

Minutes of the SOC Revision Steering Group (SRSG) Meeting

21 March 2019

11.00 – 12.30

ONS, 1 Drummond Gate, London, SW1V 2QQ

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| **Attendees:** |  |
| **Members** |  |
| Alex Bjorkergen (AB) | Dept for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) |
| Bryan Halka (BH) | Dept for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) |
| Daniel Sandford-Smith (DSS) | Gatsby Foundation |
| Peter Hounsome (PH)audio | The Tech Partnership |
| Stephanie Freeth (SF) | Dept for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) |
| Venetia Haynes (VH)audio | National Records Scotland |
| **Classification Representatives (CU)** |  |
| Suzanne Fry (SFr) Chair | ONS |
| Michaela Morris (MM) | ONS |
| Kerry Dagens (KD) Secretariat | ONS |
| **SOC Revision Working Group Representatives** |  |
| Margaret Birch (MB) | Institute for Employment Research (IER) |
| Peter Elias (PE) | Institute for Employment Research (IER) |
| Richard Boreham (RB) | NatCen |
| **Apologies:** |  |
| Andy Darnton (AD) | Health & Safety Executive (HSE) |
| Cal Ghee (CG) | ONS |
| Charlie Ball (CB) | Higher Education Careers Service Unit (HECSU) |
| Frank Bowley (FB) | Dept for Education (DfE) |
| Helena Rosieka (HR) | ONS |
| Tomas Sanchez (TS)  | ONS |

1. **Welcome and Introduction – Suzanne Fry**

SFr welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting of the Standard Occupational Classification Revision Steering Group (SRSG). Members in the room and those attending via audio introduced themselves.

SFr explained she would be chairing the meeting in TS absence

1. **Minutes of last meeting and actions – Suzanne Fry**

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

* PH: The overall process has been disappointing with meetings not being held regularly and some comments not being acted on appropriately. The issue of identifying secondary school teachers by subject taught has not been dealt with.
* MM: The decision was made that SRSG meetings are only held when there is something tangible to report. Research into identifying teachers by subject had been carried out and was reported to stakeholders that it was not possible, as most people just call themselves a ‘teacher’. This issue is something that would be fed into the SOC extension project, which is in its early stages.

**Action Point 1 – ONS to circulate the papers from the SOC extension project.**

There were some outstanding actions from the previous meeting:

* Action 1 – Whilst this had been circulated in July 2018 to both stakeholders and steering group members, some members did not see the paper. Based on the discussions at the last SRSG the working group revisited the methodology used to define ‘graduates’ which was explained in the paper.

**Action Point 2 – ONS to check original circulation and re-circulate the paper.**

* Action 2 – This is something we are thinking about now as part of the publication. SFr will speak to colleagues in Labour Market and Economic Statistics to discuss how we communicate this.
	+ There was some discussion, that for users there may not appear to be a lot of difference between SOC2010 and SOC2020. PE added that there have been significant changes at the unit group level which reflect technological changes. One of the key requirements for users when revising SOC is continuity therefore there was no change at the higher level of the classification. It was agreed that whilst jobs and the knowledge required to do a job are changing, occupations are not, and thought needs to be given on how to communicate this.
* Action 3 – The meeting to discuss graduates prior to this SRSG meeting did not take place.
	+ DSS: There was disagreement at the last SRSG about how the work had been done and there wasn’t time to discuss it properly which is why a further meeting was agreed. This is a very important policy issue with an upcoming review into graduates and university fees, which will be driven by this work.
	+ MM: Apologised for this, however as mentioned in the comments above following the last SRSG the working group revisited the methodology and the final outcomes were circulated for comment.
	+ DSS: There was a feeling at the last meeting that members didn’t fully understand why some decisions had been made and it was not clear how the final decisions were reached. Within the education sector there is a lot of emphasis on level 4/5 qualifications and it was not clear from the presentation given at the meeting whether these were being regarded as graduates?
	+ BH: There was also a question around the institution in which degrees are obtained with it being possible to obtain a level 7 qualification at a college of further education.
	+ PE: A lot of time was spent on the issue of defining graduate jobs, pulling together various research strands and reconciling it was difficult. The working group also looked closely at what employers were telling us about whether a degree was a requirement for a job. We are confident that the decisions reached will stand over the next 10 years.
	+ MM: As well as looking at whether a degree was a requirement or not, skill levels were taken into consideration.
1. **SOC Revision Presentation – Richard Boreham**

The presentation was an overview of the revision process which looked at issues raised as part of the consultation.

