



## **Definitions employed in Social Grading**

### **The six social grade groups**

#### **Grade A**

- Professionals; very senior managers in business; top-level civil servants.
- Retired people who worked in a grade A job.
- People whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade A job.

#### **Grade B**

- Middle-management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications.
- Principal officers in local government and the civil service.
- Top management or owners of small businesses and educational and service establishments.
- Retired people who worked in a grade B job.
- Retired people whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade B job.

#### **Grade C1**

- Junior management, owners of small establishments and all other non-manual workers.
- Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements.
- Retired people who worked in a grade C1 job.
- Retired people whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade C1 job.

#### **Grade C2**

- Skilled manual workers.
- Manual workers with responsibility for other people.
- Retired people who worked in a grade C2 job and who now receive an occupational pension.
- Retired people whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade C2 job and who now themselves receive a pension based on that job.

## Grade D

- Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, apprentices and trainees of skilled workers.
- Retired people who worked in a grade D job and who now receive an occupational pension.
- Retired people whose late spouse or civil partner worked in a grade D job and who now themselves receive a pension based on that job.

## Grade E

- Long-term recipients of state benefits.
- Unemployed for more than six months (otherwise classify on previous occupation).
- Off sick for six months or more (unless they are still being paid by their employer).
- Casual workers and those without a regular income.
- Intermittent workers in receipt of income support.

## Grading on occupation

Social grading is not a coding of job titles, but a coding of the jobs people do. Therefore, the question in interviews is not "what is your job title?" but "what is the job actually done?" Researchers then consider the description of the activity together with the skills or qualifications required and the responsibilities involved.

*Occupation Groupings: A Job Dictionary* is intended to help interviewers to do this in a quick way - it is not meant to replace the "philosophy" or the "spirit" of social grading.

Therefore, a social grade given against an entry must be read as "most likely grade". It could be different if a full description of what is actually done and other considerations come into play. Blindly following the guide could lead to wrong grading in some cases.

Grading on occupation is a three step process:

The first step is to determine the **household** in which the respondent lives.

The second step is to determine who the **Chief Income Earner** in that household is.

The third step is to **grade the job** that person does.

## **Definitions employed in grading on occupation**

### **THE HOUSEHOLD**

People live either in a private household or they live in an institution.

A private household normally consists of either one person living alone or a group of persons (not necessarily related), who live together and whose food and household expenses are managed as one unit.

The general rule is to include temporary absentees such as people on holiday, children at boarding school, people temporarily in hospital and people working away from home, including servicemen. Temporary visitors should be excluded unless they have no home to which they can return or they have been resident six months or more.

People who live a communal life in an institution, such as residents in a hotel, long stay hospitals or residential homes, station houses or hostels are counted as one person households.

The same applies to lodgers who cater for themselves and people living in groups sharing accommodation but not sharing food or household expenses.

Sometimes two families share a dwelling, for example a couple living with the parents of one of them. If the couple take meals with the parents and pool household expenses, they are considered one household. If they budget and cater separately, they are a separate household.

Where people share their week between two dwellings, establish which they consider to be their main dwelling.

In most cases, a private household consists of one family living together, but there are many one-person households including:

- People living alone in a house, flat or room
- People living communally in an institution, such as a nurse in a nursing home
- Unrelated people sharing accommodation

Where groups of people, such as students or young adults, share accommodation and manage their food and household expenses as one unit, they count as one household. If they cater separately, they count as individual households (even if they share a kitchen).

Where lodgers have at least one main meal provided, they are members of the landlord or landlady's household. If lodgers cater for themselves, they form their own individual household.

Resident domestic servants, nannies and au pairs are members of the household that caters for them.

However, irrespective of their catering and household arrangements, all people living in a group count as their own households and are graded on their own occupations.

### **THE CHIEF INCOME EARNER**

The Chief Income Earner is the person with the largest income, whether from employment, pensions, state benefits, investments or any other source.

If two or more related people in the household have equal income, enter the person who is the oldest.

Social grading of unrelated people living in the same household will be based on their own individual occupations. Widows receiving maintenance, with no higher occupations, will be graded on their husbands' occupation.

Unmarried couples living as married are treated as married and therefore related for classification purposes.

The Chief Income Earner can be of either sex.

### **WORKING HOURS DEFINITIONS**

Full-time workers: 30+ hours per week

Part-time workers: 8–29 hours per week

Non-working people: less than 8 hours per week

### **SPECIAL CASES**

**Students** in higher education who live at home while studying form part of that household and are graded on the occupation of its head. Students who live away from home most of the year are graded as C1. No account is taken of casual or vacation jobs.

**Lodgers, resident domestic servants, nannies and au pairs** are part of the household that caters for them. Lodgers who cater for themselves form their own households.

**Retired people** who have a company pension or private pension, or who have private means, are graded on their previous occupations. If another job is taken after retirement, grade to the highest occupation (e.g. a retired police sergeant

working as a night watchman would be graded on the police grade – as long as there is a pension or financial means derived from that occupation).

**Widows and divorced or separated people** are graded on their occupation unless they do not work and receive either a pension or maintenance.

**Unemployed people** living on state benefits are graded on their previous occupations if they have been out of work less than six months. After six months they are graded E.

### **Grading managers**

The grade of a manager depends on the type and size of the establishment they work in (the building or buildings), their job title and their qualifications. You also need to find out whether they report to someone senior and how many people they are responsible for.

Generally speaking, senior managers include:

- managing directors of large companies, chairmen etc
- branch managers in sole charge
- managers with titles such as 'Works Manager' or 'Chief Engineer' who are close to board status
- managers in charge of large and important functions within the organisations who usually have other managers to report to them.

Junior managers include:

- heads of sections within departments
- managers in charge of a small number of employees

If you are unable to find out about qualifications and exact position in the structure of the organisation, code a manager as follows:

- in charge of 25 or more employees: B
- in charge of under 25: C1

### **THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD (an older, alternative method)**

Until the 1990s social grading was routinely determined by the occupation of the 'Head of Household', regardless of their level of income. The classification of Head of Household does however rely on a number of outmoded assumptions.

The Head of Household is that member of the household who is responsible for the household having that accommodation, either by owning, renting, or having it rent-free.

This is normally the person whose name is on the deeds or rent book, or who has the rent-free arrangement. However, if that person is a woman whose husband is normally resident at that address, the husband is the Head of Household. This also applies to unmarried couples living in an arrangement they regard as permanent.

In the case of joint responsibility, the rule is that husband takes precedence over wife and male over female. If both are the same sex, the elder over the younger. If a woman has a husband who is an absentee (e.g. a soldier posted elsewhere), he remains the Head of Household and his occupation is used for grading.

A woman with a resident husband would become the Head of Household only in the case where she has taken over entire financial responsibility due for example, to his ill health.

In the case of two families (for example a young couple living with his/her parents or an elderly person living with their son or daughter), the Head of Household is the person who owns, rents or has the property rent free.

Traditionally, the Head of Household was the husband or father of the family unit and all members were graded on his occupation.