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**General Schedule
Position Classification Standards**



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**POSITION CLASSIFICATION
STANDARD
FOR
HOME ECONOMICS
SERIES,
GS-0493**



**Workforce Compensation
and Performance Service**



Home Economics Series

GS-0493

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SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes all positions that require application of professional knowledge of home economics pertaining to foods and nutrition, selection and use of household equipment, textiles, clothing and other products used in family care, and household management practices.

SERIES COVERAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The field of home economics covers a wide variety of subject-matter and functional areas of work, and does not lend itself to precise definition. Even in the Federal Government, which employs relatively few home economists, work in the occupation is varied, and difficult to distinguish clearly from work in other occupations. The following listing illustrates the major kinds of functions performed by home economists in the Federal Government.

Functions performed by home economists

1. Advice and instruction to families on household management and family care (food production, purchase, preservation; equipment and clothing selection and care; budgets; child care).
2. Assistance in planning community development (facilities for families, housing for the elderly, facilities and equipment for child feeding programs).
3. Development of menus, recipes and food planning guides to satisfy specific nutritional requirements (e.g., military feeding programs), or to promote the use of certain types of food products, the latter often accompanied by demonstration cookery.
4. Consultation and instruction to State or local government personnel carrying out food distribution and utilization programs (school lunch, food stamp, donated foods) under direction and support from the Federal Government.
5. Observation and investigation of nutritional status and problems in various groups, development of programs and advising on corrective action to be taken.
6. Dissemination of information and advice to public, professional and consumer groups on foods and nutrition, household and institution management, family economics and family care.
7. Investigation and experimental cookery to ascertain effect of various methods of preparation on food characteristics, yield, flavor, and quality.
8. Studies of food, clothing, and household goods consumption patterns for families; development of food composition tables for use in determining nutritional status and establishing nutritional standards.

Note: "Family" and "household" apply to any groups of people and their domiciles, when principles and practices of home economics governing their care and management are essentially the same as applied to families and households.

Relationships to other series

The majority of home economists employed by the Government are doing work pertaining to foods and nutrition. Their concern is largely with *applied* nutrition, in terms of normal food diets or food plans rather than with research in the science or sciences dealing with basic nutrition. (Other kinds of scientific work related to nutrition, and the occupations in which the work occurs, are discussed below under "[Series To Which Basic Scientific Work in Nutrition Is Classified.](#)")

Some of this work in foods and nutrition requires essentially the same kinds of knowledges as are characteristic of the [Dietitian Series, GS-0630](#). This includes such work as the development of menus and recipes for use in the national school lunch program, or the development of military menus or ration items. The Dietitian Series, however, is defined to include positions with responsibility for the management of dietetic programs in institutions, primarily hospitals. The Dietitian Series is not, therefore, suitable for the classification of the positions involved in the school lunch or military menu and recipe development work.

Some positions in applied nutrition are concerned with therapeutic diets or food plans in public health programs, e.g., those concerned with maternal and child care. These positions also fall outside the Dietitian Series since they are not "institutional," and outside the Home Economics Series because of their "health treatment," as opposed to "normal diet," concern. Such positions are classified to the [General Health Science Series, GS-0601](#).

Other work in the foods and nutrition area concerns the development and presentation of training guides and informational material, and demonstration of cooking processes, in connection with the school lunch, donated foods, and other programs of a promotional nature. Such work usually constitutes only a part of a total assignment that includes other work in the home economics field, so that the positions involved are properly classified to the Home Economics Series rather than to series in the [Education Group, GS-1700](#), or the [Information and Arts Group, GS-1000](#).

A number of positions classified in the Home Economics Series are concerned with studies of the nutritional status of various populations, and with the development of food composition tables. The Home Economics Series is proper for these positions when they require knowledges primarily of the nutritive content of specific foods, and the effect of methods of preparation on nutrients in the foods. When the knowledges applied deal primarily with methodology in the broader field of economics or in statistics, the positions are properly classified to the [Economist Series, GS-110](#) or to the [Statistician Series, GS-1530](#).

There are small numbers of positions classified to the Home Economics Series that are concerned with the design, use and care of clothing and textiles, and with the patterns of family consumption of all classes of goods (food, clothing, household equipment, recreation items, etc.), and with family budgets. With respect to clothing and textiles, basic research into the properties



and behavior of materials often requires knowledges more typical of the occupations of [Chemistry, GS-1320](#), or [Textile Technology, GS-1384](#), than of home economics. The determination as to how such positions should be classified is made on somewhat the same basis as in the area of foods and nutrition. The application of what is known about the basic characteristics of textiles and clothing materials to planning for the use and care of these by the family is properly classified to the Home Economics Series, GS-0493.

