Manual of Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations

January 2025

Index

1. Overview of Saudi Unified Classification of Occupation

1.1. Introduction

– The General Authority for Statistics is considered the entity responsible for statistics and is the sole official reference for conducting statistical work. It serves as the technical supervisor and regulator of such work. To achieve its objectives, it has several responsibilities, including (preparing national statistical manuals and classifications according to international standards, utilizing them, and working on updating and developing them whenever necessary).

– The Kingdom has witnessed several initiatives to develop professional and occupational classifications by various entities within the country, as well as specialized professional standards that directly impact the classification of professions and jobs across multiple government and private sectors. As a result, it has become important to unify all these initiatives and produce a comprehensive classification to be adopted by all government and private entities, serving as the primary reference for all related statistical processes.

– The Saudi Unified Occupational Classification provides a system for classifying and organizing occupational information obtained through censuses, statistical surveys, and administrative records. This classification follows the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), endorsed by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Statistical Commission, and is a revision of the previous international version (ISCO-88), upon which it is based.

– The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations is a hierarchical classification consisting of five levels, allowing for the classification of all jobs worldwide into 433 international units. These units form the most detailed level of the classification structure and are grouped into 130 minor groups, 43 sub-major groups, and 10 major groups, based on their similarity in terms of occupational level and the specialization required for the jobs at the fifth level. This structure allows for the production of relatively detailed and internationally comparable data.

– The Saudi Unified Occupational Classification is used to collect and publish statistics from sources such as population censuses, labor force surveys, other household surveys, employer surveys, and other sources. It is also used by entities in their systems for purposes such as classifying workers, linking job seekers with job vacancies, educational planning, reporting industrial accidents, managing worker compensation, and regulating labor-related migration.

– The General Authority for Statistics was tasked with preparing a manual for classifying all occupations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, covering all economic activities in both the public and private sectors. This ensures the existence of a unified and consistent classification reference, both locally and internationally, which is continually used by all entities concerned with occupational classifications in Saudi Arabia. This task is based on the Council of Ministers' decision No. (540) dated 16/9/1440 H, The second clause , which includes:

1. A technical team is to be formed within the General Authority for Statistics, with participation from representatives of the Authority, the Ministry of Civil Service, the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, the Secretariat of the Military Service Council, the National Information

Center, and the Human Resources Development Fund. The team is also authorized to invite any other entity deemed important to participate in any matters under discussion or study.

2. The technical team shall work on preparing a Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations, **taking into account the following:**
   - It must be aligned with the 2008 International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) and its subsequent updates.
   - It should include occupational descriptions derived from the Arab Standard Classification of Occupations and the descriptions used by relevant entities.
   - The technical team must complete the classification preparation within a period not exceeding six months from the date of the decision's issuance and submit the outcomes for the necessary regulatory procedures to be completed.

Accordingly, a technical team was formed within the General Authority for Statistics, chaired by the Authority and comprising members from various government entities, with the aim of reviewing the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations to align with the strategic directions and developments taking place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which in turn required making a number of adjustments in certain classification aspects while taking into account the latest global developments and best practices in the fields of occupational classification.

– This classification was approved by Cabinet Resolution No. (660) dated 24/10/1441H, which states in Clause (First: Approval of the Saudi Unified Occupational Classification in the accompanying form) and Clause Second: All ministries and government agencies must implement the classification — referred to in Clause (First) of this resolution — within their internal systems within twelve months from the date of this resolution, followed by a series of procedures to regulate the classification.

1.2. General objectives of reviewing the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations

All current occupational classification guides were reviewed and compared with leading international practices in this field to ensure access to a modern and integrated occupational classification system that meets the aspirations of the General Authority for Statistics on one hand and responds to the requirements of relevant entities on the other hand. Generally, this project included the following main phases:

1. Review the current approved national classifications in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which include the classification of the General Authority for Statistics, the Arab Standard Occupational Classification approved by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, and the public sector job classification approved by the Ministry of Civil Service.
2. Review the processes of mapping and comparing the three classifications, providing necessary recommendations to ensure their alignment.
3. Prepare the unified occupational classification guide in coordination with relevant government entities, as needed.

