

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs

San Francisco Oversight Division
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94105

Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Supervisory Computer Specialist
GS-334-13

Organization: [appellant's installation]
Bureau of Reclamation

OPM decision: Supervisory Computer Specialist
GS-334-13

OPM decision number: C-0334-13-01

Carlos A. Torrico
Classification Appeals Officer

1/7/99
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name & address]

[name & address of servicing personnel office]

Director of Personnel
U.S. Department of Interior
Mail Stop 5221
1849 C Street, NW
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Introduction

On October 23, 1997, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellant]. His position is currently classified as Supervisory Computer Specialist, GS-334-13. However, he believes its grade should be GS-14. He works in the [the appellant's installation] Bureau of Reclamation. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

This appeal decision is based on a careful review of all information submitted by the appellant and his agency, and telephone interviews with the appellant and his immediate supervisor. Both [the appellant] and his supervisor (the Assistant Regional Director for Administration) believe that the appellant's current position description (number 07502) does not accurately reflect his duties. However, they have been unable to resolve this issue within their agency. In such cases it is OPM policy to decide the appeal based on the actual duties that management has assigned and the appellant performs.

Position information

The appellant oversees the provision of information management support to approximately 1000 [the appellant's installation] employees in six States. In addition, he provides managerial and technical expertise as a member of the Bureau of Reclamation's Information Resources Management Council, which develops long range strategic plans to meet the agency's information management needs.

The appellant fully supervises 12 employees. He directly supervises 7 GS-12, 1 GS-11, and 2 GS-9 Computer Specialists, GS-334, and 2 GS-7 Computer Assistants, GS-335. In addition, he provides only administrative supervision to 2 GS-13 Computer Specialists who spend 50 per cent of their time in work for the Regional Office and 50 per cent of their time in work for the agency headquarters. In that he does not provide both technical and administrative supervision for the GS-13's, we have not considered them in the classification of his position.

The results of our interviews and other material of record furnish much more information about the appellant's duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency has classified this position in the Computer Specialist Series, GS-334, and the appellant does not disagree. We concur with the agency's determination. The appellant's position meets the criteria in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG), dated April 1998, for evaluation and classification as a supervisor (page 4). Our fact-finding disclosed that he spends all of his work time supervising twelve employees and performing related managerial responsibilities to oversee the operation of the [the appellant's office]. Therefore, the GSSG is the appropriate guide to evaluate the grade level of this supervisory position. The prescribed title for this position is Supervisory Computer Specialist, GS-334.

Grade determination

The GSSG employs a factor-point evaluation method that assesses six factors common to all supervisory positions. To grade a position, each factor is evaluated by comparing the position to the factor level definitions for that factor and crediting the points designated for the highest factor level which is met, in accordance with the instructions specified for the factor being evaluated. The total points accumulated under all factors are then converted to a grade using the point-to-grade conversion chart in the GSSG. Each factor is evaluated as follows for the appellant's position.

Factor 1, Program Scope and Effect - Level 1-2 - 350 points

This factor addresses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including the organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization. To credit a particular factor level, the criteria for *both* scope and effect must be met.

a. Scope - This element addresses the general complexity and breadth of (1) the program or program segment directed, and (2) the work directed, the products produced, or the services delivered. The geographic and organizational coverage of the program or program segment within the agency structure is to be addressed under Scope.

At Level 1-2 (pages 13-14 of the GSSG), the program segment or work directed is administrative, technical, complex clerical, or comparable in nature. The functions, activities, or services provided have limited geographic coverage and support most of the activities comprising a typical agency field office, an area office, a small to medium military installation, or comparable activities within agency program segments.

At Level 1-3 (page 14), the supervisor directs a program segment that performs technical, administrative, protective, investigative, or professional work. The program segment and work directed typically have coverage which encompasses a major metropolitan area, a State, or a small region of several States; or when most of an area's taxpayers or businesses are covered, coverage comparable to a small city. Since the appellant directs a program that provides administrative support to an organization covering a small region of several states, it could possibly meet one aspect of Level 1-3. However, the geographic coverage of the work directed is not the single most important factor in evaluating Scope for positions that direct supporting services. Other factors, such as the size of the population directly affected by the work, whether the supervisor directs or oversees other program elements and resources throughout the area, how the activities directed relate to the agency's mission and to outside entities, and the complexity and intensity of the services provided also impact on Scope. Level 1-3 Scope is generally not creditable to supervisors of supporting services unless the **organizational coverage** of the work directed is comparable to its geographic coverage. For example, providing complex services throughout a large or complex, multimission military installation (or equivalent group of activities) or managing substantive program elements (field offices, projects, or equivalent activities) throughout the geographic area in question would

meet Level 1-3. This is the highest level creditable for supervision of supporting services carried out at the field activity level, and is generally reserved for positions that supervise complex services directly affecting a large and/or complex multimission military installation or comparable group of activities.