The study of family budgets and consumption patterns overlaps home economics and the more general field of economics related to consumption practices and trends. If the primary requisite for the work is knowledge of family living and home management requirements and patterns, it is properly classified to the Home Economics Series. If, on the other hand, knowledge of the broader field of economic theory and methodology is the major requirement, such work is properly classified to the [Economist Series, GS-0110](#).

SERIES TO WHICH SCIENTIFIC WORK IN NUTRITION IS CLASSIFIED

The role of the home economist in applied nutrition has been discussed above. Because nutrition is a recognized area of concentration in the home economics curriculum, and because it is listed as an area of specialization in the definition of the Home Economics Series, GS-0493, there has been a tendency to classify any work in nutrition to the GS-0493 Series. Such classification does not recognize the nature of much of what is being done in research, testing, and similar scientific functions.

There are increasing numbers of persons in Government who are performing research and investigative work in various scientific disciplines, pertaining to the materials and processes of basic nutrition. Although some leaders in the field of nutrition define it as a synthesis of disciplines (biochemistry, psychology, physiology, etc.) this synthesis is not often found in the background of individuals doing work in the field.

For the present, it appears desirable to classify such positions to the occupational series most representative of the specific functions performed, and of the knowledges applied that pertain to nutrition. The series which accommodate most of these positions are the [Chemistry Series, GS-1320](#), the [General Biological Science Series, GS-0401](#), the [Physiology Series, GS-0413](#), and the [Microbiology Series, GS-0403](#).

A great portion of the research and investigative work being done in nutrition requires the application of skills principally in the field of biochemistry, or of physiological chemistry. Such skills are applied in studies, of, for example:

- (1) the metabolic role of minerals, vitamins and other nutrients and their interrelationships;
- (2) the characterization of blood proteins to gain information on the mechanism by which the body metabolizes fat; or

- (3) effects of protein and amino acid deficiencies on the activity of liver enzymes involved in energy production.

Positions requiring the above skills and knowledges are classified to the [Chemistry Series, GS-1320](#).

Other positions classified to the Chemistry Series are concerned with studies on such things as vitamin and amino acid retention in foods, and factors affecting their stability. (The study or development of food processing and preservation methods is included in the [Food Technology Series, GS-1382](#).)

Another major area of work relating to nutrition requires knowledges primarily in the field of biology. Positions involving such work are classifiable in the [Microbiology series, GS-0403](#), [Physiology Series, GS-0413](#), or the [General Biological Science Series, GS-0401](#). Studies in these areas deal with such matters as:

- (1) the role of nutrients in the reactions basic to cell growth and reproduction, the nutrient requirements of diploid cells in culture and the relation of these requirements to the whole animal, and identification of compounds which affect the genetic mechanism of cells; and
- (2) the effect of physical and chemical factors in the diet on the growth and maintenance of intestinal microflora.

The [General Biological Science Series, GS-0401](#), is appropriate for positions that require competence in several fields (for instance, physiology, anatomy, histology, and biochemistry) when no one field is predominant. (There are no published classification standards for the GS-0401 Series, discussed above. Positions classified in the GS-0401 Series may be titled specifically to reflect their concern with nutrition, e.g., Nutritionist, Nutrition Scientist.)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grade levels are described in terms of the *nature of assignment* and *level of responsibility*.

The nature of assignments is defined with respect to:

- scope of functional or subject-matter coverage,
- needs and characteristics of the public served, and
- level of professional qualifications required to carry out the assignments.

The level of responsibility is defined by reference to:

- control and guidance received,
- depth of judgment applied in problem solving and program execution, and
- purpose and extent of contacts with persons outside the organization.

The discussion of grade-characteristic elements is followed by descriptions of assignments illustrative of the grade level.

EVALUATION NOTES

1. Supervisory positions should be evaluated by reference to the [Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide](#).
2. Research positions should be evaluated by reference to the [Research Grade-Evaluation Guide](#). (The discussion above of basic scientific work in nutrition indicates that much of the research in nutrition is classifiable other than to the Home Economics Series, GS-0493. There are, however, a few positions properly classified to this series in which there is responsibility for research that requires application of knowledges typically gained in the study of home economics.)
3. This standard does not include criteria for positions above the GS-11 level, but this, of course, does not preclude the classification of positions in this series above that grade. Generally, at higher levels the grades are based upon substantial supervisory, research or program responsibilities. Nonsupervisory positions at those levels may be classified by extension of the criteria in this standard and the application of sound position-classification judgment.

TITLING INSTRUCTIONS

The title for all positions is *Home Economist*. The prefix *Supervisory* is to be used when [supervisory](#) qualifications are required.