The key changes when looking at each unit group were merging or splitting them, with statistical viability being the main criteria. Census and LFS data was used to estimate whether a unit group would meet the 10,000 threshold, as well as looking at the job titles in the unit group to see if they were distinct enough to have their own unit group. Trends over time were also considered to see if unit groups were increasing or decreasing to futureproof the classification. This resulted in an increase of approximately 30 unit groups. There were no changes to the main structure of the SOC, however some additional sub-major and minor groups were added.

* PH: Why is the threshold 10,000?
* PE: If it was any lower there is a risk of disclosure so statistics could not be published. This issue is being addressed by the SOC Extension project and there may be scope in future to have more detailed statistics.

**Action Point 3 – Peter Elias to speak to Peter Hounsome further about the SOC extension work and statistical viability.**

There were 3 major issues that contributed to the changes made in the classification:

* Graduates: This resulted in 6 unit groups moving from major group 3 to major group 2, 1 unit group moving from major group 6 to major group 2 and 1 unit group moving from major group 6 to major group 3.
* IT: Looked at whether all the roles within this sector should be restructured, however found that most of the jobs fitted into existing occupations. However, 7 new unit groups have been added and changes made to the wording of existing unit groups.
* Disaggregation: Taking on board comments from the consultation for further disaggregation the working group looked predominantly at the ‘not elsewhere classified’ groups. This was the main driver behind the increase in the number of unit groups in the SOC2020 structure.

In SOC2010 there were lots of documents with repetitive content. This time round it is intended to publish 1 overarching commentary on the landing page supported by additional tables.

* DSS: Can we expand more on the Skills levels/Apprenticeships document listed on the slide?
* PE: This is building on work to map apprenticeship routes/pathways, however this will not be published with the other products straight away as the work is complex. This will involve looking at job titles that are referenced in apprenticeship routes to see if the existing index reflects the same job titles. Whilst the current descriptions give some detail about qualification requirements, the skill levels/apprenticeships document will elaborate more.
* BH: BEIS have created their own SOC to skill level document which has been supplied to ONS.
* MM: The mapping was considered too complex and outside the remit of the revision project, however the BEIS document has been forwarded to PE who would look at it as part of the ongoing work.
1. **Example Volume 1 new format – Michaela Morris**

ONS are moving away from publishing PDF documents, so Volume 1 will now be published as an excel or csv file which are machine readable. It is also more user friendly as filters can be applied to search for specific job titles or tasks. This will be available as a download from the HTML landing page.

This was supported by the steering group members.

1. **Sign off the final SOC2020 structure – Suzanne Fry**

The final paper was circulated to stakeholders and steering group members on 4 March, only one response had been received which has been taken forward as part of the SOC extension project work.

Apart from the graduates proposals the steering group had no other objections. It was agreed that the graduates paper would be circulated to steering group members again, inviting comments and if required a further meeting or teleconf with those members who have an interest in the issue will be set up.

The steering group agreed to sign off the SOC2020 structure subject to the discussion over graduates.

**Action Point 4 – ONS to re-circulate the report on professional occupations to steering group members inviting** **comments.**

1. **Publication date of SOC2020 volumes 1 & 2 – Michaela Morris**

ONS are aiming to publish SOC2020 in the autumn of this year. Once published it’s up to individual organisations on when they start using the index.

* A question was raised on when ONS surveys would start using the new index, again this was up to each survey on when they updated their systems. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) will be testing soon in preparation for incorporating the new structure and index.
* PE: Will LFS dual code this time?

**Action Point 5 – ONS to talk to survey teams within ONS to establish when they will be incorporating the new structure and to discuss dual coding with the LFS team.**

1. **Any other business – Suzanne Fry**

There was no other business.

Members were happy that future business and the final sign off can be conducted by correspondence.