A large multimission military installation is defined in the GSSG (page 7) as a military base with one or a few missions or a group of activities with a total serviced or supported employee-equivalent population exceeding 4,000 personnel, and with a wide variety of serviced technical functions. These personnel are directly affected by, but not supervised by, the position under evaluation. Federal civilian and military employees, estimated contractor personnel, volunteers, and similar personnel may be used to derive the population total.

A complex, multimission installation includes four or more of the following: a garrison; a medical center or a large hospital and medical laboratory complex; multimillion dollar (annual) construction, civil works, or environmental cleanup projects; a test and evaluation center or research laboratory of moderate size; an equipment or product development center; a service school; a major command higher than that in which the servicing position is located or a comparable tenant activity of moderate size; a supply or maintenance depot; or equivalent activities. These activities are individually smaller than the large installation described above.

The appellant's position meets Level 1-2, but falls short of Level 1-3. Similar to Level 1-2 he directs work which is administrative in nature. However, unlike Level 1-3, [the appellant's office] does not provide services to an organization that is comparable to a large military installation. The organization provides support to about 1000 civilian employees in six smaller States. The activities serviced include the Regional Office, four Area Offices, a drill pool (geology), a small soils laboratory, three Job Corps centers, a mobile construction office, and a Solicitor's Office (headquarters legal staff). Neither the total workforce serviced nor the variety, size, intensity and complexity of the program elements supervised and the offices serviced would allow credit for Level 1-3 **organizational** coverage. Thus, while the scope of the services provided does exceed Level 1-2 in some aspects, it does not fully meet Level 1-3 as described in the GSSG, and therefore is properly evaluated at Level 1-2.

b. Effect - This element of Factor 1 addresses the impact of the work, the products, and/or the programs described under "Scope" on the mission, the agency, other agencies, the general public, or others.

At Level 1-2 (page 13), the services or products support and significantly affect installation level, area office level, or field office operations and objectives, or comparable program segments; or provide services to a moderate, local, or limited population of clients or users comparable to a major portion of a small city or rural county.

At Level 1-3 (page 14), activities, functions, or services accomplished directly and significantly impact a wide range of agency activities, the work of other agencies, or the operations of outside

interests (e.g., a segment of a regulated industry), or the general public. At the field activity level (involving large, complex, multimission organizations and/or very large serviced populations), the work directly involves or substantially impacts the provision of essential support operations to numerous, varied, and complex technical, professional, and administrative functions.

The technical and administrative functions supervised by the appellant do not fully meet the first half of the above (Effect) criteria for Level 1-3. While the appellant does provide direct input to Bureau information management policy and strategic planning, the administrative support services provided are in direct support of Regional Office activities, and these do not directly and significantly impact a wide range of Bureau or Department of the Interior activities, the work of other agencies, the operation of outside interests, or the general public. The services provided are internally oriented and affect the Region's accomplishment of its mission, not the operation of outside interests or the general public.

The services also fail to fully meet the second portion of the Level 1-3 criteria for Effect, pertaining to field activities. As noted earlier, the work managed does not support an organization or group of organizations comparable to a large, complex, multimission installation, nor does it support very large serviced populations. Effect is evaluated at Level 1-2, which is appropriate for positions that support and significantly affect field office operations and objectives.

In summary, we find that both Scope and Effect are evaluated at Level 1-2. Thus the correct overall evaluation of Factor 1 is 1-2, and 350 points are credited.

Factor 2, Organizational Setting - Level 2-2 - 250 points

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher level management.

The appellant's position is properly evaluated at Level 2-2. As discussed at that level (page 18 in the GSSG), this position is accountable to a position that is one reporting level below the first SES, flag or general officer, or equivalent higher level position in the direct supervisory chain. Specifically, the appellant reports to the Assistant Regional Director for Administration, who in turn reports to the Regional Director whose position is assigned to the SES.

Factor 2 is assigned Level 2-2 and 250 points are credited.

Factor 3, Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised - Level 3-2 - 450 points

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities which are exercised on a recurring basis. To be credited with a level under this factor, a position must meet the authorities and responsibilities to the extent described for the specific level.

