

GUIDELINES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE
OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM (OCS):
OCCUPATIONAL DICTIONARY 2024

1. Introduction

The Occupational Dictionary (OCS) is a coded classification system that is aimed at categorising occupations in the Public Service. It replaces the 1999 OCS and elements of the Code of Remuneration (CORE) which was aimed at providing advice in terms of defining the minimum requirements for posts; the remunerative aspects of the CORE remains unchanged.

It is anticipated that the expansion of the limited number of occupations in the OCS will improve the level of management information available for planning and decision making significantly, once employees have been linked correctly to the new occupations and codes.

Departments can do the planning and translations “offline” and submit a request to PERSAL for programmatic translation of the employees to the new codes, using the template attached at **Annexure A**. Once implemented the old OCS codes will become inactive.

2. The Purpose of the Guide

This guide is issued to support the implementation of the OCS: Occupational Dictionary issued by the MPSA. It is aimed at assisting departments to understand how the OCS should be utilised when linking posts to the OCS and appointing employees on PERSAL.

3. Definitions

Grade: The relative value of a particular job as reflected by the job weight, which is linked to a salary level in a salary scale used in the Public Service.

Inherent requirements of the job: The competency, experience, qualifications and any other requirement that an employee needs in order to perform a job.

Job: the functions according to which one or more posts of the same grade are created .

Occupation: A set of jobs whose main tasks and associated responsibilities are of such similarity that they can be grouped or clustered together.

OSD: a dispensation for a specific occupational category that includes a unique salary scale, centrally determined grades and job descriptions, career progression opportunities based on competencies, experience and performance.

Skill: The ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job. Two dimensions of skill are used to arrange occupations into groups. These are skill level and skill specialisation.

Skill level: An indication of the complexity and range of tasks and duties to be performed in an occupation. Skill level is measured operationally by considering one or more of the following:

- the nature of work performed;
- the responsibility demanded of the work;
- the skills, qualifications, including prior learning and experience required to perform the work;
- the amount of informal on-the-job training and/or previous experience in a related occupation required for competent performance of these tasks and duties; and
- the physical, mental and emotional effort required to perform the work.

Skill specialisation: Is defined in terms of the following four concepts:

- the field of knowledge required;
- the tools and machinery used;
- the materials worked on or with; and
- the kinds of goods and services produced.

4. Structure of the OCS: Occupational Dictionary 2024

The OCS organises occupations in a hierarchical structure which consists of 9 Major Categories at the top level of categorisation, sub-divided into 51 Sub-major, 113 Minor Categories and about 294 Unit Categories and about 600 Occupations (as depicted in Table 1 below). The number of occupations is variable and will be influenced by any changes in the work environment in future. All codes in the OCS are alphanumeric.

4.1 Major Categories

- The broadest/ highest level of classification (table 1 below)
- The dictionary is divided into nine (9) major categories

- The categories are distinguished from each other on the basis of skill (skill level and the broadest concept of skill specialisation)
- An alphabetic letter precedes the major category, e.g., Professionals (“D”- is the code identifier, all codes in this category begins with the letter “D”)

Major Categories	Description
A. Elementary Occupations	<p>Elementary occupations are normally responsible for routine, often manual tasks. With few exceptions only limited personal initiative and judgment are required; the use of hand-held tools and considerable physical effort may also be required. Most occupations in this category require skills at the first skill level.</p>
B. Clerical Support Workers	<p>Clerical support category consists of occupations whose main tasks entail transactional work which requires the knowledge and experience necessary to process, record, organise, store, compare and retrieve information in connection with transactional work. The tasks performed are usually routine/repetitive, directly supervised and/or highly prescriptive. Most occupations in this category require skills at the second skill level.</p>
C. Managers	<p>This category covers occupations in the senior management service levels as well as those in the middle management levels which contain management tasks that are inherent to their job content. At middle management level the responsibility area may also include the management and implementation of processes.</p> <p>Supervisors or team leaders are not included in this category as their responsibilities are focused more towards their functional areas/occupation. Occupations in this category require skills at the fourth skill level.</p>
D. Professionals	<p>Two categories of professionals are defined in the dictionary:</p> <p>a) Professionals requiring registration with statutory bodies/ councils: Refers to a category of employees (occupations) performing work that -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires formal tertiary qualifications (4 year (or longer) university or equivalent qualification); and • entails a statutory requirement to be registered with a professional council/body (established by legislation) to perform the functions. <p>b) Professionals not requiring registration with statutory bodies (also referred to as Functional Specialists):</p>

