However, if additional degree definitions are written into the factor in order to counter this, it becomes difficult to defend rating differences and leads to excessive interpretation, creation of application rules, and mis-application will still occur.

Having only a few level determinants within a factor for a wide range of occupations will be hard for some employees to understand. The overall evaluation of a job, on the other hand, comes from the combination of ratings on all factors.

Principle Features, Not Frequency

Meeting the full intent as opposed to full content requires comparison of the essence of the job, its principle features or primary responsibilities to the equivalency statements and determining at which level the typical nature of the work falls.

Jobs include variable combinations of duties that fit into the various rating levels within a job evaluation factor. For this reason, job evaluation is based upon the assignment of a factor rating that most closely approximates the typical nature or essence of the job.

There is often a misunderstanding that the job evaluation factors should measure every aspect/detail of jobs and it is therefore important to ensure that employees know the value of a job is determined through assessment of the job's principle nature and its overall role, not on the basis of occasional work or task detail.

There is a tendency to want to change a rating level if there is an increase or decrease in frequency of particular duties. For example, if a job performs certain communications responsibilities such as reaching agreements that are rated at level 3 and this role involves 20% of the job's time, an increase of this same duty to 40% does not change the rating level.

The responsibility is rated level 3 at 20% and is still level 3 if it takes up 40% of its time. The same applies if a different duty of the same level is assigned. If the job is required to reach level 3 type agreements and then is also assigned a different type of communication role which is also assessed at level 3, together these two roles still meet level 3. As such to change a rating based on an increase or decrease of frequency is double crediting and a form of bias.

It is also a form of bias to assess a job that very infrequently performs a duty at the same level as a job that performs that responsibility on a typical basis. If gradations were created on the basis of frequency measures, value disagreements arise as to what level of frequency warrants a distinction in level.

Frequency measures in job evaluation factors create requirements for inordinate amounts of documentation, increase the complexity of the job evaluation process, require guessing as to amounts of time spent, and as such estimates can be manipulated, contribute to the probability of inequitable treatment.

Assessing Typical Nature and Use of Benchmark Descriptors

The purpose of benchmark descriptors is to provide examples of work that represent the level determinants within a factor. They are not for the purpose of representing different types of work. They serve as a check on how the typical nature of duties or essence of the job relates to the particular equivalency statement or indicators in a factor.

As such, benchmark descriptors are concise summary statements of the principle features of a job and how they relate to the specific factor. They are not intended to capture attributes that do not impact on the rating level.

The number of benchmark descriptors should be kept to a minimum, as too many increases the complexity of the job evaluation system, makes maintenance of the plan difficult, and increases the potential for variations in application. Raters will have increased difficulty understanding all the benchmarks and the capacity of the system to function with integrity will be eroded if raters do not understand why the rating of a benchmark descriptor is different from a higher or lower benchmark.

Benchmark descriptors are necessary, in part, because there is a tendency for employees to want the plan to be “black and white” and not require judgment or interpretation. As the job evaluation factors/equivalency statements must be based on common, nonoccupation specific criteria, it is not possible to write enough variables to capture all the unique duties and responsibilities that exist in the myriad of government jobs, such that judgement and interpretation would not be required.

Moreover, the purpose of the job description is to outline responsibility in relation to the mandate/goals of the organization, not portray the job in the context of job evaluation criteria. Benchmark descriptors combined with equivalency statements or indicators enable consideration of the full content of any job.

Mitigating Perceptions of inequity and Maintaining integrity

Failure to address equity issues resulting from organizational change and removal of responsibilities was a common concern across line manager and employee focus groups.

There are some managers who feel that employees’ classification levels should never be adjusted downwards and those who believe they should have the right to reassign duties and lower employee’s rates of pay. Individuals expressed that they are unlikely to raise concerns within their department and rely on the Commission to monitor changes and initiate classification reviews directly.

While the Public Service Regulations require the Permanent Head to report changes in duties and responsibilities, some departments may from time to time adopt their own practices, ranging from not submitting upwards nor downwards changes, to submitting only if their employees express concern.

This very mixed practise can lead to confusion about what appropriate classifications might be for certain levels of responsibility and managers new to the organization consequently have difficulty understanding what the norms are.

Managers and employees view lack of attention to these matters as a fairness issue. Not addressing issues of over-classification creates an unfair advantage for another department in recruitment, enabling them to inappropriately promote staff from other departments. This type of internal competition for resources, brought about in part by departments being allowed to adopt their own practises, is to be avoided.

