

Secretarial Job Classification Factors Guidance Document

This guidance document is intended to clarify the eight job factors on the Secretarial Job Classification Factors matrix. Each of the eight job factors represents one component of the job, and is progressively laid out (from 4D to 4A) to illustrate a position's scope, accountability, and impact on Northern Michigan University. This document is intended to provide guidance regarding what is common at the various levels for each factor, however, is not all inclusive. Important things to note as you consider the factors:

- 1) Selections on the factor sheet need to be based on the job and not the person. An incumbent may periodically contribute at different levels or bring different skills which make that individual more or less effective in the position, but the purpose of the factor sheet is to define the position requirements. This is how HR must review the position to ensure consistency and fairness across the unit. How a position is ultimately classified should not be taken personally.
- 2) Although not specifically noted in each section, the higher-level classification is expected to be able to perform the duties of the lower level classifications.
- 3) Not all descriptors within a specific job factor, e.g. decision making/independent action at a specific level (4B) may be relevant to the position. Therefore, a position may have the first descriptor selected in the 4B classification and the second descriptor selected in the 4C classification. If a selection falls between classifications, please circle between the relevant descriptors, e.g., between the 4B and 4C. Human Resources will follow up to discuss your thinking regarding the selections you have made.
- 4) It is not likely that a position will have all the factors under one classification circled. Positions don't typically fall neatly into one classification.

Level of Constituent Supported

The level of constituent supported differentiates between various types of office structures. It ranges from working in a group setting with other clerical workers to independently supporting management at the department head level. It also accounts for providing support for multiple departments.

- **4D** – This classification reflects a position that may be one of a few clerical positions in an office. The position may receive functional guidance from another clerical staff member.
- **4C** – This classification reflects a position that may be one of a few clerical staff in the department, but the position may work more independently and not have a readily-identifiable backup during their absence.
- **4B** – At this level, the position provides assistance to management for a specific function and provides support for the department.
- **4A** – Expected to work **independently** and also supports management at the department head level or above. This includes being self-directed in accomplishing both short- and long-term tasks. The position may also provide support for two or more totally separate departments reporting to different department heads. This goes beyond

providing services to another department. The last bullet in this classification refers to providing support for intra-department teams. This would extend beyond working with the employees within the department and include working to support a cross-functional team or committee to meet project goals or outcomes.

Supervision

The level of supervision as well as the specific positions being supervised are key components of the supervision factor. At the upper end of the classification framework, responsibilities associated with training staff are also a factor.

- **4D** – This position does not have supervisory responsibilities, other than occasionally assisting in supervising student staff.
- **4C** – This position is responsible for supervising student and/or temporary staff and may participate in the student worker selection process (but is not the primary decision maker in the selection).
- **4B** – For this classification, the position provides minimal functional guidance to other clerical employee(s). For offices with only one clerical employee, the position may be responsible for hiring, training and supervising student staff.
- **4A** – At this level, the position is responsible for providing daily functional guidance to other clerical employee(s). This would include directing the job duties and timing in order to complete department tasks.

Decision Making/Independent Action

Progression through the classification framework for this factor is dependent upon the degree of independence and the impact that decisions have on the department, college or university.

- **4D** – Actions and decisions are largely constrained by well-defined practices, procedures, or office protocols and the position receives direct supervision. Decisions made or actions of the position have minimal adverse effect on the department.
- **4C** – This classification also has well-defined practices, procedures or protocols, however, there is some limited decision-making when administering or adhering to the established processes. The decisions made could have an adverse effect on the department's short-term objectives (6 months or less).
- **4B** – A higher level of independent decision-making responsibilities while still working within University or departmental guidelines. The guidelines may provide a basic framework, but also demand some independent judgment and interpretation. An error at this level could adversely affect not only the department but the college's/university's medium-term (6-12 months) or long-term objectives (over one year).
- **4A** – The position is expected to use independent judgment in order to resolve unanticipated or non-recurring issues. This would include situations that differ from pre-established guidelines or where there isn't past practice to rely on in making the decision. Decisions could have adverse outcomes for the entire university or significant impact on the department's or college's image with external constituents (beyond students and parents). Examples could include impact with external agencies regarding accreditation/compliance/graduation.

