

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

Philadelphia Oversight Division  
600 Arch Street, Room 3400  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1596

**Job Grading Appeal Decision**  
**Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [appellant's name]

**Agency classification:** Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor  
WS-5424-4

**Organization:** [name] Branch  
[name] Division  
Office of Production  
U.S. Mint  
Department of the Treasury  
[location]

**OPM decision:** Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor  
WS-5424-4

**OPM decision number:** C-5424-04-01

/s/ Robert D. Hendler

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Robert D. Hendler  
Classification Appeals Officer

December 2, 2002

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Date

As provided in section S7-8 of the *Operating Manual: Federal Wage System* (FWS), this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under the conditions and time limits specified in section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section H).

**Decision sent to:**

[appellant's name]

Acting Human Resources Officer  
Human Resources Division  
Department of the Treasury  
U.S. Mint  
[address]  
[location]

Director of Human Resources  
Department of the Treasury  
U.S. Mint  
801 9<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
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Director, Office of Personnel Policy  
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## **Introduction**

On August 22, 2002, the Philadelphia Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [appellant's name]. His job is currently graded as Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor, WS-5424-4. He believes that the job should be a higher grade. The appellant works in the [name] Branch, [name] Division, Office of Production, U.S. Mint, Department of the Treasury, [location]. We received the complete appeal administrative report on September 26, 2002. We accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

## **General issues**

The appellant states in his appeal letter that his job was upgraded from Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor, WS-5424-5, to Industrial Equipment Operator, WS-5401-6, in October 2000. His job was downgraded 14 months later to Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor, WS-5424-4. The appellant says that his job was initially graded as WS-5424-5 in 1992, and that he continues to supervise four to six Weighing Machine Operators, WG-5424-5, and one Weighing Machine Operator Leader, WL-5424-5. He states that no duties were removed from his job, that he continues to exercise the same level of supervisory responsibility, and that he is responsible for two Department of the Treasury programs: Mutilated Coin Redemption and Uncurrent Coin Redemption.

In his appeal letter, the appellant questions the adequacy of his agency's review of his job. He states that the review missed two critical functions that he has performed since 1998 that had been performed by occupants of higher graded General Schedule (GS) positions. The appellant says that his position description (PD) #[number] cites the 3869 Metal Forming Machine Operator job grading standard (JGS). He states that his installation's 3869 Metal Forming Machine Operators are WG-7's and that his subordinates perform similar work. The appellant also says that the 3869 Metal Forming Machine Operators' supervisors are WS-7's. However, the appellant says that his job is a WS-4 even though the same standard is used to evaluate his job. The appellant requests that his grade be increased to the same level as these other supervisory jobs and that the financial duties previously performed by GS employees be added to his "position classification."

Our job grading decisions must be based solely upon a comparison between the actual duties and responsibilities of the job and the appropriate JGS's (5 U.S.C. 5346). Other methods or factors of evaluation may not be used in the job grading process. These include comparing the appellant's job with other jobs that may or may not be graded correctly, e.g., the jobs cited by the appellant including his employing agency's initial and subsequent grading action on his own job. A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position or job by an official with the authority to assign work. A position or job is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by an employee. Job grading appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a job and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities currently assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision classifies a real operating job, and not simply the PD.

Therefore, this decision is based on the work currently assigned to and performed by the appellant and sets aside any previous agency decision.

Implicit in the appellant's rationale is that his financial duties should raise the grade of his job because they were formerly assigned to employees in higher graded positions. He points to the sensitivity of the data that he handles, including social security, tax identification, and bank account numbers. Both he and his supervisor stress that he runs the only coin redemption program in the U.S. Mint system and services both domestic and foreign customers. The quantity of work performed is not germane to the job grading process. Access to sensitive data does not have a direct effect on the grade level worth of work. For example, positions at many grade levels in human resources and financial offices have access to social security numbers and other sensitive employee data. The job grading process considers sensitive data only to the extent that it affects the difficulty and complexity of the work performed.

