

## **2. GLOSSARY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE MASTER STANDARD**

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### **Introduction**

1. The six factors of the Master Standard are designed to measure the relative importance of jobs - not individuals - within an organization (organization refers to an autonomous body of the United Nations common system, often constitutionally and administratively separate from other organizations that make up the United Nations family). These factors have been selected in order to ascertain the appropriate grade levels of all jobs in the Professional and higher categories within the various organizations of the common system. Each factor, with the exception of Factor 1, consists of two elements, one presented as a horizontal element reflecting one aspect of the factor and one presented as a vertical element reflecting another aspect of the same factor. Each element has several levels or sub-elements and where they intersect on the horizontal and vertical line an appropriate score is derived. This is the score of the factor. The total point rating for a particular job falls within a point range which indicates the grade for the job.

### **I. FACTOR I - PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED**

2. This is the only three-dimensional factor. In applying this factor, the level of theoretical knowledge required by the job (i.e., the horizontal element) is identified first. Then the requirements of the job in terms of the level of practical experience in applying that theoretical knowledge (i.e., the vertical element) are determined. The box corresponding to the two elements is identified. Finally, depending on the language knowledge requirements of the job (i.e., the third element) the point value is chosen from among the three values indicated in that box. If proficiency in one language is required, the lowest score is allocated. The middle score is given for the requirement of proficiency in two languages and the highest score for the requirements of proficiency in three languages.

3. For job classification purposes, credit is given only for the minimum knowledge and experience required to perform the work after a brief period of orientation. Requirements for recruitment for the position reflect long-range human resources planning objectives and may be different from the job classification credit. In applying this factor, a clear distinction should be made between the recruitment policy of the organization and the job classification credit, which is based on the minimum qualifications required to perform the work as described in the duty statement of the job under review. For example, performing the duties of a particular job might require the knowledge and skills developed by a first-level university degree and proficiency in one language. For the same position, the recruitment requirements might be an advanced degree and two languages, in consideration of the organization's career and human resources requirements. Thus, the important consideration in the application of this factor is the nature of the work to be performed.

### **A. Horizontal - Theoretical: knowledge required**

4. Theoretical knowledge refers to the knowledge of the theories, concepts and, principles relevant to a discipline or field obtained through systematic study, professional reading, and/or the conduct of original research.
  - a. Level 1. Knowledge at first university degree level: The work requires theoretical knowledge gained through an educational programme leading to certification of qualifications, such as a degree awarded by a university, or equivalent post-secondary educational institution, usually after three or four years of full-time study.
  - b. Level 2. Knowledge at advanced university degree level: The work requires theoretical knowledge gained through an educational programme leading to certification by a university, (i) beyond that required for a first university degree, usually involving one or more years, of additional study, or alternatively, (ii) after completing an educational programme of extended duration and required in many countries (often by legislation) for entry into certain professions, such as medicine or law.
  - c. Level 3. Knowledge at highest university degree level: The work requires theoretical knowledge gained through an educational programme, usually emphasizing research, leading to certification by the award of a degree, such as a doctorate, and generally requiring three or more years of study after obtaining an advanced university degree.
  - d. Levels 1 to 3. Equivalent in training: Refers to the theoretical knowledge at the same level as that obtained through educational programmes certified by universities or equivalent post-secondary educational institutions. This equivalent is acquired through a structured programme of instruction, planned work experience, or a combination of both (often organized in the working environment), which however, does not normally lead to academic certification. Such equivalent training is frequently obtained through participation in programmes conducted by public and private enterprises, educational institutions, professional associations, government agencies, and international organizations.
  - e. Equivalent in self study: Refers to the theoretical knowledge in a discipline or field obtained through an individual programme of study designed and undertaken by the learner but which does not require participation in an organized educational training programme. Although self study seldom leads to academic certification, the level of knowledge attained may be evidenced in the publication of monographs, articles in professional journals, official documents of a substantive nature, papers presented to conferences, etc.
  - f. Equivalent to a degree: Refers to a command of a body of theory normally associated with a specific academic discipline. This does not suggest that a number of years of experience in technical. or support work., is equivalent to academic preparation in a

discipline. The work of some jobs is, however, such that theoretical preparation obtained through university study is only partly relevant. This is particularly true in occupations where practical applications are developed in advance of curriculum, e.g. computer systems analysis. In such cases, it is possible to measure the level of theoretical preparation required by a particular job, for example, that indicated by authorship of publications considered authoritative in the emerging field, and recognized as analytical and creative.