4. Prepare the occupational descriptions for all occupations agreed upon within the approved classification tier within the new classification hierarchy.

5. Provide technical support in the implementation phase for adopting the approved Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations.

This methodology aims to present the process of reviewing the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations, adopting the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), **including:**

1. Classification methodology

2. The classification structure in the alignment with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08)

3. Standards for preparing lists of occupations and titling rules

4. Occupations guide explaining the major groups and classification hierarchy

5. Occupational descriptions of the occupations classified in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations

1.3. Methodology of the Saudi Unified Classification of Occupation

- The process of classifying occupations is defined as a comprehensive and integrated process aimed at dividing jobs into various occupations. This division determines the type of work, the method of performing assigned tasks, and the qualification requirements. As a result, occupations are hierarchically divided into major groups, which branch into sub-major groups, and then into smaller groups, until reaching occupations, which represent the lowest occupational division in the lists of occupations.

- The importance of having a systematic and scientific occupational classification system is linked to a set of objectives, **which can be summarized as follows:**

    1. Collecting statistical data on the availability of occupations in the labor market easily, with a high degree of accuracy and detail.

    2. Matching labor market needs with the available occupations and identifying gaps.

    3. Developing plans to bridge the gap between supply and demand in the Saudi labor market by working with entities responsible for occupational qualifications, such as the Ministry of Education and others.

    4. Providing a common language for all human resources departments in both the public and private sectors across all economic sectors in the Kingdom.

The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations also adopts a set of global standards that countries follow when developing unified occupational classification systems at the national level. These can be summarized as follows:

- **Alignment:** The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations must be aligned and compatible with international classification systems and best global practices in this field.
- **Logical Basis:** The classification process should be logically structured according to the purpose it serves.
- **Consistency:** The approach used should be general and consistent, so that its rules are easily applied without the need for special rules to classify or divide certain occupations.
- **Comprehensiveness:** The method used should be comprehensive, covering all types of occupations and allowing for detailed classification into specific jobs.
- **Accuracy and Clarity:** The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations must include clear descriptive definitions for all occupations.
- **Ease of Use:** The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations should provide clear, guiding manuals that facilitate its continuous use and updating.

❖ Updating the Saudi Unified Classification of Occupation

This section addresses the processes and procedures followed by the authority as the sponsor of the classification for reviewing, modifying, and updating occupational descriptions. It also clarifies the justifications and reasons for the review and update processes, and how they are managed and implemented flexibly and effective manner.

The following points highlight several cases that may necessitate the need for an update or modification to an occupational description:

- New developments and advancements in the main activity or field to which the occupation belongs, changing its purpose and the nature of the tasks it performs.

- Significant advancements in technologies, methods, and knowledge related to the occupation, which alter the way the job is performed and the specifications of the jobholder.

- Convergence of work fields and activities, leading to the merging of two or more occupations into one, or specialized developments that necessitate splitting some occupations into more specific and specialized roles.

- Changes or additions to the specifications or requirements of the occupation, such as changes in educational qualifications and competencies.

2. Background for the creation of the Saudi Unified Classification of Occupation

The review process of the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations relies on the following methodology:

- Adhering to the standards and criteria of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08).
- Following the skill-based approach to classifying occupations (four skill levels and their definitions).
- Matching the classification levels (four classification levels, where the highest level sets the skill level for all subsequent levels).
- Using the names of the classification levels and their quantities as stated in ISCO-08 (including 10 major groups that branch down to the fourth level, which is the unit where occupations are listed).
- Applying the coding method used in ISCO-08 and ensuring its alignment.