### **Job information**

The appellant supervises the [name] Branch. The subordinate staff consists of one Weighing Machine Operator Leader, WL-5424-5, job and five Weighing Machine Operator, WG-5424-5, jobs. The Leader and one Operator jobs are currently vacant. The mission of the organization is to process lots of uncurrent and mutilated coins sent to the U.S. Mint. Federal Reserve Banks send uncurrent coins (in such condition or appearance that they are no longer fit for circulation) to the U.S. Mint two or three times each year and are redeemed at face value. Mutilated coins (cut, bent, punched, or treated in such a manner as to alter the amount of metal in or the shape of the coin) may be sent in by private citizens, businesses, banks, etc., (vendors, also known as customers) and are redeemed by the weight value of the remaining metal.

The appellant's staff sorts and weighs the coins received and records information that is used to determine the amount of money each vendor receives. This involves using weighing scales to weigh coins and material handling equipment to lift and move large containers which contain the coins. In 1998, the appellant assumed responsibility for entering new vendors into and updating existing vendor information in the Mint's PeopleSoft Consolidated Information System, including such sensitive information as social security, bank account, and tax identification numbers. He enters settlement data into the system that is used to generate vendor payments for the coins processed by his staff.

We conducted an on-site audit with the appellant on November 13, 2002, and conducted a telephone interview with his acting immediate supervisor, [name], Chief, [name] Division, on November 18. In deciding this appeal, we fully considered the audit and interview findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his activity at our request. We find that the PD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

### **Pay category**

Although the appellant has not questioned the pay category placement of his job, he points to his performing vendor information entry and settlement work previously assigned to GS employees.

A job is exempt from the GS only if the paramount requirement of the job is knowledge and experience in trades, crafts, or laboring. Some FWS and GS occupations share common duties. For example, employees who occupy Supply Clerical and Technician, GS-2005, positions and 6907 Materials Handler jobs regularly input data into and extract data from automated supply systems. The primary duty for the appellant's job is direction of workers in the 5424 Weighing Machine Operating occupation. The chief requirement of his job is knowledge and experience in that work. The appellant's vendor data input and related duties document and complete the work performed by his staff; i.e., they document the weight of coins received and the amount payable to the vendor for the coins. Consequently, his job is exempt from the General Schedule and falls under the FWS.

### **Occupational code, title, and standard determination**

The appellant's agency has placed his position in the 5424 Weighing Machine Operator occupation. Because his job is supervisory, the agency titled it Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor and used the JGS for Supervisors to determine his job's grade level.

The appellant points to his PD's coversheet which references the 3869 Metal Forming Machine Operating JGS. The coversheet, however, shows that the agency placed the appellant's job in the 5424 and not the 3869 occupation. The appellant and his staff do not perform work covered by the 3869 occupation; i.e., they do not operate metal forming equipment to cut, punch, stamp, draw, shape, and roll metal sheets, strips, or wire into desired shapes or contours. As discussed previously, the appellant and his staff perform work in the 5424 occupation which involves operating and maintaining weighing scales to weigh products or materials such as coins.

The appellant's job is properly graded by application of the JGS for Supervisors. This JGS is used to grade the jobs of FWS supervisors who, as a regular and recurring part of their jobs, and on a substantially full-time and continuous basis, exercise technical and administrative supervision over subordinate workers in accomplishing trades and labor work. Based on the titling practices in the JGS, the appellant's job is allocated properly as Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor, WS-5424.

### **Grade determination**

The JGS for Supervisors' grading plan consists of three factors: *Nature of Supervisory Responsibility*; *Level of Work Supervised*; and *Scope of Work Operations Supervised*.

#### *Factor 1, Nature of Supervisory Responsibility*

This factor considers the nature of the supervisory duties performed, and the type and degree of responsibility for control over the work supervised. The factor describes four basic supervisory situations. These, in sequence, depict successively higher levels of supervisory responsibility and authority for scheduling work operations, planning use of resources (i.e., subordinate workers, equipment, facilities, materials, and tools) to accomplish scheduled or unscheduled work, directing subordinates in performing work assignments, and carrying out administrative

duties. In order for a job to be credited at a level, the job must fully meet the situation. This means that a job must meet all of the bullets under the specific situation.