Major Categories	Description
	<p>Refers to a Category of employees (occupations) who–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are subject matter experts and are able to undertake work/provide advice on complex functions in the particular work environment; and • have the ability to provide advice and guidance on policy/technical issues and entails a high level of theoretical and practical knowledge obtained through substantial exposure in the relevant field.
<p>E. Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers</p>	<p>Plant and machine operators and assemblers mainly operates and monitors industrial and agricultural machinery and equipment on the spot or by remote control, drive and operate trains, motor vehicles and mobile machinery and equipment, or assemble products from component parts according to strict specifications and procedures.</p> <p>The work mainly calls for experience with and an understanding of industrial and agricultural machinery and equipment as well as an ability to cope with machine-paced operations and to adapt to technological innovations. Most occupations in this category require skills at the second skill level.</p>
<p>F. Protective and Rescue Service Workers; Social and Health Sciences Supplementary and Support Personnel</p>	<p>The occupations in this category normally apply their knowledge and skills as part of the support functions directly associated with protective and rescue service workers; social and health sciences supplementary and support personnel.</p> <p>They normally assist with supporting services like operating specialised equipment/do preparations for specialised tasks to be performed by professionals/technicians. Most occupations in this category require skills at the third skill level.</p>
<p>G. Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers</p>	<p>Skilled agricultural and fishery workers provides advisory and extension service to farmers and producers. Occupations in this category are also employed at agricultural research farms and at agricultural colleges. Most occupations in this category require skills ranging from the second to the third skill level.</p> <p>Craft and related trades workers apply their specific knowledge and skills in the fields of mining and construction, form metal, erect metal structures, make, fit, maintain and repair machinery, buildings, equipment or tools, carry</p>

Major Categories	Description
	<p>out printing work as well as produce or process foodstuffs, textiles, or wooden, metal and other articles.</p> <p>The work is carried out by hand and by hand-powered and other tools which are used to reduce the amount of physical effort and time required for specific tasks, as well as to improve the quality of the products. The tasks call for an understanding of all stages of the production process, the materials and tools used, and the nature and purpose of the final product. Most occupations in this category require skills at the second skill level.</p>
<p>H. Technicians and Associate Technical Occupations</p>	<p>Technicians category consists of occupations whose main tasks require technical knowledge and experience in the field of physical and applied sciences. They perform mostly technical support and related tasks connected with maintenance, manufacturing, construction and research.</p> <p>Technicians may also be classified as highly skilled workers and can be part of a larger (production) process. They are found in a variety of fields, some usually have a job title with the designation 'technician' following the particular category of work, e.g., a veterinary technician is an employee who provides technical support in the veterinary field or to the professional veterinary surgeon.</p> <p>Associate technical occupations category includes occupations whose main tasks require technical knowledge and experience in the relevant field. They perform mostly technical related tasks in the fields of life sciences, arts, information and communication technology. Most occupations in this category require skills at the third skill level.</p>
<p>I. Security and Custodial Personnel</p>	<p>Security and Custodial Personnel consist of occupations employed in the security cluster, i.e., the SAPS, Defence and Correctional Services in terms of their respective legislations performing functions directly linked to their legislations, e.g., SAPS Act, Defence Act and Correctional Services Act. This category is defined at two levels which includes functional management and operational levels. Most occupations included in this category require skills ranging between the 2nd and 4th skill level. The requirements to be determined by the relevant Sector departments as per specific post or job requirements.</p>