❖ Criteria for Reviewing the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations

- Establishing a standardized approach to professional titles:
  - A. The job title should indicate the skill level (supervisory or individual contributor) of the occupation in alignment with the job description and nature of assigned tasks, ensuring the occupation can be easily understood from the name directly.
  - B. The title should not indicate a job title, job level, grade, or be specific to a particular entity or organizational structure.
  - C. The same job title should not be used for more than one occupation.
  - D. The job title should indicate the qualitative nature of the occupation (being directly or indirectly linked to the secondary group or unit under which the occupation falls) in a way that facilitates understanding of the specialized and technical field of the occupation.
  - E. The job title should be common and widely used among similar institutions in both public and private sectors, especially among practitioners and specialists in the profession.
  - F. The occupation name should be appropriate for the local general culture.
- Using classification boundary names from the International Standard Classification of Occupations with accurate translation to avoid confusion in classifying occupations under them
- Removing "occupational groups" from the classification tier, where the occupation tier is restricted to specific occupation names only.
- Eliminating detailed subdivisions that are not considered occupations but rather breakdowns of job functions and tasks.
- Adding new occupations that have emerged in both the Saudi and international labor markets.

3. Relationship of the Saudi Unified Classification of Occupation with Other Classifications

3.1. Relationship with Educational Classifications (e.g., International Standard Classification of Education- ISCED-11[1])

The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations (SSCO) is often used in conjunction with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) to analyze the relationship between educational attainment and employment. This helps in understanding the alignment between education levels and various occupations, as well as in workforce planning and policy development.

❖ **Linking Occupation with Academic Qualifications (Based on Skill Level and Type of Work)**

The major groups are directly linked to the education levels required for occupations within the group, according to the educational levels defined in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-11). The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations (SSCO) aligns its skill levels with these educational levels.

The table below illustrates the linkage between skill levels and the qualification levels recognized by the Classification, in addition to the education levels established by the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED-11

Skill Level	Education Levels ISCED-11	Education Level Description ISCED-11	Education Level Description Saudi Unified Occupational Classification
4	8	Doctor or equivalent	Doctorate degree
4	7	Master's or equivalent	Master degree (including vocational)
4	6	Bachelor's or equivalent	Bachelor degree (including vocational)
3	5	Short-cycle tertiary education	Diploma
3	4	Post-secondary non-tertiary education	Diploma
2	3	Upper secondary education	Higher secondary education
2	2	Lower secondary education	Lower secondary education
1	1	Elementary School	Primary education
1	0	Less than Elementary School	Less than primary education

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education [1]

3.2. Relationship with fields of education as per International Standard Classification for Fields of Education ISCED-13

The lists of fields of education and their branches were prepared in alignment with the international standards as stated in the International Standard Classification for Fields of Education ISCED-13.

The International Standard Classification of Education Fields uses three classification levels starting with the upper level of the broad field of education, the narrow field, which branches off into the detailed fields of education. In order to meet the needs of the Saudi labor market, the third limit detailing the fields of education has been relied upon when preparing academic requirements for Occupations.

The following is an example of a classification of international education fields:

Code	Broad Field	Code	Narrow Field	Code	Detailed Field
08	Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	081	Agriculture	0811	Crop and livestock production
				0812	Horticulture
		082	Forestry	0821	Forestry
		083	Fisheries	0831	Fisheries
		084	Veterinary	0841	Veterinary

3.3. Relationship with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08)

The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations (SSCO) closely aligns with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) issued by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This relationship is based on several aspects aimed at achieving compatibility between the two classifications while taking into account the specific needs of the Saudi labor market.

The SSCO is primarily based on the methodology and structure of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), which allows for comparability between occupational data at the national level with occupational data at the international level.

4. Conceptual Basis of the Saudi Unified Occupational Classification

4.1. The Classification Concept

The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations has also adopted the definition of "occupation" as stated in the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), as follows:

– An occupation refers to the type of work performed in a job. Accordingly, an occupation is defined as: "a set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity."

– The international classification distinguishes between occupations and jobs, with the classification being limited to occupations to meet the standards for preparing the classification. SSCO defines jobs as: "A set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person for a particular employer, including self-employment."

Below is an outline of the method used to structure the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations to align with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08):

1. **Defining the Major Groups**

    Defining the groups for the list of occupations is the cornerstone of the classification process, on which all subsequent sorting and grouping processes are based.