Budgetary Responsibilities

Budgetary responsibilities vary widely across campus. While the financial manager has ultimate accountability for the budget outcomes of each department, many TOP positions are involved with budget monitoring and may make recommendations which directly impact budget planning and potential cost savings.

- **4D** – The position has no budget involvement.
- **4C** – Expected to be familiar with the University's financial policies and procedures. This could include expense reporting, purchasing and requisition policies, credit card usage, and check requests. This could also include generating basic reports for others to review.
- **4B** – Responsible for processing various budget transactions and also monitoring budget reports. This could include preparing new financial reports and spreadsheets, following up on expenses and accounting corrections, pointing out budget anomalies or progress towards the plan, and making suggestions regarding budget issues.
- **4A** – Plays an integral role in the budget monitoring process. This includes involvement in the budget planning process, actively monitoring spending for multiple department budgets on a monthly or project basis, and making significant recommendations regarding cost savings (at or above 5% of total budget) and future spending plans.

Office Administration/Operations

Office administration covers the functional expertise associated with completing office-related responsibilities. This progressive listing of duties includes the types of tasks that would be associated with similar jobs at a wide variety of workplaces.

- **4D** – Has basic knowledge of department operations which includes customer service, office equipment, supplies, filing, communications, and scheduling meetings and other calendaring tasks. Responsible for using existing department computer programs/systems.
- **4C** – This position initiates documents/forms, establishes filing systems, and assists faculty/staff with organizing department projects, events, meetings or programs. Ensures all department office equipment is maintained. Utilizes new department computer programs/systems as they are implemented.
- **4B** – Serves as primary support for an entire large department or unit. Takes primary responsibility for the entire functioning of the office and applies broad functional expertise to departmental operations. Expected to troubleshoot office equipment, establish and maintain complex filing systems, independently order department supplies without supervisory approval, and make independent decisions in regard to organizing logistics for department programs, events and meetings. May also be responsible for webpage design and maintenance. In addition to department computer technologies or systems, operates University-wide systems.
- **4A** – Demonstrates cross-functional knowledge of inter-departmental operation and broad understanding of several related areas of campus or student services. Expected to create reports based on department needs (not run canned reports) and maintain complex reports to discuss with the supervisor for broad-based decision-making or budgetary purposes.

Policy and Procedure Application

All employees are expected to understand the policies and procedures that are relevant for their position. This factor addresses the extent to which this knowledge varies across the classifications.

- **4D** – Expected to be aware of all relevant department policies and procedures and be able to apply those policies and procedures to daily work activities.
- **4C** – Includes awareness of University policies and procedures beyond those of the specific department. At this level, the position would be responsible for training student workers on relevant policies and procedures.
- **4B** – Responsible for training faculty and staff based on a thorough understanding of applicable department and university policies and procedures. Examples may include the Concur expense reporting system, the talent management system used for recruiting and/or performance management, student registration and grading procedures, class and room scheduling, etc. The position ensures that all department employees with a need to know are aware of applicable policies and procedures. Also provides input on operational functions and procedures in order to improve services and increase efficiencies.
- **4A** – This classification makes recommendations/improvements based on an extensive understanding of policies and procedures. This could include working with IT on automating department/university tasks or processes to streamline or create efficiencies. At this level, training responsibilities would extend beyond the department employees to other stakeholders and would be provided on a consistent and regular basis.

Involvement in Continuous Improvement/Initiatives

This factor acknowledges the involvement and input that TOP members have regarding decisions which affect their work. For this category, the 4A and 4B selections are not as common. Note that the language selected for this classification should be based on the on-going expectations of a particular level of involvement and not a one-time occurrence.