HOME ECONOMIST, GS-0493-05

Work is assigned to acquaint the employee with the program, functions, and procedures of the organization. The work involves straightforward application of knowledges and skills gained academically, and is closely supervised to insure adherence to instructions and procedures.

Personal contacts are mostly with individuals to whom directed by the supervisor, and are for the purpose of giving or gathering clear-cut factual information.

Following are examples of kinds of tasks assigned:

- (1) Interviews persons being provided home management advisory service to obtain information about the conditions and problems. Reports facts to supervisor, and recommends, or obtains guidance from supervisor concerning, measures to be taken to improve household management practices. As directed, follows up to ascertain progress in carrying out recommendations.
- (2) Participates in, or presents, cookery demonstrations to promote use of specific foods, when objectives and methods have been carefully worked out and cleared by supervisor beforehand.
- (3) In connection with preparation of standardized tables of food composition, collects data and information from specified sources, applies established formulas for deriving food or nutritional values, and prepares material in table or chart form.
- (4) Collects background data on dietary habits and food preferences of children; searches literature for background data on food, nutrition, equipment, management and operational techniques of school feeding for use in the development of program and training aids.

HOME ECONOMIST, GS-0493-07

Assignments that are confined to a narrow functional area, where required action is based on well-defined procedures and ample precedents, are carried out at this level under fairly general supervision. When work is varied in nature, and assignments pertain to several functions or program areas, the employee receives detailed preliminary instructions and guidance during the course of the assignment, and thorough review of completed work to assure that it meets objectives.

The GS-7 employee provides information services to a variety of "clients" -- the public, and persons in other agencies or organizations with related programs. The responsibility in such contacts is limited essentially to obtaining data according to established or indicated format, or furnishing advice and information when this can be based on clear precedents and readily available appropriate material.

GS-7 is characterized by assignments such as the following:

- (1) Develops and tests recipes and menus for small and large quantity preparation, using foods generally available on the market, to meet general requirements as to nutritive content and cost. Carries out established procedures (weighing, measuring, visual observation, preparing, cooking, taste evaluation) to determine the yield, quality, and cost of foods, with respect to variety and grade, preservation process, and method of cooking.
- (2) Within the framework of subject- and audience-coverage determined by others, prepares factual, instructive material for release by various media, concerning needs, dangers or benefits of use of household equipment or food, drug, and cosmetic items for family consumption. Assists in arranging and presenting demonstrations, exhibits, film showings, or panel discussions to interested consumer groups concerning the same matters.
- (3) Advises families on ways to improve household management practices, in order to make better use of their resources to improve standards of family living and to increase their economic resources. When medical, social, or educational counseling and assistance appear to be needed, recommends sources for such assistance and maintains liaison with those organizations to furnish information and obtain help.
- (4) From literature search, develops background data on nutritive value of foods. Prepares reports and recommendations to supervisor on the suitability of specific donated foods for use in school lunches, school breakfasts, and institutional and family meals. Develops menu suggestions and food value information for use by those planning school feeding programs, to assist in gaining acceptance of donated foods and foods in plentiful supply.

HOME ECONOMIST, GS-0493-09

Assignments are characterized by some variety in tasks, relating to several project or functional activities such as development of menus and recipes for use in the various donated food programs, or a program that serves a population with varying needs and characteristics (e.g., farm and non-farm rural homeowners, farm labor, elderly persons, small town citizens).

The employee performs independently the work for which overall objectives and methods have been established. He receives supervisory guidance and instruction on new assignments, on situations that call for modification of normal procedures, or on desired approach in handling contacts on controversial matters. In contrast with the GS-7 level, where work is subject to detailed guidance and review, the review at this level is normally in the nature of spot-checks to observe soundness of professional judgment and effectiveness of communication in personal contacts.

Fairly extensive contacts with the public, representatives of news media, consumer and trade groups, professional societies and other governmental agencies are typical of the GS-9 level. These contacts are for the purpose of obtaining or furnishing information, and providing advice. The employee must be well-informed in the area of work assigned to be effective in selecting and presenting technical information, and to give sound advice and guidance in solving problems referred.

The responsibility for communication with varied professional groups, as well as the public, on a range of problems and situations requiring experienced judgment distinguishes the GS-9 level from grade GS-7.