    - **Defining Major Groups by Skill Level**

    Skill refers to the ability to perform the tasks and duties associated with a particular occupation. Skill level refers to the complexity and scope of the tasks and duties to be performed. By determining the required skill level for the work, the major groups are identified, starting with supervisory and specialized jobs that require a high level of academic qualification, and descending to lower skill levels, such as manual jobs that do not require advanced education and require a limited amount of practical skills to perform.

    It is worth noting that after determining the major groups based on skill level, skill specialization is used to define and classify the sub-major groups within the major groups. It is also common in many classification systems to use skill specialization (qualitative division) to define some major groups for the purpose of balancing and simplifying the classification process, provided that this does not violate the main principle that these groups must include occupations requiring the same skill level.

    - **Skill Levels**

    The skill levels adopted in the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) are based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED11). **Below is a brief explanation of the four skill levels used in ISCO-08:**

- **Skill Level 1**

  This level involves occupations that require performing simple and routine manual or physical tasks, possibly using hand tools such as shovels or simple electrical equipment like vacuum cleaners. In some cases, completion of primary or basic education is required to achieve the competence needed for jobs in this level. Some jobs may require short on-the-job training.

- **Skill Level 2**

  This level involves occupations that require performing simple procedural tasks such as operating machinery, driving vehicles, and maintaining and repairing electrical and mechanical equipment. Competence in occupations at this level typically requires at least a secondary education. Some jobs may require on-the-job training, and in some cases, experience and training can substitute for formal education.

- **Skill Level 3**

  This level involves occupations that require performing complex technical and practical tasks requiring a significant amount of hands-on and procedural knowledge in specialized fields. Competence at this level is typically acquired through studies at higher education institutions for one to three years after completing secondary education, usually leading to a qualification below a bachelor's degree.

- **Skill Level 4**

  This level involves occupations that require complex problem-solving skills, decision-making, and analytical thinking, along with the application of a wide range of theoretical and practical knowledge in a specialized field. Competence is typically achieved through studies at higher education institutions for three to six years, leading to a bachelor's degree or higher. In some cases, in addition to formal education, extensive related experience and on-the-job training may be required.

2. **Defining the Classification Boundaries (Classification Groups)**

   - Defining Major Groups and Subsequent Groups

   The first four levels of classification in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations are aligned with the classification boundaries of ISCO by following the same method of grouping occupations into qualitative groups (grouping by type of work and its fields) for all classification levels below the top level, which is the major group. As previously explained, the major groups are determined based on skill level.

   The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations includes the addition of a fifth and final level, which is the occupation level.

The classification structure includes the following main topics:

1. Major Groups
2. Classification Groups (Boundaries) Sub-groups, minor groups, units
3. Occupation Name
4. Coding
5. Linking Occupation with Academic Qualifications (Based on Skill Level and Type of Work)

   - Education Levels

   - Fields of Education

6. Behavioral and Technical Competencies

1. Major groups

The major groups were identified in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations according to the four skill levels internationally approved by the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). The following table shows the major groups and skill levels defined by the International Standard Classification of Occupations:

Code	Major Group	Skill Level
1	Managers	4-3
2	Professionals	4
3	Technicians and associate professionals	3
4	Clerical support workers	2
5	Service and sales workers	2
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	2
7	Craft and related trades workers	2
8	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	2
9	Elementary occupations	1
0	Armed forces occupations	1-2-4

2. Classification Groups (Classification Boundaries)

Determining the classification tiers for all tiers subsequent to the major group are based on the type of work performed (skill specialization) within the subgroups, as the specialization segmentation begins at the second tier of groups reaching the lowest (i.e. from the sub-major group to the unit group). It is also possible to define major groups by specialization for creating balance, consistency and simplification of the aggregation processes, nevertheless with the condition of identifying one skill level for the major

group (each group has only one skill level except for one sub-group in the Managers major group and the Armed forces occupations group, as stated in the International Standard Classification of Occupations).