Table 1: major categories and descriptors

4.2 Sub-Major Categories

- Sub-divisions of the major categories.
- The categories are distinguished from each other on the basis of broadly stated skill specialisation.
- e.g., Physical, Mathematical and Engineering Science Professionals (Code: DA000000)

4.3 Minor Categories

- Sub-divisions of sub-major categories.
- The categories are distinguished from each other on the basis of less broadly stated skill specialisation.
- e.g., Physical and Earth Science Professionals (Code: DA010000)

4.4 Unit Categories

- Sub-divisions of the minor categories.
- The categories are distinguished from each other on the basis of a finer degree of skill specialisation.
- e.g.,
 - Physicists and Related Professionals (Code: DA010100)
 - Meteorologists (Code: DA010200)
 - Chemists (Code: DA010300)
 - Geologists and Geophysicists (Code: DA010400)

4.5 Occupations

- Subdivisions of the unit categories.
- Occupations in the same unit are distinguished from each other on the basis of uniqueness of the output, usually due to specific application of skills and knowledge in a specific context.
- It also relates to a cluster of jobs which involve the performance of a common set of tasks.
- e.g.,
 - Physicist (Code: DA010101)
 - Climate Change Scientist (Code: DA010201)

- Meteorologist (Code: DA010202)
- Chemist (Code: DA010301)
- Hydrologist (Code: DA010401)
- Geologist (Code: DA010402)
- Geophysicist (Code: DA010403)
- Oceanographer (Code: DA010404)
- \pm 600 occupations
- Posts are linked to an occupation at this level on PERSAL
- Descriptors are provided for each occupation (Annexure A of the dictionary: list of occupations and descriptors)

5. Structural difference between the 1999 OCS and the new OCS

The principles and structure of the OCS remain largely the same and the changes are as follows:

Changes	The 1999 OCS	The 2024 OCS
Broad categories (major categories)	10 major categories 24 COREs	9 major categories
Skill levels	The utilisation of skill levels to define and differentiate the occupational categories.	Skill levels still used to define and differentiate occupational categories, in addition, NQF levels were also used as one of the measures for defining skill levels.
Occupations	\pm 130 occupations	It provides for \pm 600 occupations (occupations are classified up to level of specialization)
Coding	OCS codes are alphanumeric. For example, code: B1010200 (Financial clerks and credit controllers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The alphabet "B" represents a high level categorization (major group) 	OCS codes are alphanumeric (2 alphabets before a number) For example, code: BA010101 (administration clerk)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each alphabet is followed by six digits number (providing differentiation at different levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first alphabet “B” represents a high level categorization (major group) • The second alphabet “A” represents second level categorisation (sub major) • Each alphabet is followed by six digits number (providing differentiation at different levels)
Occupation Descriptors	No descriptors	Occupation descriptors that define each occupation to reflect occupational specialisation areas

6. Linking posts to the Occupational Classification Code in the (OCS): Occupational Dictionary

To be able to link posts to occupations in the dictionary, there should be an understanding of the organisational structure and the functions of posts on the structure. Which means that each post within the organisation should have a profile which outlines the main objectives of the post, the activities and functions of the post/s and the inherent requirements (i.e. minimum education and experience required).

6.1 Mapping posts to occupations

6.1.1 Identify functional areas (Branches/ Business Units) in the department (derived from the organisational structure)

6.1.2 Identify from the 9 major categories in the dictionary, which ones are applicable in the department. Then focus on those categories to map posts (e.g., elementary, managers, professionals, clerical support workers, etc)

6.1.3 Identify posts in the department (derived from the functional structure)

- How many posts are on the structure?
- What are the main objectives, activities, functions of the posts
- Compile a list of post titles in the department e.g., Labour Relations Officer, Engineer, Medical Doctor, Agricultural Economist, etc.

6.1.4 Selecting the appropriate occupation in the OCS (each occupation has a unique code) by determining the following:

- Locate where the occupation is classified in the OCS (unit, minor, sub-major and major group)
- Read the occupation descriptor (Refer to Annexure A of the dictionary for a list of occupations and descriptors) and compare it to the outputs of the post to be mapped. The majority of occupations in the OCS have a descriptor that describes the occupation's output. If the descriptor associated with an occupation title does not relate to the output of the post title in your department then a more appropriate occupation title must be identified by mapping the post output to the appropriate descriptor.
- Identify similarities (between the post and occupation) in terms of skill level, specialisation and knowledge base.