### **B. Vertical - Practical experience required**

5. Practical experience refers to the skills and understanding of a discipline or field that are gained through the application of the theoretical knowledge to specific cases and situations, i.e. performance of a job or task. The requirements of national and international experience need to be analysed separately and measured accordingly. For example, one to five years national experience (rating B) and two to five years international experience (rating C) would result in the selection of element C.

- a. Levels A to F. Experience at national level: Practical experience gained in work which is national in nature; this involves primarily national issues or concerns and is restricted to a national system or country.
- b. Levels B to G. Experience at international level: Practical experience gained in work with effects which cross national boundaries, involving primarily international issues or concerns, for example, work in a government bureau concerned with providing assistance to other countries, or work in a private corporation which involves more than one country, or work in an international organization. For experience at the international level to be credited, it must be specifically required by the nature of the work.
- c. Levels D and F. Experience at both the national and international level: For level D: experience in applying theoretical knowledge for over nine up to fifteen years of which three up to five years are at the international level. For level F: experience in applying theoretical knowledge for over seventeen years of which over six up to ten years are at the international level.

### **C. Diagonal - Language knowledge required**

Proficiency in language - Working knowledge of a language (not necessarily an official language) which is required to take part in ordinary conversations, to participate in meetings, and to write official documents which, while not grammatically perfect, avoid the grosser grammatical and syntactical errors and are readily comprehensible.

## II. FACTOR 11 - DIFFICULTY OF WORK

### A. Horizontal - Individual contribution

7. Individual contribution refers to the intellectual or creative processes or operations required to perform the work.
- a. Level 4. Synthesis, conversion and presentation: Researching and compiling data; applying knowledge of the theories, principles, and concepts of the profession to identify relevant sources, extract appropriate information and organize information in a creative and original manner. This process involves an evaluation of the sources, an analysis of the available materials, and an appreciation of the use of the finished product.
  - b. Level 5. Interpreting rules, procedures or texts: Elucidating or explaining the meaning of regulations, standards or established ways of doing things, that apply either within the organization or to a body of theoretical knowledge or principles in a particular subject area, profession or occupation. Interpretation involves a situation, comparing it to precedents which are not directly applicable, considering various alternative interpretations and selecting the appropriate one. This process involves in-depth analysis and considerable judgement. Interpretation should not be seen as a process in which the situations presented are repetitive, where directly applicable precedents exist and where only one interpretation is normally possible: in these cases, the decision reached is straightforward and does not involve in-depth analysis or considerable judgement. Such cases would be measured by level 4.
  - c. Level 6. Corrective action: Corrective action involves analyzing the work results of qualified professionals in the same or a related occupation (inside or outside the organization), judging the soundness and validity of their conclusions or recommendations and, if necessary, modifying or amending the results or products. Corrective action does not necessarily imply final authority to approve the adjustment or modification. It does, however, take the form of authoritative advice.
  - d. Level 6. Adaptive action: Adaptive action involves the process of analyzing existing or previously-determined decisions, recommendations, conclusions, precedents, work products; judging their application to the current problem or situation and, if necessary, modifying or adjusting them to meet new or changed circumstances or requirements. Adaptive action does not necessarily imply the final authority to approve the adjustments or modifications. It does, however, take the form of authoritative advice.
  - e. Level 6. Revising work: The process of re-examining, correcting or modifying and thereby improving the work products of other professionals. The revision of work does not necessarily imply the final authority to approve the work and may be only an intermediate step in the approval of the work by a higher authority.
  - f. Level 7. Developing new approaches, procedures, techniques or technologies: Initiating or preparing original, novel or innovative means of tackling a problem, situation or

methodology; methods or manner of undertaking tasks; processes or ways of doing things; technical or special terms, words or nomenclature. There are different types and levels of approaches, procedures and techniques that can be developed within an organization and hence different degrees of importance to be attached to these. Level 7 is not meant to include the initiation of simple approaches, procedures or techniques which can be a feature of jobs applying the most basic principles of a profession (as in level 4), or involving analysis, interpretation, etc., (as in level 5), or the taking of corrective or adaptive action such as the adaptation of existing systems for introduction into a new context (as in level 6). Rather, this level measures those jobs which have a basic role to develop original and innovative approaches, procedures or techniques, i.e., state-of-the-art, which are of importance to a major entity of the organization and which will shape its future direction and are considered as precedent-setting.