The following table shows the distribution of occupational groups in the five-tiered hierarchical structure:

Order	Classification Tier	Definition
1	Major Group	Represent the highest tier and is cascaded into sub-major groups (e.g. Professionals Group)
2	Sub-major group	Represent the second tier and is cascaded into minor groups (e.g. Science and engineering professionals Group)
3	Minor Group	Represent the third tier and is cascaded into unit groups (e.g. Physical and earth science professionals Group)
4	Unit	Represent the fourth tier and is cascaded into occupations (e.g. Physicists and astronomers Group)
5	Occupation	Represent the fifth tier and is considered as the main statistical unit in the classification (e.g. Physicist)

<u>**Characteristics of the fifth classification tier in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations:**</u>

An **occupation** is defined as a group of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity, where the description of tasks is comprehensive so as to accommodate the detailed jobs to be mapped by the various entities from all sectors. Occupational description defines the minimum requirements that must be met by professionals (in terms of education level, examples of education fields, technical and behavioral skills).

Occupations can be similar in nature of work, level and type of academic education, but differ according to the nature of tasks and duties required:

- When some occupations are similar in nature of work, general tasks and duties, level and type of education, the occupations are merged into one generic occupation.
- The broad scope principle was followed, which accommodates several similar occupations, whereas a narrow scope approach is followed whenever the need for specialization increases and where differences between the occupations appear in the way work is performed.
- Job levels are not considered when classifying occupations, job ranks, or the different organizational structures of any entities.

Formatted: Font: 10 pt, Complex Script Font: 10 pt

Formatted: Font: Bold, Complex Script Font: Bold

Formatted: Pattern: Clear (Background 1)

3. Occupation nomenclature

Occupations titles mostly reflect the type of work to clearly indicate what the occupation is, for all employers to identify the occupations appropriate for their jobs.

4. Technical and behavioral competencies

– Behavioral competencies

In this stage, the general technical and behavioral competencies of the occupation were defined, so that the framework of behavioral competencies was referred to in accordance with international best practices.

– Technical competencies

In accordance with international best practices, assigning technical competencies to national occupational classifications is based on the European Skills / Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO), which is considered one of the best global sources that can be relied upon in building technical competencies at the level of occupations, bearing in mind that this European standard is holistic and generic.

The following summary serves as a roadmap for the alignment between the International Standard Classification of Occupations and the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations:

Classification Categories	International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO 08	Saudi Unified Occupational Classification SSCO
Major groups	10	10
Sub-major groups	43	43
Minor groups	130	130
Units groups	436	433
Occupation (Tier 5)	-	2048

– (10) major groups (same as the international standard classification of occupations ISCO-08)

The major group represents very broad areas of work and not specific types of work performed. There are ten major groups, each identified by one digit from 0-9.

– (43) sub-major groups (same as the international standard classification of occupations ISCO-08)

Sub-major groups are sub-divisions within the major groups cascaded according to the general field of work.

– (130) minor groups (same as the international standard classification of occupations ISCO-08)

Minor groups are sub-groups within sub-groups divided according to types of work sub-fields.

- (433) units (same as the international standard classification of occupations ISCO-08)

  They are subsections of the minor groups. Their classification is more precise and more detailed than those included within the minor groups, and directly indicates the specialized types of work.

- (2048) occupation (the fifth tier of the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations)

  They are subdivisions of units and are the most detailed tier of the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations.

The following table illustrates the statistics of the classification boundaries and the number of occupations included in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations:

Major Group Code	Major group	Sub-major Group	Minor Group	Unit	Occupation*
1	Managers	4	11	31	325
2	Professionals	6	27	92	640
3	Technicians and associate professionals	5	20	84	376
4	Clerical support workers	4	8	27	52
5	Service and sales workers	4	13	39	109
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	3	9	18	53
7	Craft and related trades workers	5	14	66	179
8	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	3	14	40	219
9	Elementary occupations	6	11	33	77
0	Armed forces occupations	3	3	3	18
	Total	**43**	**130**	**433**	**2048**

The following table illustrates a comparison between the number of groups at each level of the Saudi Unified Occupational Classification and the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08).

