

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
ATLANTA OVERSIGHT DIVISION
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION

Under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant]

Position: Engineering Data Technician
(Office Automation), GS-303-5

Organization: [Organization]
U.S. Air Force
[Location]

Decision: GS-303-5 (Title at the discretion of the agency, to include
Office Automation)
(Appeal denied)

OPM decision number: C-0303-05-01

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

October 16, 1996

Rdrive # 0303057a.atr

Background

On June 26, 1996, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Engineering Data Technician, GS-303-5, located in [organization], [installation], U.S. Air Force. The appellant is requesting that her position be changed to Program Assistant (Office Automation), GS-344-7.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

Sources of Information

This appeal decision is based on information from the following sources:

1. A letter from the appellant dated June 10, 1996, appealing the classification of her position.
2. The agency's letter of July 16, 1996, providing position and organizational information.
3. A telephone interview with the appellant on August 29, 1996.
4. A telephone interview with the appellant's immediate supervisor on August 29, 1996.

Position Information

The appellant is assigned to Position Number [#] which was classified on December 20, 1995. The appellant, supervisor, and agency have certified to the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant's primary duty is to manage the Selective Cost Reimbursement (SCR) System for [the program]. She provides technical and administrative support duties to assist in tracking the use of resources for the cost reimbursement engineering workload. She establishes and maintains database records of projected milestones and funding requirements and reviews the funding, man-hours, and equipment time used and project milestones met by comparing status reports to established allowances and requirements. She monitors the status of projects from beginning to completion; identifies cost trends; and prepares reports that describe problems or delays, the actions that were taken to correct the problems, and the need for additional time or resources.

In addition, the appellant plans, organizes, and administers the security programs throughout the flight to ensure appropriate methods are used and policies are in place for the handling and storage of classified information and materials and other sensitive and pilferable-type items.

She also prepares reports and a variety of specialized documents using various software and printing equipment to create, copy, edit, and print information. The position requires the skill of a qualified typist.

The appellant reports to the Supervisory Electronics Engineer who assists only with highly unusual situations, problems, or studies that do not have clear precedents. The appellant independently plans and carries out the steps of assignments on her own initiative, handling problems and deviations in accordance with instructions. The methods used in arriving at the end results are not normally reviewed.

Standards Referenced

Management and Program Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-344, May 1993.
Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, January 1979.
Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, June 1989.
Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-326, November 1990.
Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, November 1990.

Position Information

Series:

The appellant believes that the duties she performs are described by the Management and Program Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-344, which includes positions performing clerical and technical work in support of management analysis and program analysis for the purposes of evaluating and improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of organizations and programs. Employees in this series perform clerical and technical work in support of management analysis and/or program analysis. The purpose of management and program analysis is to provide managers with objectively based information for making decisions on the administrative and operational aspects of agency management and program operations. Program clerks and assistants apply clerical or technical procedures, methods, and techniques to support program analysis functions and processes. The employees in this series typically work in offices where management analysts or program analysts are also employed.

The appellant is primarily responsible for tracking the use of resources and the completion of objectives associated with reimbursable engineering projects; administering a security program for handling classified information and materials; and preparing documents and reports issued by [the program]. She does not provide support for the type of program analysis work described in the GS-344 series, i.e., organizational and workflow projects, studies of information management systems, production studies, etc. Therefore, the GS-344 series is not appropriate.

The agency has determined that the appellant's position is properly placed in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, which covers positions that perform or

supervise clerical, assistant, or technical work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires a knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out the work of an organization (e.g., the Field Engineering Flight) and involves application of procedures and practices within the framework of established guidelines. We agree with the agency's decision that the type of assignments given to the appellant fall within the purview of the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303.

Title:

No titles are specified for positions in this series. Based on the guidance in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, the agency may construct a position title descriptive of the work performed. Since the appellant's position requires the use of office automation equipment and a fully qualified typist, that requirement should be reflected in the title of the position by adding the parenthetical title (Office Automation) which may be abbreviated as (OA).