In order to meet Level 3-2 (pages 18-20) a position must meet any one of the conditions described in paragraphs a, b, or c under this factor level. This position meets Level 3-2c. Supervisors at that level must carry out at least three of the first four, and a total of six or more of the 10 responsibilities listed on pages 19-20 of the GSSG. The appellant carries out all 10 authorities and responsibilities. For example, he exercises responsibilities 3 and 4, since he evaluates subordinates' work performance and gives them advice and instruction on both work and administrative matters.

In order to fully meet Factor Level 3-3 (pages 20-21), a position must meet the conditions described in paragraphs a or b, under this factor level.

Under Level 3-3a, the incumbent of a position must exercise the authority to set long range plans with goals and objectives, assure implementation of the plans by subordinate organizational units, determine which objectives require additional emphasis, and determine solutions to and resolve issues created by budget and staff requirements (including contracting out). While the appellant does carry out the functions involved with developing program plans, goals, and objectives, resolving problems arising during implementation and administration of these plans (including budget and staff driven problems), the planning cycle is strictly annual (rather than long term), and does not take place in an organizational setting (one with organizational subdivisions and subordinate supervisors) envisioned at Level 3-3a. Therefore his position is not credited with Level 3-3a.

At Level 3-3b, a supervisor must exercise all or nearly all of the supervisory responsibilities and authorities described at Level 3-2c, plus at least 8 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b (pages 20-21) of the GSSG.

As already noted, this position exercises all 10 of the responsibilities described at Level 3-2c. The appellant also exercises 7 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b. Specifically, he exercises responsibilities 2, 4, 7, 11, 13, 14, and 15. For example, he carries out responsibilities 2 and 13 since he exercises significant responsibilities in dealing with officials of other units and in advising management officials of higher rank (top information resources managers at Bureau level), and he approves expenses comparable to within-grade increases and employee travel. The appellant's position cannot receive credit for the other 8 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b. That is, it cannot receive credit for responsibilities 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 12. Responsibilities 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8 refer to situations where work is accomplished through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or other similar personnel. In this case, although the appellant has assigned some tasks to two subordinate employees that could also be assigned to team leaders, in neither case are the positions classified using the General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide, nor do the lead responsibilities assigned correspond substantially to the minimum requirements listed in that guide. Responsibility 9 is not credited because the appellant provides only an initial response to employee complaints and/or grievances, but a second level supervisor (the Assistant Regional Director for Administration) provides a hearing and offers a formal resolution. Responsibility 10 is not credited because the appellant acts as the proposing official for serious disciplinary actions, but the second level (or higher) supervisor provides a hearing for the employee response, and acts as the deciding official or recommends a final decision. Responsibility 12 is not credited because the oversight of contractor

work envisioned in the GSSG, in precedent OPM decisions, and in OPM central office guidance involves tasks of supervisors who regularly oversee the work of contractor personnel in a manner somewhat comparable to the way in which other supervisors direct the work of subordinate employees. Since the appellant does not oversee the ongoing work of contractor personnel in this manner, this responsibility cannot be credited.

Because the appellant's position does not fully meet 3-3a, nor 8 of the 15 responsibilities listed in Factor 3-3b, Level 3-2 is awarded and 450 points credited.

Factor 4, Personal Contacts - Levels 4A-3, 75 points/4B-3, 100 points

This is a two part factor which assesses the nature and purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities. The nature of contacts credited under Subfactor 4A, and the purpose of these contacts, credited under Subfactor 4B, must be based on the same contacts.

- Subfactor 4A, Nature of Contacts - This subfactor covers organizational relationships, authority or influence level, setting, and difficulty of preparation associated with making personal contacts involved in supervisory and managerial work. To be credited, the level of contacts must contribute to successful performance of the work, be a recurring requirement, have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the position, and require direct contact.

The agency evaluated this subfactor at Level 4A-3, the appellant has described his contacts at this level, and we concur that this level should be credited and assigned.

Similar to Level 4A-3 (discussed on pages 24-25 of the GSSG), the appellant has frequent contact with top managers within the IRM program at Bureau headquarters. These managers are directly concerned with the Bureau's overall IRM program - its administration, funding, long term direction, and all policy considerations. In addition, he is in regular contact with Bureau-level technical staff to discuss a broad range of technical issues that impact the program Bureau-wide.