Group Code	Major group	Sub-major groups	Minor groups	Unit groups
1	Managers	4 (4)	11 (11)	31 (31)
2	Professionals	6 (6)	27 (27)	92 (92)
3	Technicians and associate professionals	5 (5)	20 (20)	84 (84)
4	Clerical support workers	4 (4)	8 (8)	27 (29)
5	Service and sales workers	4 (4)	13 (13)	39 (40)
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	3 (3)	9 (9)	18 (18)
7	Craft and related trades workers	5 (5)	14 (14)	66 (66)
8	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	3 (3)	14 (14)	40 (40)
9	Elementary occupations	6 (6)	11 (11)	33 (33)
0	Armed forces occupations	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)
	Total SSCO (ISCO-08)	43 (43)	130 (130)	433 (436)
Notes: Numbers for ISCO-08 are shown in brackets .				

4.2. Criteria for Preparation of Occupational Descriptions for the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations

1. Criteria for Writing Occupational Descriptions in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations

Occupational descriptions are an integral part of building any professional or job classification system, as the concept of an occupation cannot be fully understood without describing the type of work performed and the main tasks involved. These descriptions help to identify what specific jobs or duties fall under the occupation, based on the requirements of the entities using the classification. While job titles provide a general idea of the occupation, the detailed occupational description offers precise information about the qualifications and skills required for individuals in those roles.

Based on this understanding, the lists for the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations (SSCO) were developed, including a range of occupations characterized by a high degree of generality and comprehensiveness, reflecting the nature of the occupations as previously defined.

2. Guidelines for Preparing Occupational Descriptions

Just as the occupation lists in the classification were systematically and consistently developed, general principles and standards were followed in writing the occupational descriptions, in line with global best practices, as outlined in the official guide for writing occupational descriptions for the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations, which was prepared before the descriptions were written for the occupation lists:

- The prepared occupational descriptions are kept general and non-specific, allowing entities to adapt them to their diverse needs.

- The use of correct and proper Arabic language is essential, especially when drafting key fields such as the occupation summary and the main tasks and duties.

- Sentences should begin with a verb infinitive appropriate to the nature of the occupation being described.

- Avoid using any technical terms, jargon, or phrases that may have multiple meanings, as well as avoiding abbreviations, to ensure clarity and ease of understanding for all concerned parties.

- Avoid referencing gender when describing occupations and using pronouns, except in cases where the occupation is specifically for women.

3. Occupational Description Template

Some parameters were established for designing the occupational description card and the required fields to specify the requirements that must be available in occupation holders, according to the following:

- Classification Data
- Occupation Name
- Occupation Code
- Occupation Summary: Description of the occupation in two or three sentences at most. The user should be able to understand the nature of the occupation (what its purpose is and what it does) by reading this field only
- Main Tasks of the Occupation: Up to five detailed tasks are clarified. The description of these main tasks should follow the instructions provided in the occupational descriptions preparation guide
- Minimum Educational Level: The minimum educational level for entering the occupation is specified
- Field of Education: Up to three educational fields suitable for the occupation
- Behavioral Competencies: Up to five competencies
- Technical Competencies: Up to five competencies

The following table defines the fields of the occupational description card and the sources used to populate these fields:

#	Field	Definition	Source
1	Classification data	Position of the occupation in the classification and unit group to which it belongs	List of Occupations
2	Occupation title	The name given to the occupations describing its type of work	List of Occupations
3	Occupation Code	The digital identifier or code assigned to the occupation within the general framework of the Unified Classification of Occupations	List of Occupations
4	Summary description	Brief description of the hey accountabilities describing the main purpose of the occupation and its importance, this summary is brief and holistic and may be used by different entities	Text written according to the Occupation Description Guide
5	key accountabilities	A set of tasks and duties that describe the occupation in a comprehensive and generic way covering its main activities in most cases, characterized as generic same as in the summary but with some detail	Text written according to the Occupation Description Guide
6	Education Level	The minimum level of educational qualification required for the occupation holder to be able to carry out his/her work in an acceptable level of competence and effectiveness. This field is directly related to the position of the occupation in the classification	Table of Education Levels (according to ISCED-11)
7	Education Field	The field of education that allows the occupation holder to perform in an acceptable level of competence	Table of Education Fields (according to ISCED-13)
8	Behavioral competencies	A set of behavioral skills, abilities and knowledge that can be observed, measured and developed by professionals. The behavioral competencies support professionals in performing their duties in an outstanding manner.	Behavioral Competencies
9	Technical competencies	A set of technical skills, abilities and knowledge that can be observed, measured and developed by the owner of the profession that enable him/her to perform the job effectively and accurately	Technical Competencies