NB: Not all post titles are reflected on the OCS as an occupation. It is therefore important to interpret the appropriate match in terms of similarity of the criteria mentioned above. Occupations classified in the same category, are usually defined in terms of the same skill level. A number of posts can be linked to one occupation.

- Focus should not be on the post levels. Remove all indicators of seniority (e.g., the following posts- candidate engineer, engineer, senior engineer, principal engineer- generally represents one occupation and should therefore be linked to one occupation, i.e., civil or mechanical or environmental engineer). Only when the indicator would not have a bearing on the occupation that the post relates to, then the level should not be removed e.g., Chief Financial Officer relates to a management position which should be mapped to the manager category in the OCS (Chief Financial Officer, Code: CB010201). Therefore, "Chief" should not be removed as removal would lead to the post being associated with an occupation in the Professionals category.
- Remove all appointment levels relating to grade or level of employment (e.g., the following posts- Staff nurse grade 1, Staff nurse grade 2, Staff nurse grade 3, should be interpreted as one occupation and they should be linked to one occupation in the OCS, i.e., Staff nurse, (Code: FD010201)
- The above approach will reduce the list of post titles that needs to be mapped to the OCS. Simplifying the list will ensure that there is consistency when mapping post titles to occupations and occupational codes in the department.
- Ultimately, a table should be compiled that links all the posts to an OCS code.

6.2 Completing the translation table

To translate from the current OCS to the new OCS, a translation table attached to the determination as Annexure A should be completed as follows, e.g.,

- Name of Department
- Name and surname of the individual occupying the position
- Post title
- Persal number
- Current OCS code
- New OCS code
- Rank/ Salary code
- Appointment number

The table below contains an example:

Department	Name&Surname	Post title	Persal number	Current OCS		New OCS		Rank/salary code	Appointment number
				Occupation	Current Code	Occupation	New code		
XX	XX	Cleaner	XX	Cleaners in offices workshops hospitals etc.	A1020000	Office Cleaner	AA010104	XX	XX
XX	XX	Messenger	XX	Messengers porters & deliverers	A2010000	Messenger	AE020101	XX	XX
XX	XX	Clerk: Finance	XX	Financial clerks and credit controllers	B1010200	Finance clerk	BC010101	XX	XX
XX	XX	Library assistant	XX	Library mail and related clerks	B1010300	Library assistant	BD010101	XX	XX
XX	XX	Head of Department	XX	Head of Department/Chief Executive officer	C6010100	Head of National Department	CA010101	XX	XX
XX	XX	Director: Communication	XX	Senior Managers	C6010200	Communication and Marketing Manager	CB020101	XX	XX

Department	Name&Surname	Post title	Persal number	Current OCS		New OCS		Rank/salary code	Appointment number
				Occupation	Current Code	Occupation	New code		
XX	XX	Deputy Director: Internal Audit - if the post is inherently managerial in nature, then it should be linked to the manager category; - if the post is more specialised with limited managerial responsibilities, it should be linked to the professional category.	XX	Financial and related professionals OR Risk management and security services	C6020100 C6030200	Middle Manager: Internal Audit related OR Internal Auditor	CC011201 DC020205	XX	XX
XX	XX	Social Auxiliary worker	XX	Auxiliary and related workers	F1010000	Social Auxiliary Worker	FA010202	XX	XX

6.3 What to do if an appropriate occupation can't be found

During the mapping, if a suitable occupation cannot be found to map to a specific post title, the structure of the OCS should be used to guide to the most appropriate occupation, e.g., mapping an Agriculture Technician to the OCS,

6.3.1 Start by finding a descriptor at Annexure A of the dictionary.

Descriptor: Performs tests and experiments, and provides technical support to assist agricultural scientists and technologists in areas such as research, production, servicing and marketing.