The appellant's position is properly coded as GS-303 with the title at the discretion of the agency. The title chosen should reflect a requirement for office automation skills.

Grade Determination

Since the GS-303 standard does not contain grade level criteria, the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work is used to determine the grade level of this position. The Guide covers the work of processing transactions and performing various office support and miscellaneous clerical and assistance duties within a framework of procedures, precedents, or instructions and provides general criteria for use in determining the grade level of nonsupervisory clerical and assistance work from GS-1 through GS-7.

The guide describes the general characteristics of each grade level from GS-1 through GS-7 in a three-part format:

- The definition of the grade level as spelled out in 5 U.S.C. 5104;
- A description of the grade level concept pertaining to clerical and assistance work written in narrative format in terms of two evaluation factors: **Nature of Assignment** (which includes the elements of knowledge required and complexity of the work), and **Level of Responsibility** (which includes the elements of supervisory controls, guidelines, and contacts); and
- General work examples to illustrate each grade level.

To determine the appropriate grade, the Guide requires the application of the total criteria (i.e., the law, the evaluation factors, and the work examples) and assignment of the highest

level which the work being evaluated most closely matches. The Guide requires the considerations of weaknesses as well as strengths in matching work to the grade level criteria. The appellant's position is evaluated as follows:

Nature of assignment:

This factor measures the knowledge required and the complexity of the work.

At the GS-5 level, the work involves performing a full range of standard and nonstandard clerical assignments and resolving a variety of nonrecurring problems. The work includes a variety of assignments requiring different and unrelated steps, processes, or methods. The GS-5 level employee must identify and understand the issues involved in each assignment and determine what steps and procedures are necessary and the order of their performance. Completion of each transaction typically involves selecting a course of action from a number of possibilities. The work requires extensive knowledge of an organization's rules, procedures, operations, or business practices to perform the more complex, interrelated, or one-of-a-kind clerical processing procedures.

The GS-5 level is met. The appellant's primary responsibility is to assist with the workload and funding program for the [program]. She states that she spends 60 percent of her time working with the workload management program which involves direct assistance to the three sections within the [program]. She maintains database records and tracks funding, man-hours, and equipment time by comparing monthly reports to established allowances. She obtains information from project managers to help identify problems and explain changing conditions. In addition, she monitors the data collected to identify trends (i.e., more equipment time continually used than budgeted), as well as problems causing recurring delays. The appellant applies knowledge of standardized processes and procedures for evaluating the SCR system to complete her assignments, identify problems, and select solutions from alternatives in guidelines or precedent cases. She considers program operations and objectives in deciding what needs to be done. Her responsibilities associated with the security programs include ensuring that appropriate methods are used in handling and storing classified information, conducting initial investigations of security violations to determine the response required by the [program] chief, and managing complaint reports. Her responsibilities associated with consolidating and preparing documents and reports require the appellant to apply rules of spelling, punctuation, grammar, English usage, document layout, publication manuals, etc. These duties are clerical and administrative in nature, require a variety of different steps and processes determined by the appellant, and compare to the GS-5 level, also.

At the GS-6 level, the work involves processing a wide variety of transactions subject to different sets of rules and regulations or the work requires considerable evaluative judgment within well-defined, commonly occurring aspects of an administrative program or function. It may involve providing direct assistance to specialists or analysts by performing a segment

of their work, or it may involve responsibility for a stream of products or continuing processes based on direct application of established policies, practices, and criteria. This work typically involves identifying issues, problems, or conditions and seeking alternative solutions based on evaluation of the intent of applicable rules, regulations, and procedures. Assignments requiring evaluative judgment are relatively clear cut. Problems or situations are stable and resemble past situations. There is not one absolute correct solution to problems or situations but a best or most appropriate one. A practical knowledge of guidelines and precedent case actions relating to a particular program is required and skill to recognize the dimensions of a problem and express ideas in writing.