4.3. Guidelines for Preparing Occupational Descriptions

This paragraph aims to provide the guidelines upon which the occupational descriptions for the professions listed in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations were developed, **in order to achieve the following objectives:**

- Ensure the adoption of modern human resource management practices in the preparation of occupational descriptions.
- Standardize and unify the basic procedures and processes related to occupational descriptions for future updates and development of occupations in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations.
- Unify the general understanding of the occupation and prevent varying interpretations of the occupation's name based on different perspectives.

The guidelines outlined in this manual are followed when developing job descriptions:

- Definition of Occupational Description: A description of the type of work performed and its main features, in addition to a set of requirements, known as occupational requirements, that must be met by the jobholder to perform the work with an appropriate level of competence and effectiveness.
- Definition of Occupational Description Template: The document that outlines and describes the key aspects of the occupation, such as the job title, the nature of the tasks and responsibilities, the qualifications required to perform the job, and the competencies required for efficient and effective performance.

1. Development of the Occupational Description

First Step: Filling in the Fields Related to Occupational Classification

- In this step, the fields related to occupational classification are filled in based on the occupational titles and specific numerical data provided in the classification.
- The data for these fields is derived from the prepared classification.
- These fields serve as the identification and reference section for the occupation.

Second Step: Filling in the Fields Related to the Job Summary and Tasks

- In this stage, the fields related to the tasks and responsibilities of the occupation are written.
- This stage relies on inputs provided by the technical team and stakeholders, particularly the job and occupational descriptions submitted.
- The job summary should be clear, concise, and general, providing comprehensive information to give a general understanding of the occupation's tasks when read.
- The focus is solely on the general tasks and duties of the occupation, without mentioning temporary or emergency responsibilities.
- The tasks are written in a general manner to ensure they can be easily used by relevant entities.

Third Step: Filling in the Fields Related to Job Requirements

- At this stage, the fields related to job requirements are completed, particularly the qualification level and field of education.
- The qualification level represents the academic degree required to perform the job efficiently, and this field is filled in based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-11), which serves as a reference for organizing educational programs and qualifications by levels and fields of education.
- The "Field of Education" field specifies the type of educational qualification required, reflecting the nature of the occupation. This field is filled in based on ISCED-13.

Fourth Step: Filling in the Fields Related to Behavioral and Technical Competencies

- In this stage, the general behavioral and technical competencies for the occupation are identified, based on global best practices in defining competencies and skills in most occupational fields, as well as some international references that can be relied upon for competency building. One of the most important references is the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications, and Occupations (ESCO) Classification, focusing on the fact that this guide is broad and general, allowing various entities to specify the competencies they need, whether technical or behavioral. It also gives private and government entities the opportunity to develop their own detailed frameworks according to their specific needs.

4.4. Classified Units

The basic unit of classification is the occupation. In the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations, an occupation is defined as a group of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity.

A person may be associated with an occupation through their current main job, a secondary job, a future job, or a previous job.

4.5. Classification Criteria

The Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations (SSCO) relies on a set of criteria used to classify occupations into consistent and organized occupational groups. **These criteria are based on conceptual foundations that support the classification of occupations in a way that reflects skill levels and specialization. The main criteria used in the classification are:**

- **Skill Level**

Skill level refers to the degree of complexity and difficulty required to perform the tasks associated with the job. This includes the level of education or training needed and the time required to acquire the skills to successfully perform the occupational tasks.

