

**Step 1: Understanding the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Guidelines**

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The Bureau of Labor Statistics has published Classification Guidelines as part of their SOC user guide to ensure that all users of occupational data classify workers the same way. Although developed for SOC, the basic principles also apply to O\*NET-SOC

**Classification Guidelines**

In order to ensure that all users of occupational data classify workers the same way, the following classification principles should be followed.

1. The Classification covers all occupations in which work is performed for pay or profit, including work performed in family-operated enterprises by family members who are not directly compensated. It excludes occupations unique to volunteers. Each occupation is assigned to only one occupation at the lowest level of the classification.
2. Occupations are classified based upon work performed, skills, education, training, and credentials.
3. Supervisors of professional and technical workers usually have a background similar to the workers they supervise, and are therefore classified with the workers they supervise. Likewise, team leaders, lead workers and supervisors of production, sales, and service workers who spend at least 20 percent of their time performing work similar to the workers they supervise are classified with the workers they supervise.
4. First-line managers and supervisors of production, service, and sales workers who spend more than 80 percent of their time performing supervisory activities are classified separately in the appropriate supervisor category, since their work activities are distinct from those of the workers they supervise. First-line managers are generally found in smaller establishments where they perform both supervisory and management functions, such as accounting, marketing, and personnel work.
5. Apprentices and trainees should be classified with the occupations for which they are being trained, while helpers and aides should be classified separately.
6. If an occupation is not included as a distinct detailed occupation in the structure, it is classified in the appropriate residual occupation. Residual occupations contain all occupations within a major, minor or broad group that are not classified separately.
7. When workers may be classified in more than one occupation, they should be classified in the occupation that requires the highest level of skill. If there is no measurable difference in skill requirements, workers are included in the occupation they spend the most time.
8. Data collection and reporting agencies should classify workers at the most detailed level possible. Different agencies may use different levels of aggregation, depending on their ability to collect data, and the requirements of users.

Users should code to the residual classifications (also known as the "All Others") ending with O\*NET-SOC code .99 when there is no other appropriate classification.

Jobs should be coded to the most detailed level O\*NET-SOC code appropriate.

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| Step 2: Understanding the Occupational Code Assignment (OCA) Process |
| **Understanding the Occupational Code Assignment (OCA) Process**  **What is an occupational code assignment?**  An occupational code assignment (OCA) is a process established to help occupational information users relate a job title or occupational specialty to an O\*NET-SOC occupation. O\*NET (The Occupational Information Network) is a SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) based system. Businesses, training and educational institutions, labor and occupational organizations, and professional associations can use the OCA process to determine if a job title or occupational specialty is recognized within the O\*NET-SOC system and the U.S. labor market.  **What is the O\*NET-SOC System?**  The O\*NET-SOC system organizes the work done in our nation into approximately 1000 occupational categories. These occupations have associated data on the importance and level of a range of occupational characteristics, including Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, Tasks, and General Work Activities. All of this occupational information has been compiled into a database and is available as a free, downloadable file at <http://www.onetcenter.org/database.html>. Furthermore, an internet application of the database, referred to as O\*NET OnLine, allows the database to be easily viewed and utilized for searches of occupational information.  The O\*NET-SOC system is based on the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. The Office of Management and Budget has mandated the use of this classification system for all federal agencies that collect and disseminate occupational information.  How do I obtain an occupational code assignment?  Prior to obtaining an OCA, it is advisable to conduct a thorough search of O\*NET Code Connector to determine if the occupational code and title you are seeking already exists within the O\*NET-SOC system. The O\*NET Code Connector was developed to assist workforce professionals in coding jobs. If you are unable to match your job title and information to an O\*NET-SOC occupational code and title, you will benefit from using the OCA process.  To obtain an OCA, you must submit occupational information, via an OCA Form-Part A, to the National Center for O\*NET Development. The submitted information will be reviewed by an occupational analyst. Upon analysis, the analyst will send you an OCA Form-Part B that will list and explain the code assignment.  **What is the importance of the occupational code assignment process?**  After receiving a code and title assignment, you will be able review detailed information on the occupation within the O\*NET-SOC system and link to other sources of national, state, and local SOC based occupational information. For instance, within O\*NET OnLine, you can link to America's Career InfoNet, <http://www.acinet.org/acinet>, a resource that provides occupational employment and wage estimates.  If the job title you submit is new to the O\*NET-SOC system and the analyst codes it to an existing occupation, we will add the title to the lay title file. This file is updated on a regularly scheduled basis and is one of the files used to facilitate occupational searches within both O\*NET Online and O\*NET Code Connector. Individuals may also see the submitted title, along with other related job and occupational titles, when reviewing O\*NET occupational reports.  Submitting information to the OCA process, however, does not necessarily mean that the O\*NET-SOC system will classify this information as a new O\*NET-SOC code and title. Such a designation cannot be made based on a single identification of a new job title or occupational specialty. Rather, new O\*NET-SOC codes and titles will be determined based on considerations of frequency and prevalence in multiple sources, including transactions analysis of entries into online job banks and other occupationally relevant websites.  **What if I have further inquiries?**  For further information on the O\*NET-SOC system or to learn about other products or programs related to the O\*NET Project, see the National O\*NET Project website at <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/>. For specific questions on O\*NET Online or the O\*NET Code Connector, e-mail: [o-net@dol.gov](mailto:%20o-net@dol.gov); call: 202-693-3660; or write to the: O\*NET Project, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N5637, Washington, D.C. 20210-0002. |

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| Step 3: Submit OCA Form - Part A |
| Submit OCA Form - Part A  A downloadable version of The OCA Form - Part A is available below. It is being provided in advance of a web-based version of this form that is currently under development. Please answer the items on the form to the best of your ability and submit your form to the National Center for O\*NET Development, using the address information provided below. The form is provided in two formats: Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF. The latter format requires the freely available Acrobat Reader software. (Download the [Adobe Acrobat Reader.](http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html#reader))  The National Center for O\*NET Development will process your request within 14 business days. If we need additional information, we will contact you using the information you provide on the completed form. After completing our analysis of your request, we will send you an OCA Form - Part B that will identify and explain the code assignment.  Download:  [OCA Form - Part A](http://intranet.onetcenter.org/codeconnector/docs/OCAForm-PartA.doc) (MSWord - 180 kb)  Note: Using the MSWord version, you may download and complete the form at your work station and both save and print the form. To take advantage of the built-in spell-check functionality, you must enable macros in MSWord. You can return the form to the O\*NET Center as an email attachment, by mail, or by fax.  [OCA Form - Part A](http://intranet.onetcenter.org/codeconnector/docs/OCAForm-PartA.pdf) (PDF - 214 kb)  Note: Using the PDF version, you can print the form and manually complete it. Then, either mail or fax it back to the National Center for O\*NET Development.  Address: National Center for O\*NET Development 700 Wade Avenue Raleigh, North Carolina 27605 E-mail: [onet@ncmail.net](mailto:onet@ncmail.net) Fax: 919-715-0778 |