The full intent of the GS-6 level is not met. The appellant's assignments are limited to the engineering administration area and do not require the broad working knowledge of special and complex subject matter or the processing of a wide variety of transactions with different sets of rules and regulations described at this level. Her work requires the use of different processes and the knowledge of many rules and operations but the transactions are related to a narrow area (i.e., the SCR system). Her evaluative duties require comparison of actual data to projected data and flagging key indicators that are out of line and might be an indication of a particular trend. She follows established procedures for much of her work and is not tasked with identifying issues or conditions that require alternative solutions based on the evaluation of the intent of regulations and rules.

Level GS-5 is assigned for this factor.

Level of responsibility:

At the GS-5 level, the supervisor assigns the work by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance on assignments which do not have clear precedents. Work is in accordance with accepted practices and completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and effectiveness in meeting goals. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines for application and adapting them according to circumstances of the specific case. Problems may arise and require interpretations. Contacts are with a variety of persons within and outside the agency for the purpose of receiving or providing information relating to the work or resolving operating problems.

The GS-5 level is met. The appellant independently plans and carries out her daily assignments and follows accepted practices in resolving nonrecurring problems. She adapts guidelines, if necessary, to apply to specific situations, and completed work is evaluated for effectiveness in meeting goals. Contacts consist of employees within the organization, higher headquarters, and other MAJCOM financial and projects managers within the Air Force, for the purpose of planning and coordinating project milestones and to acquire and transfer funding.

At the GS-6 level, the employee is recognized as an authority on processing transactions or completing assignments within a complicated framework of established procedures and guidelines, often where there are no clear precedents. Recognition typically extends beyond the immediate office or work unit to the overall organization or, in some cases, outside the organization. Because the employee is regarded as an expert source of information, she is frequently called upon to provide accurate information rapidly on short notice. Guidelines are numerous and varied and often do not apply directly. Contacts at the GS-6 level are with employees in the agency, in other agencies, or with management or users or providers of agency services. The employee provides information, explains the application of regulations, or resolves problems relating to the assignment.

The nature of the appellant's job assignment approaches but does not fully meet the GS-6 level. The appellant is recognized within the [program] as an expert in database management, integration of spreadsheets, and graphics, etc., and is called upon to meet short deadlines. However, this does not compare to the recognition described at this level which typically extends beyond the immediate office or work unit to the overall organization or, in some cases, outside the organization. The appellant uses numerous guidelines, however, there are accepted practices and precedents which she can reference in selecting guidelines or deviating from them. In new or unusual situations, or if existing guidelines cannot be applied, the appellant checks with her supervisor before taking final action or refers the matter to the supervisor. This level of authority is typical of the GS-5 level. Contacts are within and outside of the organization for the purpose of transferring funds and ensuring that the customers' requirements are met.

This factor is evaluated at GS-5.

Since both factors are evaluated at GS-5, that is the proper grade of the position.

Office Automation:

The appellant's use of computer equipment for word processing and data entry duties is evaluated against the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide. Office Automation duties are secondary to the requirements of this position and are not grade-controlling. These duties are evaluated using the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide. Nine factor levels are measured, as follows.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1-Knowledge Required by the Position	1-4	550
2-Supervisory Control	2-3	275
3-Guidelines	3-2	125
4-Complexity	4-2	75
5-Scope and Effect	5-1	25
6-Personal Contacts	1a	30
7-Purpose of Contacts		
8-Physical Demands	8-1	5
9-Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	1090

A total of 1090 points equates to GS-5 (855-1100 points) on the Grade Conversion Chart in the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide.

Summary

The appellant's position combines clerical assistance work evaluated at GS-5 and office automation work evaluated at GS-5. The position is properly graded at GS-5.

Decision

This position is properly classified as GS-303-5 (Title at the discretion of the agency, to include Office Automation). This decision constitutes a classification certificate issued under the authority of section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This certificate is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the Government.