



HR Broadcast

CLASSIFICATION AUDITS

A classification audit, often called a desk audit, is a tool used by classifiers to gather information about jobs. By contributing to the classifier's knowledge of how jobs function, audits help assure that positions are properly classified. Audits are conducted for a variety of reasons including, a position has changed over time; OPM has issued a new standard; or managers have asked for help in identifying areas of improvement, organizational structure and position management.

A classification audit is a review of the duties and responsibilities comprising a position. In most cases, an audit is a conversation or a series of conversations about the position. It is a fact finding mission, with the HR Classification Specialist asking most of the questions and the incumbent and/or the incumbent's supervisor providing most of the answers.

The three primary types of classification audits are paper review, desk audit, and supervisory audit.

The HR Classification Specialist and the incumbent are the primary players in the audit process, although the incumbent's supervisor and/or other subject matter experts might also be interviewed. Additional information on audits can be found at:

www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/classification/audits.html

Coming in the April Issue:

- ❖ More FAQ's on USAJOBS
- ❖ Required Appointment Documents
- ❖ How CSRS annuity is calculated



The Benefits Buzz

Your FERS Retirement Benefit: How is your Basic Annuity Calculated?

It is important to know for retirement planning how much your Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) basic benefit will be. **The amount of your benefit is based on your years and months of creditable service and your highest three years of salary.**

Your high 3 average salary is usually your last 3 years of Federal service, but it could be any 3 consecutive years that give you the largest rate of basic pay.

FERS, enacted in 1987, is a three-tiered system, which means that FERS employees participate in 3 programs: FERS (a defined benefit plan), Social Security, and the Thrift Savings Plan (a defined contribution plan).

The FERS Basic Annuity Formula: $1\% \times \text{High 3} \times \text{Years of Service}$ OR If age 62 with 20 years of service: $1.1\% \times \text{High 3} \times \text{Years of Service}$.

As a result, under FERS, employees have the power to make up the difference by contributing more to their Thrift Savings Plan accounts and taking advantage of the agency matching TSP contributions for FERS employees.

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Your annual personal benefits statement provided by NFC each spring, gives you an idea of your basic annuity amount, and when you are within a few years of retirement eligibility, your Benefits Specialist can provide you with a more accurate computation. If you have any questions about creditable service or retirement benefits, please contact your servicing Benefits Specialist:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/employee_directory/benefits.html

FEDERAL INCOME TAX W-4

Employees who claimed an exemption from Federal tax last year and who do not expect to owe any taxes this year must file a **NEW W-4** claiming exempt status **BEFORE FEBRUARY 15 (PP 4)** of each year. Otherwise, tax withholdings will automatically be based on a determination of single with zero exemptions. No adjustment will be made to reimburse employees for taxes withheld at the single rate.

AD 581, LUMP SUM PAYMENT FOR LEAVE OR COMPENSATORY TIME

The AD-581 and a leave audit, completed using Form AD-717, **should be submitted** no later than one pay period after the employee separates. This will help ensure timely payment of the lump sum. **If the AD-581 is not received after 2 requests from the Processing unit, the processing assistant will use a current accounting code and the leave balances in the system to pay out the lump sum.**



USAJOBS Pointers

Q: What are some helpful hints when applying for a job with the Federal government?

A: The following are the most frequent omissions made by applicants for Federal jobs. These errors often result in the applicant being excluded from consideration. Please take the time to review this list. You may use it as a basic checklist when reviewing your application(s) for future announcements.

Because Federal agencies are required to prorate your experience when making qualification determinations, it is necessary for you to provide **complete employment dates (month/year at a minimum) and work schedules (indicate "full-time" or average hours worked per week) for all periods of employment.** Failure to include this information will exclude this experience from being considered in the qualifications determination and may result in disqualification.

Detailed descriptions of your duties for all previous employment must be provided. We may not assume qualifying experience on the basis of "job title", employer, or employment type. We may only credit experience specifically described.

Transcripts must be submitted, if requested in the announcement, if there is an education requirement, or if you are qualifying for the job based on your education. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.