

Supervisor Guide for UAW Office Professional Position Audit

Michigan Technological University has entered into a formal agreement with the UAW to represent office professional employees on campus. The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, hours, and working conditions; to establish the machinery for collective bargaining; and to promote orderly and peaceful labor relations between the University and its employees. To the above end, it is the intent of the parties to abide by the terms of this Agreement at all times.

The Bargaining Unit shall have sole collective bargaining jurisdiction over all work within each of the positions covered by this Agreement and members of the Bargaining Unit shall have the right to perform the duties and responsibilities for each position covered by this Agreement as set forth in paragraph 3. It is recognized that certain office professional work which is the same or similar to that which is performed by employees in the bargaining unit has and may continue to be performed by employees who are excluded from the bargaining unit.

Additionally, non-bargaining personnel may perform work in any of these positions temporarily, in emergencies or for the purpose of training, but not on any regular or scheduled basis and such work should not eliminate a position covered by this Agreement. It is understood that supervisory, administrative, and student employees will not be used to replace a bargaining unit employee on a permanent basis.

The UAW contract can be found at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/laborrel/index.uaw.html>.

This guide has been prepared to assist supervisors of UAW office professionals in the completion of the Position Audit Form. (Please note that there is a separate guide for office professionals to aid in completing the audit form.)

It is very important to understand that it is the position that is being audited and not the person. It is true that the person in a particular position may change that position. However, the knowledge, skills, and responsibilities required by the position are assessed by this tool. This tool and process are meant to look at a position as a whole. Some positions will not fill in any information for a particular area because that knowledge and those skills and responsibilities are not required for that position. This is not intended to penalize the person in the position or the position – what is required for the position is what matters in this context.

There is now a Supervisor's Comments/Signature Form document that you must complete and include with the position audit form when it is returned to Human Resources. It is available on the web at _____. All sections except the signature can be filled out on-line. It is a Microsoft Word document and can be saved to your computer. You will need to decide which signature line to complete. One indicates that you agree to the accuracy and completeness of the sections completed by the employee; the other indicates that you disagree with the contents as presented.

The next step in the process is an audit interview with a designee from Human Resources with the employee and their supervisor to gather additional information about the position. Specific questions will be asked about knowledge, skills, and responsibilities referenced in the audit form. Your office professional is encouraged to bring samples of their work to the interview. The interview is your opportunity to clarify, elaborate, and explain the position and responsibilities in an informal setting.

Remember that submitting an audit form to Human Resources initiates the audit process and is not just a 'test to see what might happen'. If it is determined that the position is actually at a lower level, it will be reclassified as such, however the employee's annual salary shall be maintained.

Employees need to provide supporting information for each of the categories on the form. Incomplete information may result in the employee being asked to provide additional information prior to the audit interview.

Audit Results

Should the audit process reveal that the employee is misclassified, the University may either discontinue assigning the employee those duties and responsibilities found not to be inherent in her/his current classification, or reclassify her/him to the particular position determined by the audit process to be proper. If

reclassified to a position in a higher pay grade effective with the first pay period following the date at which the Position Audit Request was submitted, the employee's annual salary shall be increased by the amount specified in the contract.

Below are some areas of the form that will require special attention from you:

As a supervisor, it is your responsibility to review the information in the audit form and verify its accuracy. If the information listed on the form is not required for the position, it should be addressed with the employee prior to submission of the form.

Impact of Actions – Employee may need your assistance in assessing this factor. Please take the opportunity to help your office professional understand the impact their actions have, not only on your department, but the University as a whole.

Supervision of Others – This section deals only with formal assignment of responsibility for supervising other employees. Do not list informal working relationships or temporary assignments.

Please direct questions about the form or the process to Becky Christianson in Human Resources.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Office Professional Audit Process

POSITION INFORMATION

How is the level of a position determined?

Office professional positions are classified based on the duties and responsibilities assigned and exercised. In addition, the position's level is based on knowledge required for the position, work direction received, decision making, organizational impact of actions, supervision of others, software or other technology required by the position, key contacts, and access and relationship to sensitive and/or confidential information. Each area has been assigned a point value. Based on responses on the audit form and an interview with a representative from Human Resources, points are totaled for each of the areas to arrive at the position's level.