6.3.2 Check which of the 9 Major categories' descriptors best represent the stated occupation descriptor.

Technicians and Associate Technical Occupations: includes occupations whose main tasks require technical knowledge and experience in different fields, including physical and applied sciences or social sciences and humanities. They perform mostly technical support and related tasks connected with maintenance and research and the application of scientific, social or artistic concepts and operational methods and government regulations.

6.3.3 Check Annexure B of the dictionary (occupational categories and codes)

Check the lower levels of classification and locate which sub major, minor, unit category and occupation best represents the occupation descriptor. The idea is to drill down from the highest level of classification to the lowest level of classification and find the fit that is closest to the post description, even when the post and occupation titles are not exactly the same, i.e., Agriculture Technician and Agricultural Technician (HA030201), e.g.,

Sub-Major Category	Code	Minor Category	Code	Unit Category	Code	Occupations	Codes	
Science & engineering technicians	HA000000	Life Science Technicians and Related Associate Professionals	HA030000	Life Science Technicians (Excluding Medical)	HA030100	Life Science Technician	HA030101	
						Environmental Science Technician	HA030102	
					Agricultural and Forestry Technicians	HA030200	Agricultural Technician	HA030201
							Forestry Technician	HA030202
				Forestry Research Technician			HA030203	

6.3.4 Each occupational category has an option of a “not elsewhere classified” classification. Should an occupation still not be found after following the above process, the “not elsewhere classified” option should be used as an exception. It should be noted that this selection should be used as a last option, as it does not help with managing information for reporting and decision making purposes. It was created to allow for those occupations that might have been omitted, for consideration during the review of the OCS in future.

Sub-Major Category	Code	Minor Category	Code	Unit Category	Code	Occupations	Code
Elementary Workers not Elsewhere classified	AF000000	Elementary Workers not Elsewhere classified	AF010000	Elementary Workers not Elsewhere classified	AF010100	Elementary Workers not Elsewhere classified	AF010101
Clerical Support Workers not Elsewhere Classified	BE000000	Clerical Support Workers not Elsewhere Classified	BE010000	Clerical Support Workers not Elsewhere Classified	BE010100	Clerical Support Workers not Elsewhere Classified	BE010101
Managers not Elsewhere Classified	CD000000	Managers not Elsewhere Classified	CD010000	Managers not Elsewhere Classified	CD010100	Managers not Elsewhere Classified	CD010101
Professionals not Elsewhere Classified	DF000000	Professionals not Elsewhere Classified	DF010000	Professionals not Elsewhere Classified	DF010100	Professionals not Elsewhere Classified	DF010101
Plant, machine operators and assemblers not elsewhere classified	ED000000	Plant, machine operators and assemblers not elsewhere classified	ED010000	Plant, machine operators and assemblers not elsewhere classified	ED010100	Plant, machine operators and assemblers not elsewhere classified	ED010101
Protective and Rescue Service workers, Social and Health Sciences Supplementary and support personnel not elsewhere classified	FF000000	Protective and Rescue Service workers, Social and Health Sciences Supplementary and support personnel not elsewhere classified	FF010000	Protective and Rescue Service workers, Social and Health Sciences Supplementary and support personnel not elsewhere classified	FF010100	Protective and Rescue Service workers, Social and Health Sciences Supplementary and support personnel not elsewhere classified	FF010101

Sub-Major Category	Code	Minor Category	Code	Unit Category	Code	Occupations	Code
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers not elsewhere classified	GH000000	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers not elsewhere classified	GH010000	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery and Related Workers not Elsewhere Classified	GH010100	Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery and Related Workers not Elsewhere Classified	GH010101
				Craft and Related Workers not Elsewhere Classified	GH010200	Craft and Related Workers not Elsewhere Classified	GH010201
Technicians and associate technical occupations not elsewhere classified	HF000000	Technicians and associate technical occupations not elsewhere classified	HF010000	Technicians and associate technical occupations not elsewhere classified	HF010100	Technicians and associate technical occupations not elsewhere classified	HF010101