- g. Level 7. Appreciable part: A substantial portion of the work, estimated to involve at least one third of the content of the job.
- h. Predominantly level 6 positions: Where the majority of the Professional positions concerned would be measured by level 6 of Factor II.
- i. Level 8. Major part: Indicates work that comprises more than one-half of the content of the job.
- j. New concepts, theories or policies: Original, novel or innovative ideas, notions, plans, courses of action or areas of abstract or speculative thought, which are of major importance to several organizational entities and which would determine their policy for many years to come.
- k. Delicate: Problems that, within the overall context of the organization's objective, are considered as sensitive, critical in nature and requiring careful, skillful and discreet resolution.
- l. Launching major activities: Conceiving, conceptualizing and designing strategies for implementation of major projects or programmes of work which are critical for the organization; organizing the resources needed and initiating the action.
- m. Diverse organizational entities: Individual units or divisions within the organization which perform different, distinct, or separate roles and types of work or pursue different objectives.
- n. Level 9. Vital area: A key area that is considered essential and crucial to achieving the objectives of the organization's mandate.
- o. Spanning a broad segment: Covering or extending over a wide, extensive or major sector or multi-departmental area of the organization's activities.

**B. Vertical - Complexity of assigned work**

8. Complexity refers to the difficulty of the work in terms of intricacy scope and depth.
- a. Intricacy: Refers to the variety and number of methods, procedures, and processes used in performing the duties and the variables considered in achieving the objectives of the work.
  - b. Level H. Moderately Intricate: The methodologies applied refer to the basic theories, concepts, principles and practices applicable to the particular area of work, they are easily identifiable and the scope of alternatives and variables to be considered are limited.
  - c. Level I. Intricate: The methods and procedures used, refer to a variety of different alternatives of which a choice of the most applicable to each particular case has to be made. A number of variables (e.g., technical and/or administrative) have to be considered before such a choice is made.
  - d. Levels J and K. Substantial Intricacy: Under these levels, work entails the analysis of complex issues or the development of new methods/approaches requiring the identification and in-depth examination of numerous technical factors, as well as policy considerations, in the solution of methodological problems or in the formulation of programme and policy proposals.
  - e. Level L. Great Intricacy: Work requires that several diverse phases of policy formulation, programme development and implementation are carried out concurrently for a variety of programmes. Policy formulation, programme development and management require the identification and resolution of multi-faceted problems which affect major areas of work or other organizations, including Governments; variables to be considered are often conflicting and influencing the way major parts of the organization are functioning. Development and implementation of solutions invariably affects the policies and activities of other major areas of the organization.
  - f. Scope: Refers to the range of clearly distinguished fields of work which are regularly encountered and within which decisions and recommendations are regularly taken. The Common Classification of Occupational Groups (CCOG) identifies fields of work.
  - g. Depth: Refers to the degree of specialization within clearly distinguished fields of work, and considers the range, number, nature and the relatedness/unrelatedness of the variables which must be considered.

### III. FACTOR III - INDEPENDENCE OF WORK

#### A. Horizontal - Application of guidelines

9. This element measures the degree to which guidelines apply to the work.
- a. Guidelines: They are indicators of a permanent or continuing validity such as those established by or contained in decisions or deliberations of national or international legislative bodies, regulations and rules, programme and budget documents, manuals, technical publications, project documents, standard methods, terms of reference, relevant literature, known precedents, accepted practices, research techniques or procedures, etc.
  - b. Establish guidelines: To institute, authorize, determine or promulgate, for the work of others, guidelines of the type indicated in the definition given above. Preparing project documents, giving oral instructions, INFORMALLY recommending guidelines which are further reviewed and revised by the supervisory authority, are not sufficient in themselves to give credit for establishment of guidelines.
  - c. Levels 11 and 12: The procedures under level 11 MAY not be standardized and SPECIFIC applicable guidelines are not ALWAYS available. In this case it is the SPECIFICITY of the guidelines which is the key word. In other words, under level 11 guidelines do exist but they may not be specific and applicable to all cases as under level 10.
  - d. Levels 12 and 13: The guidelines under both levels are partially relevant. However, under level 12, the work requires the OCCASIONAL interpretation and adaptation of guidelines to UNUSUAL AND COMPLEX situations. The work, under level 12 does not require the establishment of guidelines, although level 12 could be granted if the incumbent INFORMALLY recommends guidelines, i.e., they are subject to further review and revision by the supervisory authority. For level 13 to be applicable, the work NORMALLY (i.e., the major part, the main thrust of the job) requires the interpretation and adaptation of guidelines AND the establishment of guidelines that influence the work of others and are precedent-setting. Level 13, may be granted if the incumbent is explicitly and formally expected to recommend guidelines that are established virtually unchanged.
  - e. Level 14. Broadly stated: Stated in terms of general objectives and desired results such as those found in resolutions of governing bodies.
  - f. Level 14. Extensive interpretation: Requiring in-depth or profound explanation or exposition of the meaning.
  - g. Level 15. Policy: Statement expressing the course, approach or plan of action, or official position on a given subject of the organization.