While the Commission encourages departments to seek determination of probable classification levels in advance of implementing major change a more proactive approach was viewed to be important.

In addition to change, a number of other practices contribute to perceptions of inequity:

- Advertisements may cause confusion regarding the overall role of the job. Most ads shorten the overall responsibilities of a job to a few specific points and are written to attract applicants. Because they do not reflect the total job, individuals comparing their jobs to the advertised job often view their job as larger because they are not seeing the full scope of responsibilities.
- The same is true in terms of how an employee or manager sees jobs that may be peers in an organization. While they may interact with these jobs and note some of the jobs responsibilities, they do not necessarily see the full scope of responsibilities.
- Some executive managers view jobs at the same organizational level to be worth the same amount of money with no reference to the overall responsibilities assigned.
- Managers from outside the public service will not be familiar with the job evaluation plan or how pay ranges are established in a large organization. They come with perceptions about the relative value of work based on past organizations and may have had more, or less, independence in determining pay.

Beyond the issue of equity, the classification plan works with Compensation to enable recruitment and retention. The combination of the classification plan and the policies and practises associated with compensation are a formal accountability mechanism regarding expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

In a public accountability context, rigor is required in managing the plan and ensuring there is documentation of any rationale for stepping outside of salary structure to address market.

Our ability to maintain confidence in both sides of this equation requires that we get the classification decisions right to begin with. Skilled, experienced classification staff are necessary to achieve this.

The need for responsiveness, the expectation of greater departmental and/or occupational involvement, the need to enable managers to manage work assignments through job redesign, combined with the need for a simpler and better understood plan all suggest that capacity of departmental human resource staff and line managers is also important.

Such expertise is only obtained through practical application of the plan in a coaching environment. Limited departmental resources and turnover require ongoing orientation programs be made available to new managers and that human resource personnel receive training inclusive of practical application.

Differential Worth and Alignment with Equal Pay Principles

As the purpose of job evaluation is to differentiate the value of one job relative to another, only those characteristics that contribute to differentiating one job from another need be assessed.

There are many attributes of work that do not differentiate the value of one job from another. These include: responsibilities that are basic expectation in all out-of-scope positions (e.g. tact, courteousness); duties that are commensurate with the job's role such that assessing them would create a double credit; and behaviours which are related to performance and therefore not part of the assessment of job content (e.g. innovative behaviour might be considered in performance evaluation but not in assessment of job content).

Following are some of the issues that have arisen over time.

1. Service Integration

Service integration is the responsibility to ensure coordination of service delivery with other organizations or work units.

As positions have no direct authority to change methods of work in another organization or work unit, service integration is achieved by influencing and as such is measured in a job's communication role.

2. Teamwork

a) Definition

Any form of organized cooperation that brings people together for the purpose of achieving a common goal is a team.

Working together cooperatively is a basic expectation of every employee and therefore not a value that distinguishes the relative value of one job assignment from another.

A manager who expects good quality decision making should expect any individual charged with achieving specific outcomes to involve others that are affected, in other words, to achieve their own form of organized cooperation.

b) Teams and Individual Responsibility

Individuals must have an assigned responsibility to contribute to a common outcome for the concept of a team to exist.

Within a team, any set of duties could be assigned to any individual and team members could have very different assignments.

Individuals on any given team may have a mixture of duties relating to both their home assignment and the team's project.

Participation (as opposed to being the project lead) on inter-branch, or inter-agency committees, task, or project teams does not normally represent a change in the value of the job. For the most part this is viewed as assignment of equivalent level, especially if the role is to "represent" the home work unit, particularly where the individual is assigned to project teams in order to bring their level of expertise.

3. Leadership

There are a couple of different ways of looking at the dichotomy between management and leadership.

In one sense, management can be viewed to be about things (timeliness, quality of work, processes, procedures, etc.) whereas leadership is about people (creating a sense of vision, motivating, coaching, etc.).

All out-of-scope employees, whether they have direct line staff responsibility or not, have managerial responsibilities – i.e., responsibilities for processes, etc. and all have leadership roles of some type.

In a sense, with the exception of conditions of work, all factors are measuring components of leadership/management. Criteria of these matters are characteristic of all out-of-scope positions.

Another way of looking at it is to view leadership and management as two ends of a continuum:

1. Autocratic - Where the manager makes the majority of operating and policy decisions and frequently checks up on decisions and achievements of staff. Typically, this model is used where staff are new to the organization, however, it is normal that as staff become more experienced, the managerial control will progress toward the participative model.