Assignments such as described below are characteristic of grade GS-9:

- (1) Carries out experimental cookery relating to types of foods not widely used, or to strains or species being developed. Tests various methods for preparing foods and develops recipes to best enhance their palatability. From results of experimentation, prepares reports concerning strain or variety characteristics, and processing and preservation methods that yield best results in terms of nutritive value, taste, and cost. Prepares buying guides, cooking instructions, menus and meal planning aids, and recommendations on use and care of foods for family or institutional consumption.
- (2) Serves as an advisor in a local geographic area on aspects of family living requirements to be considered in facility planning under community development, rural renewal or economic opportunity programs. Works with local public agencies, planning groups, and Federal agency representatives concerned with development or approval of projects to point out needs and to recommend features to be incorporated in facilities, particularly those that will serve low-income groups. Advises individual families on measures to

improve home management and family living. Counsels with individuals or small groups on setting up small business enterprises (such as production, processing, and marketing of food, or furnishing of services) to supplement family incomes and improve community economic conditions.

- (3) Presents training sessions and workshops to personnel operating the school lunch and special milk programs in public and private schools and child care institutions. The training covers nutritional standards to be met, menu planning to make best use of donated commodities and plentiful foods, methods for buying, storing, preparing and serving food to obtain maximum food value for money spent, how to select and train lunchroom and kitchen personnel, and the like.
- (4) Assists in performing analyses of the school lunch and special milk programs, which are administered by State agencies. Reviews records and reports, and observes operation and management in particular areas. Participates in discussions of findings with administrative personnel, and makes recommendations and on-the-spot suggestions for improvement.

HOME ECONOMIST, GS-0493-11

The employee typically is responsible for carrying out the varied activities of a function or program within a geographic area (e.g., comprehensive information and advisory service to consumers and professional groups) or a segment of a program management organization (for instance, development and presentation of training materials and courses on menu planning and utilization of donated foods to meet nutritional requirements in school lunch programs). Assignments usually pertain to operations of a conventional nature, for which there are established policies and objectives. Nevertheless, the employee must use initiative and experienced judgment in planning specific actions and approaches to meet the needs within the area of assignment.

The employee serves as a recognized source of information and advice in his area of assignment. This involves extensive contacts with the public, and with other government, private, or public groups that participate in the programs or receive guidance. Problems presented for solution are not usually highly novel or complex, although they usually require some skill in determining their nature and scope, and solutions are likely to require extensive searches of references or literature. They also require mature professional judgment in selecting the best and most appropriate answers.

Within the framework of blanket instructions or objectives, the employee is generally free to plan and carry out his own work. Supervisory control over the work consists generally of spot-check reviews and periodic program evaluations. The supervisor gives advice and guidance on matters that are novel or controversial.

This professional independence in planning and executing work, and the typical responsibility for a program or activity, distinguish the GS-11 level from the GS-9 level, where the work, although containing some variety, is subject to closer supervisory guidance.

Following are examples of assignments typifying the GS-11 level:

- (1) Provides technical guidance with respect to nutrition information and food service management in connection with Federal programs for food distribution (school lunch, special milk, etc.) in an area of several States. Guides State personnel who administer these programs in the development of manuals, instructions, and training courses covering basic elements of food and nutrition, health and sanitation, and detailed aspects of operation such as menu planning, food buying and storage, quantity food preparation, and kitchen and lunchroom organization and management. Leads and participates in conferences and workshops for State management personnel, to inform and instruct them about program policies, objectives and requirements. Through visits, conferences, and review of operational reports, evaluates the State program operations, with respect to quality of supervision and assistance given to local operating personnel, and effectiveness of training and informational materials furnished for their guidance.
- (2) Plans and carries out projects for development of food items and recipes for such purposes as (a) to gain new or increased markets for certain classes of foods, or (b) to promote use of new low-cost highly nutritive food products by institutions or by low income groups. Consults with representatives of food industries and with food marketing specialists concerning food sources and supply, harvesting and processing methods, and food consumption patterns. Plans programs for testing (by cooking and serving food) of the quality, yield, and acceptability of foods of new varieties and strains, or food products that are being subjected to experimental methods of processing or preservation that affect their basic characteristics (composition, texture, flavor, etc.). Develops recipes and methods for preparing and using the food items tested, or recommends rejection of their use. Recommends ways in which food products should be prepared for packaging, and amounts that packages should contain for consumer convenience. Prepares exhibits and gives demonstrations on the preparation of these foods to college and extension groups, food industry, public utility, and professional groups concerned with food preparation, and restaurant, institutional, and military food service groups.
- (3) Plans and carries out a program in a regional area to inform and provide professional advice to the public, and to professional and consumer-interest groups, about scientific or technical findings and developments, regulatory determinations, and agency program activities that pertain to distribution and use of foods and nutrients, drugs, cosmetics, and household products. Maintains active contact with general media and specialized publications to furnish news and feature items on matters of importance to the consumer public. Consults with educators and other professional groups (home economists, dietitians, nurses, social workers) to furnish advice and present information about matters on which the agency has made findings and determinations. Attends conferences and workshops, and makes radio and TV appearances, to present information.