### **B. Vertical - Supervisory controls**

- 10.** This measures the degree of direction, oversight or management guidance received in the job from immediate superiors or entities such as committees, boards of working groups. In some jobs, the purpose, desired results or approaches may not be indicated by the supervisor but are indicated by the existing procedures or structure of the organization or job.
- a. Level O. Problems discussed at the discretion of the official; and level P: Work in process reviewed only when the official feels -it necessary: The two statements describe a working expectation which is an element of the post's delegated independence within the overall structural context. However, it does not preclude the supervisor's authority to discuss problems with the official (for level O) or his/her discretion to review the work in process (for level P).
  - b. Levels P, Q and R: The objectives referred to in these levels are the aims or goals of a job. They are the reasons for its existence and are the reference points against which the effectiveness of the job is determined. It is recognized that a hierarchy of objectives exists within an organization, from the most general to the most specific. This factor is concerned only with those objectives to which the job under review is directed. These are not to be confused with the objectives of the organization which are the aims and goals normally set out in the constitution or established by legislative bodies and which are the organization's *raison d' être*.
  - c. Level Q: This level is normally allocated to senior positions with authority to establish objectives for the work programme jointly with top management and with authority to take decisions on the resolution of major problems and on the necessary actions related to the way the work is being performed.
  - d. Level R: This level is normally allocated to top management positions with the authority to identify organizational objectives and to decide on how these are to be best met.

### **IV. FACTOR IV - WORK RELATIONSHIPS**

**11.** This factor measures the skill, content and frequency of the work contacts and these should be analysed in applying this factor. Written and verbal exchanges should be an ongoing, integral part of the work performed for credit to be given.

**A. Horizontal – Skill**

- 12.** This element refers to the skills and level authority referred in work relationships.
- a. Level 16: Refers to the normal predictable work relationships and exchange foreseen in the duties where the objectives of the interlocutors in the exchange are consistent.
  - b. Level 17. Non-routine significance: Matters occurring in the work situation which are not of a regular, predictable or normal nature – problems and questions not fitting a set pattern. The contact involves problem solving, persuading, and negotiating in environments where there are diverse points of view and objectives as well as competing demands.
  - c. Levels 18 to 21. Adviser: Providing authoritative advice, guidance or counselling or making recommendations or proposals to the organization or its organs in defined subject-matter areas. Acting as Adviser refers to having contacts or work relations which are inside the organization.
  - d. Levels 18 to 21. Representative: Having the authority to act as spokesman or agent for the organization, stating, defending, and explaining the organization's policy and position in external fora. Acting as representative refers to having contacts and work relations which are outside the organization, such as with Member States, national institutions, non-governmental organizations, etc.
  - e. Level 18: As adviser or representative, the job is recognized as that responsible within the organization for recommending solutions and courses of action, to higher authorities based on predetermined policies. These recommendations do not commit the organization, are reviewed and may be revised by higher authorities.
  - f. Level 19: As adviser or representative, the job is recognized as that responsible within the organization for providing the authoritative advice on policies which are accepted virtually unchanged and/or committing the organization to a course of action on the policy issues concerned. These policy issues focus on a particular programme area or field of work and would not directly affect major systems or programmes.
  - g. Level 20: As adviser or representative, the job is recognized as that responsible within the organization for providing the authoritative advice on policies and strategies which are accepted virtually unchanged and/or committing the organization to a course of action on the policy and strategy issues concerned. These policy issues directly affect the operation of major systems and programmes of the organization.

### **B. Vertical - Importance**

12. The vertical element measures mainly the importance of the subject matter or issues which are the content of the contact and the impact of such contacts upon organization. The importance of the persons or organizations contacted should be only used as an indication of the importance and the impact of the contacts and not as the sole criterion for rating this element.