This criterion is used to determine the skill levels required for jobs and classify them into groups based on the complexity of the work.

- **Skill Specialization**

This criterion addresses the level of specialization needed to perform occupational tasks. It includes the knowledge or skill domain to which the work belongs and the technical expertise or knowledge that a person must possess to perform the job effectively.

5. Coding

- **Determining the Number of Digits for the Classification Code**

The four classification boundaries of the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations were coded based on the same coding method used in the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), which assigns only one digit for each classification boundary. Two digits were assigned for the fifth boundary (the occupation boundary) to accommodate the number of occupations listed under the fourth boundary of the international classification.

- **The coding process must meet the following criteria:**

- Compatibility with the type of electronic systems used.
- The code should serve its purpose and provide the necessary information.
- The number of digits, whether numeric or alphabetical, within the code should be appropriate.
- The coding system should be easy to use and understand in terms of what the code represents.

Based on the coding methodology reviewed, the occupation code will consist of five boundaries, including six numeric digits, as follows:

- First Boundary: One digit (1-9), which is the first digit from the left.
- Second Boundary: One digit (1-9), which is the second digit from the left.
- Third Boundary: One digit (1-9), which is the third digit from the left.
- Fourth Boundary: One digit (1-9), which is the fourth digit from the left.
- Fifth Boundary: Two digits (01-99), allowing for the inclusion of up to 98 occupations, which are the fifth and sixth digits from the left .

5.1. Information required for Coding

In the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations, the coding process requires the collection of accurate information about the unit or element to be classified. This information is obtained from data sources that are classified according to the classification system. To ensure coding accuracy, specific information related to the classified unit must be provided, such as:

- **Job Title**

The job title is a key piece of information used in the coding process.

- **Main Tasks**

This refers to the tasks performed by the worker or employee in their job, which is essential information within the scope of work.

- **Skill Level**

The required skill level for performing the job must be known, including the type of training or education acquired.

- **Economic Sector**

Knowing the economic sector to which the job belongs helps in determining the appropriate occupational codes.

5.2. How to use the Classification in Coding

To ensure the effective use of the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations in the coding process, the best practices that focus on accurately matching the available information with the coding index can be followed. Below are the recommended steps and methods:

- **Matching the Information with the Coding Index**

The first step is to match the available information (such as job title, duties performed, skill level) with the approved coding index in the classification. This method relies on matching each unit or occupation with a specific description in the coding index, which includes a list of occupations organized hierarchically.

- **Handling Inexact Descriptions**

In some cases, the description found in the data source may not exactly match a single entry in the coding index. In this case, the closest description that accurately reflects the nature of the tasks performed or the required skill level is searched for. This may require starting from more aggregated classification levels and gradually working toward the most specific code.

- **Prioritizing Available Information**

If the occupational information is incomplete or contradictory, priority is given to the main tasks performed over the job title. For example, if the job title is unclear, but the main tasks belong to a specific category in the classification, the occupation is coded based on the main tasks.

5.3. Classification rules

The coding rules in the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations rely on a set of principles that guide coders on how to apply codes accurately, especially in complex or exceptional cases:

- **Coding Double Responses**

In the case of more than one occupation or a double response in a questionnaire about the job title, the title that reflects the primary activities or tasks performed by the individual is selected. If the duties are not equally important, the occupation that is more significant or in which the worker spends the most time is chosen.

- **Rules for Classifying Supervisory or Administrative Occupations**

In the Saudi Standard Classification of Occupations, there are specific rules for classifying administrative and supervisory occupations. Occupations that involve direct administrative responsibilities are classified under administrative occupation categories, while supervisory occupations that do not include direct administrative responsibilities are classified under supervisory occupation categories.

- **Coding for Atypical Tasks**

If a coder encounters an occupation with atypical or rare tasks, the closest description in the coding index is used. This approach is followed to avoid excessive focus on minor differences that may lead to improper classification.

stats.gov.sa