2. Participative - Staff make the majority of operating decisions, seek advice from each other on areas of expertise, use their own judgement as to when to take problems to the manager and contribute to policy decisions. The leader reserves the right to intervene, involves staff in a participatory and consensus manner and retains accountability.

Within the same work unit, a manager's style needs to be different with different individuals based on capability. The job evaluation plan does not distinguish jobs based on leadership style as it should fluctuate from employee to employee.

4. Public Involvement

Public involvement is defined as involving the public in the decision making process of government. This can range from advising the public of decisions, to soliciting their input, to jointly developing the decisions as equal partners.

Such involvement may be of varying degrees of influence and is measured in the communication factor.

5. Authority/Independence/Empowerment/Decision-Making

The degree of authority a position has to act independently of its supervisor (empowerment) is commensurate with role and responsibility within the context of the organization. The degree of independence allowed is often a function of the style adopted by the position's immediate manager, and changes from one person to the next. The classification level of a job should not be subject to change based on different managerial style.

6. Accountability

Individuals are held accountable for achievement of results, or for how these results are achieved. Holding someone accountable results from performance assessment. The level of accountability is commensurate with the role and responsibility within the context of the organization.

7. Recommendations

All positions are expected to make recommendations to improve service. As such, the responsibility to make recommendations does not differentiate one job from another.

8. Knowledge-based pay/Incumbent's Knowledge

The concept of knowledge-based pay has given rise to confusion with respect to how compensation should be attached to job assignments. At its worst, one would pay based on the knowledge that the person possesses, irrespective of the assigned duties.

As an extreme example, this would mean paying the labourer on the highways crew, who happens to have a Phd in psychology, as a psychologist.

Argument is often made that the specialized education possessed by an individual should be compensated at a higher level. Specialized knowledge must first be needed by the organization and for differential pay to exist, there needs to be some identifiable difference in assignment. If this is the case, the assignment can be defined and evaluated at a different level by the job evaluation plan.

9. Experience

Direct measures of years of experience assume a correlation between years of service and quality of judgement. Quality of judgement, though it may be obtained through experience, is a performance measure, not a job evaluation measure.

There are other difficulties associated with measuring years of experience: individuals may obtain the required level of judgement earlier or later than the stated length of time; experience requirements tend to be lengthened or reduced with recruitment and retention difficulty; experience measures become a systemic barrier where assignments could otherwise be restructured to provide employment equity opportunities.

10. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is expected of all employees and all public servants swear an oath of confidentiality.

There are no degrees of confidentiality, either you maintain a confidence, or you do not. The skill and responsibility to maintain a confidence is the same, thus we cannot differentiate one job from another on this basis.

11. Workload

Workload fluctuation is not measured. Job evaluation based on fluctuation measures would have several negatives for employees:

1. Decreases in "workload" would result in downward reclasses;
2. Increases in staffing levels would cause downward reclasses;
3. "Workload" cannot be fairly measured from one occupation to another;
4. A perception of "workload" can be created whether or not it exists.
5. Would reward those that procrastinate, are poorly organized, have difficulty prioritizing, delegating or are unconcerned about work and family balance and would require documentation of excess leaves or some other

assessment of workload.

12. Stress

The stress an individual feels cannot be directly or fairly measured.

One person may thrive with many stimuli, while another with the exact same duties, may not be able to cope adequately. Further, stress can even vary for the individual, based on an individual's mood on a particular day. Conditions which cause stress may be assessed.

13. Consequence of Error

Error is the result of poor judgment. Most job evaluation plans have ceased to measure consequence of error as the measures usually deteriorate to a consideration of the worst-case scenario of what might occur, in the event of inadequate performance. As such, job evaluation assesses the impact that occurs if the job is done effectively.

14. Ongoing Learning

Ongoing learning is a requirement of all jobs and is commensurate with the nature of the assignment. It includes keeping current in the field of study, learning new programs, policies, practices and systems application used to perform the work, etc. It is virtually impossible to quantify the ongoing learning requirements of one occupation, relative to other occupations in the context of an ever-changing environment.

15. Courtesy, tact and diplomacy are a basic expectation of all employees and are part of level 1 communication responsibility.

16. Change management is a basic expectation of all employees and is also commensurate with the levels of role and responsibility.

17. Mentoring of others is an ongoing expectation of all employees as the need and opportunity arise.