- a. Levels S. 1. to S. 3. Functional area: An organizational objective or entity which has common or similar operations, occupations and procedures to accomplish its goals.
- b. Levels S.2. to S.3. Extensively throughout the organization: Over a broad area of the organization including wide horizontal and vertical contacts and crossing functional, hierarchical and organizational lines; signifies a variety of subject matters and contact points.
- c. Level S.3.: It requires contacts extensively throughout the organization AND outside the duty station AND OUTSIDE THE FUNCTIONAL AREA.
- d. Level T.2. Routine subject matters: Matters, which, although might be of importance to the work area, are of a procedural nature and are part of the day-to-day specific work process.
- e. Level T.3. Subject matters of importance: Matters which are important for the evolution of a programme area influencing the quality of its cooperation/collaboration with the outside entities and therefore its delivery.
- f. Level T.4. Subject matters of greater importance: Matters which are important for the evolution of a number of programmes/divisions influencing the delivery of a variety of programme areas.
- g. Level T.5. Matters of a significant impact: Matters affecting major organizational components and having substantial influence on the organization's relations with constituents and Member States.

### **V. FACTOR V - SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY**

13. The intent of this factor is to measure the ongoing managerial responsibilities of the work; planning, directing and controlling the work; resolving performance, morale and productivity problems; preparing performance reports. Staff refers to all positions at all levels that are subordinate to the job under review, including those supervised by subordinate supervisors. Short term consultants, short term professionals, associate experts, temporary staff, trainees, etc., are not to be given credit under this factor, but rather are recognized under Factor II, horizontal. However, for exceptionally long-term contract arrangements, where positions as

described above are a quasi permanent feature, of the organizational setting, then credit for such supervision may be granted.

## VI. FACTOR VI - IMPACT OF WORK

### A. Horizontal - Effect on work

14. In assigning classification credit a clear distinction must be made between the nature of the autonomous decisions taken and the authoritative proposals made. This could result in a split rating.

- a. Levels 30 to 36. Decisions: Authoritative commitments to a course of action.
- b. Levels 30 to 36: Proposals: Recommendations or suggestions for a course of action.
- c. Level 30. Decisions: At this level, decisions are very rare and they usually concern how own work is organized and how own priorities effectively serve and are best integrated in the overall work of the immediate work area.
- d. Levels 31 and 32. Further processes or services: Later steps in the technical, substantive, administrative work or operations which are of equal importance in the organization and which are dependent or contingent upon the decisions and proposals of the job under review.
- e. Levels 32 to 34. System: A series of interconnected work processes or procedures rationally organized to achieve a common and important objective.
- f. Levels 32 and 33. Programmes: An organizational entity, an area or part of the organization with clearly set and distinct objectives, plans and operations.
- g. Levels 33 and 34. Major programmes: A programme considered essential to the achievement of a major objective of the organization or one which comprises a number of distinct and significant programmes.

### B. Vertical - Consequences of errors

15. This factor measures the consequences of errors on the organization's objectives. The impact of the errors would be the result of the decisions and recommendations made.
- a. Levels c to g. Errors: Errors are involuntary. They should not be confused with the results of poor performance. They result from time constraints, oversight, fault in judgment or inappropriate choice of a course of action

- b. Level e: Decisions and recommendations must affect the direction and leadership of the organization's programmes.
  
- c. Levels f and g: Decisions and recommendations must affect the objectives (*raison d'être*) of the organization.

## VII. SPLIT RATING

16. Generally, a job can be rated by identifying the most appropriate level of each element and allocating the number of points indicated. In some cases, even after careful job analysis and thorough consideration of the Master Standard, the glossary and guidelines, and the relevant Tier II standards and precedents, it may be seen that two adjacent ratings are both applicable. The number of points allocated might therefore be determined by taking the mean between the two adjacent ratings, i.e., split rating. Cases in which this technique is appropriate include those in which an appreciable amount of time is spent performing each of two sets of duties - one set evaluated at one rating and another evaluated at a lower or higher adjacent rating (e.g. meteorologist jobs which function at a higher level developing research proposals, and then, implementing those proposals which have been accepted). The application of this technique is suitable also when a factor of the Master Standard has two parts (e.g. Factor VI - Impact of Work) and the job being evaluated is such that one part of the job (e.g. "Proposals") is at higher rating level than another part of the job (e.g. "Decisions"). To split ratings is not an appropriate approach for the resolution of disputes or uncertainties about the rating(s) for a job. In view of the above, split ratings should, as far as possible, be avoided and in any case should not apply for Factors I, IV and V.