What factors are not considered in the reclassification of a position?

Below are examples of person-related factors that are **not** taken into account when reclassifying a position.

- **Longevity/Length of Service** – If an employee has been in a particular position for an extended period of time, longevity and length of service are not considered as factors for reclassification.
- **Financial Need** – The reclassification process does not take personal financial conditions into consideration.
- **Dedication/Performance** – We value dedicated employees who are competent, capable, experienced, and loyal. Although these characteristics are admirable, they are not considered in reclassification.
- **Change in Workload** – An increase in the workload for the duties required of the position does not necessarily mean that it's time for an audit.
- **Relationship to the University and/or Supervisor** – A good working relationship between employee and supervisor is productive, but that rapport is not considered as part of the audit process.
- **Employee Retention** – Reclassification should not be the mechanism to retain an employee within the department if a position has not changed or evolved over time.

Why can't the supervisor just move a position to a higher level?

The UAW contract does not allow this.

UAW CONTRACT INFORMATION

What are the union requirements around the audit process?

See the contract at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/laborrel/audits.html>.

How can I reward my office professional for excellent performance? Can't I just give them more money?

Because the UAW office professionals have a contract with Michigan Tech, there is no mechanism in place for merit salary increases. You may want to consider non-monetary rewards for your office professional (training, for example). Check with the Affirmative Programs Office or the CPDQI for additional information.

Why can't the supervisor initiate the audit process?

According to UAW contract language, the employee must initiate the audit process.

How can office professionals get a raise if their position is at the level where it belongs?

There is no mechanism for office professionals to get an increase in their level of pay other than the longevity as provided for in the UAW contract.

Can a supervisor stop an audit from going forward?

No, a supervisor cannot stop an audit from proceeding. Refer to language in the UAW contract.

AUDIT PROCESS

As a supervisor, how do I know when a position should go through an audit?

You should encourage your office professional to consider reclassification when:

- their responsibilities have evolved over time
- there has been a reorganization that impacts their position
- there has been a transfer or redelegation of duties/responsibilities from another position
- there have been significant changes in their supervisory responsibility
- there have been significant changes in knowledge and skills required to perform their job
- there have been significant changes in their scope of assignments and/or responsibilities
- functions have been added to their position that were not previously performed
- there has been a change in complexity of problems or assignments required for their position

What role does a supervisor play in the audit process? How can I help my office professional get their position upgraded?

The role of a supervisor in the audit process can range from reviewing and signing a completed audit form to assisting the employee in filling out the form. It depends on the relationship between supervisor and employee and level of comfort completing the form. You can encourage your office professional to complete an audit form. You can offer to assist when requested. It is up to the employee to complete the form. You can't fill it out for them.

Can I submit feedback from others or letters of reference as part of the audit process?

Feedback from others and letters of reference will not be considered during the audit process. Remember that this is not an appraisal of the employee's performance, but an evaluation of the position's classification.

As a manager, is there some place to go to see if additional responsibilities would result in upgrade?

Because many aspects of a position change over time, the only way to look at the whole position is for the employee to go through an audit. Human Resources will not perform a 'pre-audit' for positions.

Can I get my office professional's audit score?

No you can't. The office professional does not have access to the result either. People are under the impression that if they 'just did this' or 'just supervised someone', they would get the points they needed to go up a level or two. It is very unlikely that a slight change in just one area would move a position to a higher level. Remember that the audit takes a look at the whole position and its relationship to other positions across the university.

What happens during the interview with someone from Human Resources?

Both the employee and supervisor are invited to come to the interview. The HR professional will have already reviewed the form submitted by the employee and will ask questions to gain additional information and clarify some of the information submitted. The office professional may bring examples of work that represents their duties and responsibilities.

I have heard that there are positions that have been classified downward. How many positions have had that result?

Since 1999, there have not been any positions that have been reclassified downward. Of the 57 positions that were audited since 1999, seven (7) were already classified at the correct level, 38 went up one level, and 12 went up two levels (data as of March 11, 2004).

