

New York State Department of Civil Service
DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION

CLASSIFICATION STANDARD

Occ. Code 3852200

Historian, Grade 18 3852200
Senior Historian, Grade 22 3852300

Brief Description of Class Series

Historians are responsible for professional historical research, publications work, and curatorial duties related to New York State history. These positions are classified only in the New York State Education Department.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Historian: full performance level; under the supervision of a Senior Historian, works in the State Museum and conducts research as part of a major research or collections program on the history of New York State.

Senior Historian: advanced performance level; under the general direction of the Chief Curator (History), is responsible for either a major component of a major research and collections program or a small-scale independent research or collections program on the history of New York State; may supervise staff in the technical aspects of research. Incumbents of these positions conduct research activities on large segments of research programs with only general guidance as to objectives, methodology and reporting, and have wide latitude for independent judgment concerning methods of conducting research projects.

Related Classes

Museum Scientists perform scientific research that typically is connected to the State Museum collections and/or to New York State and its larger global context. Incumbents write research papers that frequently result in published, peer-reviewed studies and otherwise disseminate the results of their research and share their knowledge. They curate assigned collections related to their areas of expertise, compete for grants from a variety of sources to fund their research and collections work, and take part in exhibit planning to ensure the accuracy of the exhibits. The areas of expertise include biology, archaeology, geology, paleontology, and other areas of scientific inquiry.

Illustrative Duties

Historian

Conducts independent research as part of major research programs.

Prepares scholarly research reports, usually as a section of a major project report, in written, graphic, audio or visual form.

Organizes research material using approved methods, and develops automated research and statistical databases, supervises data entry, and verifies accuracy and integrity of databases.

Conducts complicated computer searches, retrieves data in a variety of formats, and constructs new formats for specific needs.

Prepares routine correspondence related to assigned areas of study, and answers questions and identifies historical objects brought to the State Museum by individuals and organizations conducting research in New York State.

Identifies and reports on items and collections submitted to the Museum and makes information available from the State's history collections as well as from published and unpublished manuscripts and documents.

Develops, maintains, and curates subsections of the large and varied State Museum history collection.

Assures proper documentation, identification, authentication, and storage of the collections, and participates in policy making for collections, with special emphasis on archival material and conservation.

Assists in the development of Museum exhibits and plans, and may take technical responsibility for implementation, particularly as it concerns object safety and integrity.

Senior Historian

Initiates and conducts independent scholarly research projects as part of major research programs or carries out smaller scale independent research programs.

Locates and uses primary and secondary information sources, such as books, articles, archival records, photographs and films, graphic representations, ethnographic field work, and oral histories from living informants and from material culture.

Devises the most appropriate research methods and techniques to accomplish each research assignment and schedules work to meet State Museum priorities.

Prepares substantial scholarly publications based on personal fieldwork and on the study of the collections in the State Museum and in other institutions. Reviews research proposals, manuscripts and public materials, and lectures and addresses various professional associations and public meetings.

Develops, maintains, and curates a large and varied New York history collection in various areas of study following the general guideline of collections policies of the State Museum.

Conducts research to assure proper documentation, identification, authentication, and storage of collections.

Develops policies for collections management with special emphasis on archival materials and conservation.

Initiates the development of Museum exhibits and plans, and takes technical responsibility for the implementation of large and complex exhibits.

Provides historical content to the public through a variety of media including websites, newsletters, podcasts, and public talks and lectures.

May supervise lower-level professional staff in the technical aspects of research.

Minimum Qualifications

Historian

Open Competitive: Bachelor's degree in history, public history, or American studies*, and two years of professional experience in collections management and/or research; OR a master's degree in history, public history, or American studies*, and one year of professional experience in collections management and/or research.

Senior Historian

Promotion: One year of permanent service as a Historian.

Open Competitive: Master's degree in history, public history, art history, American studies*, or museum studies*, and three years of professional experience in collections management and/or research; OR a Ph.D. in history, public history, art history, or American studies*.

*Including or supplemented with nine credit hours in history.

Note: Classification Standards illustrate the nature, extent and scope of duties and responsibilities of the classes they describe. Standards cannot and do not include all of the work that might be appropriately performed by a class. The minimum qualifications above are those which were required for appointment at the time the Classification Standard was written. Please contact the Division of Staffing Services for current information on minimum qualification requirements for appointment or examination.

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