- **4D** – Limited involvement in continuous improvement initiatives. At this level, the position may be responsible for suggesting improvements which benefit their own area or department. Outcomes may include improved reporting, more efficient work flow, increased productivity, increased customer/student satisfaction or expense savings/ cost avoidance.
- **4C** – May involve joint projects that are inter- or intra-departmental, e.g., actively involved in specific committees which benefit the entire department, its clients/customers and/or an additional two departments. May be most relevant for those who regularly attend standing committees, etc. Outcomes may include fewer process handoffs within or across departments, cost reductions or avoidance (<\$1,000), and/or better data and/or information sharing.
- **4B** – For this classification, examples may include providing recommendations that result in a significant reduction in the time required for processing or outcomes, cost reductions or avoidance (<\$2,500), and/or impact on three or more departments. This is an active level of participation in which the position's presence or absence on the committee or team has a significant impact on the group's decisions or outcomes.

Examples have included automating/streamlining processes that have impacted multiple departments and provided quicker services to students.

- **4A** – Position has a significant impact on campus-wide initiatives and activities. Results might include suggesting improvements which are a benefit to the **entire campus**, significant cost reductions or avoidance (>\$2,500), and/or campus-wide impact felt by more than 100 employees. Examples of this include serving as TOP representative on the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee, or recommending automating processes that significantly reduce costs and processing time impacting a significant number of employees.

Customer Service

This job factor assesses the extent of assistance that is expected to be provided to other employees or external stakeholders.

- **4D** – Expected to greet visitors or callers, assess the need presented, and in most cases refer the individual to appropriate personnel. Must have a good awareness of the services provided by the department and be able to answer basic or recurring questions.
- **4C** – Deeper level of expertise and knowledge related to department programs or activities. Has a clear understanding of how to resolve common problems or questions and be able to assess the need to refer to others within or outside of the department. An awareness of other departments is also necessary in order to redirect customers. In an academic department, general responses to program requirements or course information may be an expectation.
- **4B** – The responsibility for degree advising and course selection resides with the faculty, however, positions at the 4B classification level may be involved with addressing front-line student questions. Examples may include providing guidance to students regarding different undergraduate and graduate degree programs or providing information regarding course options in the event of course cancellation or closure. On the staff side, this position must have extensive information regarding departmental activities and services. Must be able to independently address and resolve issues of medium complexity for internal customers including non-recurring solutions that don't have established guidelines or past practice as a reference.
- **4A** – This level includes non-recurring external constituents beyond university faculty, staff, students, and parents. Must be able to effectively resolve complex problems which may have a systemic root cause. Has broad latitude within the parameters established by the department to independently resolve issues or concerns with minimal or no supervision expected.

Minimum Qualifications

Although this factor addresses the specific knowledge and experience required for the position, it is included as part of the position description because it helps to provide an assessment of the length and complexity required to effectively perform the job duties. Although an incumbent may have significantly more experience or education than that position requires, this factor emphasizes the minimum required for an incoming employee to satisfactorily perform the job. The required minimum work experience will be based upon the level of the position. For example, if the position is classified as a 4B because a majority of the factor selections are in

the 4B column, the required minimum experience will automatically be three years. Maintaining consistency with the required years of work experience for each classification allows current TOP employees to qualify for a different position at the same level.

Managers do have the ability to select required education level for the position, if desired.

Please note that the education level can be selected in lieu of the required work experience but not in addition to work experience. If you select the education listed for the appropriate level of the position, the minimum qualification will be noted as work experience or education.

- **4D** – This is an entry-level position. The incoming employee does not need related work experience and can learn on-the-job. A high school degree or GED is required for this and all other higher classifications.
- **4C** – The incoming employee must have at least one year of office-related work experience. The examples listed aren't intended to be a complete list of relevant work experience. Although the selected candidate may have considerably more experience, only one year of experience is required for the position. One year of coursework leading to an Associate's Degree may be substituted for one year of office-related work experience, if selected.
- **4B** – An incoming employee at the 4B classification must have at least three years of progressive office work experience. The 4B requirement emphasizes the need for **progressive** office experience which would require a variety of experiences over at least three years. The person would need to be familiar with a wide range of office situations, particularly with regard to dealing with customers and supporting a department. An Associate's Degree or two years coursework leading to a Bachelor's Degree may be substituted for three years' progressive office work experience, if selected.
- **4A** – A minimum of five years of progressive office work experience is required for the 4A classification. This would include providing support for management and a substantial degree of independence in the oversight of the office operations. A Bachelor's Degree can be selected in lieu of the five years of progressive office experience, if selected.