If the position is upgraded, what will be the cost to my budget?

If a position is reclassified to a higher pay grade, the employee's annual salary shall be increased by an amount specified in the contract or to the minimum of the pay grade for the new classification, whichever is greater. The increase is effective the first day of the pay period following receipt of the audit form by Human Resources.

What happens if my department doesn't have the money to upgrade a position and the audit indicates that the position is at a higher level?

If your department doesn't have the budget to support an upgrade, then enough duties and responsibilities will need to be taken away from your office professional to move the position to the appropriate level. It is important that this is coordinated with Human Resources to make sure that duties removed go to another UAW office professional position.

Is there a central pool available for positions that have been upgraded if my department doesn't have the money to upgrade a position?

There is no central pool of money available for upgraded positions. The money needs to come from your departmental budget.

What if the position isn't upgraded? What can I do?

If the position isn't upgraded, it means that it was already classified at the correct level. Please help your employee to realize that it is not a reflection on them or their performance. The audit is not a measure of their performance. Levels are reflective of knowledge and skills for duties and responsibilities, decision making, impact of actions, independence of action, responsibility for the work of others, scope of contacts/customer service, sensitive/confidential information, and depth of software utilization.

AUDIT FORM

Can an office professional complete the audit form on work time?

It is up to the discretion of the supervisor and should be worked out with the employee. A supervisor is not required to allow the audit form to be completed on work time.

If there is something that an office professional doesn't do (for example, supervise anyone), why are they penalized for that?

The purpose of classifying positions is not to penalize anyone, nor reward anyone for anything. It is the position that is being audited, not the employee or their performance. The audit determines the appropriate level for a position based on the duties and responsibilities of the position.

How can the same tool be used for both academic and administrative areas? Are the factors weighted differently for different positions?

There are a variety of positions within academic areas and similar diversity within positions in administrative areas. It is the job of Human Resources to establish equity across positions within the classification system. Since all positions need to be treated equally and fairly, the same tool and factor values are used for all positions.

I have heard that there are 'magic words' that can be used to get a position classified at a higher level. What are those words?

There are no 'magic words' to move a position to a higher level. Classification levels are based on the duties and responsibilities assigned and exercised.

How does volume count in the audit?

Volume, per se, does not 'count' in the auditing of a position. The effect of volume on complexity of a position will be considered.

What resources are available to office professionals to help them fill out the audit form?

As a supervisor, you should be the first resource for your office professional. There are members of the office professional group who are willing to work with those who are completing audit forms. Also, direct your employee to (list web site here) to access the Audit Form Guide for Office Professionals.

Why doesn't the form use 'percentage of effort' instead of frequency of duties and responsibilities?

It is difficult to determine percentage of effort for each duty across campus, especially since many duties and responsibilities are cyclical in nature. If one of your duties only occurs once each semester, it may be difficult for you to associate a percentage with that duty.

Are there completed audit forms (where the employee was successfully reclassified) available?

The completed form and the interview establish the position's classification level. Every position is unique and your form should accurately represent your position. It is a misconception that using information from someone else's form will get you an upgrade.

Does the audit serve as a performance appraisal?

The audit process does not provide information that would be found in a performance appraisal. The purpose of the audit process is to appropriately determine the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for a particular position. Employees or supervisors may request a performance evaluation. Both parties must agree and complete the request form. The evaluation becomes part of the employee's personnel file.

How are the criteria weighted?

Each of the areas is given a particular percentage of points. Those percentages are the same for every UAW position in order to treat positions in a similar manner. Criteria include knowledge and skills for duties and responsibilities, decision making, impact of actions, independence of action, responsibility for the work of others, scope of contacts/customer service, sensitive/confidential information, and depth of software utilization.

Why can't an office professional get any credit for additional learning (computer classes or sessions attended)?

Functions performed within the position are what are audited, not what the person brings to the position.

There are many resources available to office professionals who are completing an audit form, including you, as their supervisor, and this guide. Please direct questions to the Classification/Compensation office in Human Resources.