This position does not meet Level 4A-4 (page 25) where contacts are with organized groups from outside the agency, representatives of trade associations, key congressional committees, etc.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level 4A-3, and 75 points are assigned.

- Subfactor 4B, Purpose of Contacts - This subfactor covers the purpose of the personal contacts credited in Subfactor 4A, including the advisory, representational, negotiating, and commitment making responsibilities related to supervision and management. The agency evaluated the subfactor at Level 4B-3, and the appellant does not disagree. We concur with the agency's evaluation.

Similar to Level 4B-3 (page 26 of the GSSG), the purpose of the appellant's contacts is to justify, defend or negotiate his projects, particularly in gaining or committing resources. The appellant serves

with other Regional IRM chiefs and the Bureau IRM program director on a committee which has the responsibility for developing the overall direction, funding level (budget), and input to policy development for the Bureau IRM program. As committee members, all Regional IRM chiefs must present their particular Regional IRM concerns, needs for specific funding levels, and most desired policy direction. In addition, the appellant is called upon to insure compliance with communication and information management laws, rules, and procedures in dealing with Regional managers. Unlike Level 4B-4, the appellant's contacts and discussions do not take place in an environment of intense opposition and resistance arising from significant organizational and/or philosophical conflict, major resource reduction, or other comparable issues.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level 4B-3 and 100 points are assigned.

Factor 5 - Difficulty of Typical Work Directed - Level 5-7 - 930 points

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization directed. The agency found that at least 25 per cent of the workload is at the GS-12 level. The appellant does not disagree. Our fact-finding disclosed that the appellant currently provides technical and administrative supervision to 12 nonsupervisory positions performing mission oriented, substantive work: 7 GS-12, 1 GS-11, and 2 GS-9 Computer Specialists, GS-334, and 2 GS-7 Computer Assistants, GS-335. For the purposes of this evaluation, we accept the agency's classification of these positions. The agency estimates that the GS-12 employees spend virtually all of their time performing work at the GS-12 level, and for the remaining positions, at least 50 per cent of their time is working to the level at which each position is classified. While the appellant also has the services of two GS-13 Computer Specialists, he is limited to 50 per cent of the time of each, and provides virtually no technical supervision. Because of this, their work does not affect the computation of the base level of work supervised. Based on our analysis, GS-12 level work constitutes 25 per cent or more of the nonsupervisory workload in the appellant's organization. Therefore, in accordance with the chart on page 28 of the GSSG, the highest level of base work is GS-12, and the appellant's position warrants assignment of Level 5-7, with 930 points credited.

Factor 6, Other Conditions - Level 6-5 - 1225 points

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions contribute to the difficulty and complexity of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities. To evaluate Factor 6, two steps are used. First, the highest level that a position fully meets is initially credited. Then, if the level selected is either 6-1, 6-2, or 6-3, the Special Situations listed after the factor level definitions are considered. If a position meets three or more of the situations, then a single level is added to the level selected in Step 1. If the level selected under Step 1 is either 6-4, 6-5, or 6-6, the Special Situations may not be considered in determining whether a higher factor level is creditable. The agency credited Level 6-5 for this factor, and we concur.

We agree that the appellant's position meets Level 6-5a (pages 32-33 of the GSSG). Similar to this level, his position requires significant coordination and integration of important projects of technical

and administrative work comparable in difficulty to the GS-12 level. He makes major recommendations in at least three of the seven areas listed on page 33 of the GSSG, including: (1) determining what projects to initiate, drop, or curtail, (2) making changes in organizational structures, specifying the particular changes to be effected, and (3) determining the optimum mix of reduced operating costs and assurance of program effectiveness. The appellant has made these recommendations in conjunction with his responsibilities as IRM chief at the Regional Office, as well as in his role on the committee of Regional IRM officials.

This factor is evaluated at Level 6-5 and 1225 points are credited.

Summary of Factors

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. Program Scope and Effect	1-2	350
2. Organizational Setting	2-2	250
3. Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised	3-2	450
4. Personal Contacts		
4A, Nature of Contacts	4A-3	75
4B, Purpose of Contacts	4B-3	100
5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed	5-7	930
6. Other Conditions	6-5	<u>1225</u>
Total Points:		3380

A total of 3380 points is credited to the appellant's position. According to the point-to-grade conversion chart on page 36 of the GSSG, this total falls within the GS-13 range (3155-3600). The appellant's supervisory duties are correctly evaluated at the GS-13 level.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Supervisory Computer Specialist, GS-334-13.