The record shows that the agency credited Situation #1. In support of his appeal, the appellant cites an agency evaluation statement from 1992 which credited Situation #2.

In Situation #1, supervisors are primarily responsible for supervising workers, either directly or through subordinate leaders, in accomplishing trades and labor work operations in a segment of an organization, a group, or work shift. Supervisors perform the following:

#### Planning

- X Plan the use of workers, equipment, facilities, materials, and tools on a day-to-day or project-by-project basis;
- X Adhere to work priorities, project schedules, resources, and detailed work plans established by higher level supervisors;
- X Follow customary work cycles and sequences in planning work assignments;
- X Track and report progress on work assignments and request authority to adjust work assignments and to use overtime, equipment, and materials to meet schedules; and
- X Recommend changes to schedules, priorities, and work sequences as necessary and make minor deviations in procedures or redirect resources under their control to overcome problems such as equipment failure, material delays, or unplanned absences.

#### Work Direction

- X Assign work to individuals and provide technical direction and/or help in accomplishing difficult work steps and processes;
- X Observe work in progress to anticipate and resolve problems, reassign personnel within group supervised, and coordinate work among workers and other supervisors to maintain work progress to meet schedules;
- X Inspect completed work for quality and work order requirements; and
- X Report possible or actual work delays to their supervisor.

#### Administration

- X Support and explain management programs to their subordinates;
- X Recommend performance ratings, training, disciplinary actions, changes in performance standards, and the most suitable applicants for vacancies;

- X Advise and counsel workers on how to improve their performance and explain new work techniques;
- X Investigate grievances and complaints, resolve them informally, and notify supervisors of those of sufficient importance or seriousness;
- X Assure safety and housekeeping practices are observed; and
- X Maintain work reports and records and assist supervisors in planning overall leave schedules.

In contrast, supervisors in Situation #2 are responsible for supervising workers directly or through subordinate leaders *and/or* supervisors in accomplishing the work of an *organizational segment or group*. Supervisors in Situation #2 differ from supervisors in Situation #1 primarily in planning work operations of greater scope and complexity; determining the sequence, priority, and time for the performance of particular operations within the limits of broader work schedules and time limits; and exercising greater administrative authority. In addition to the duties described in Situation #1, supervisors in Situation #2 perform the following:

#### Planning

- X Plan use of subordinate workers, equipment, facilities, and materials on a week-to-week or month-to-month basis;
- X Establish deadlines, priorities, and work sequences, and plan work assignments based on general work schedules, methods, and policies set by higher level supervisors;
- X Coordinate work with supporting or related work functions controlled by other supervisors;
- X Determine the number and types of workers needed to accomplish specific projects;
- X Redirect individual workers and resources to accomplish unanticipated work (e.g., work resulting from Aopen and inspect@ types of work orders);
- X Inform higher level supervisors of the need to revise work schedules and re-estimate labor and other resources; and
- X Participate with their superiors in the initial planning of current and future work schedules, budget requests, staffing needs, estimates, and recommendations as to scheduling projected work.

#### Work Direction

- X Investigate work related problems such as excessive costs or low productivity and determine causes;

- X Implement corrective actions within their authority to resolve work problems; and
- X Recommend solutions to staffing problems, engineering requirements, and work operations directed by other supervisors.

### Administration

- X Plan and establish overall leave schedule;
- X Determine training needs of subordinates and arrange for its accomplishment, set performance standards, and make formal appraisals of subordinate work performance; and
- X Initiate recommendations for promotion or reassignment of subordinates.

The appellant's job meets Situation #1. Most of his work flows from coins received from vendors on a daily basis. Work is planned and performed on a first-in, first-out basis. The appellant determines the number of people, equipment, and materials required to complete each job; assigns work within established policies and procedures; schedules and assigns priorities based on whether the work is urgent, emergency or routine; and follows the normal work cycle and sequencing of operations to be performed. Typical of Situation #1, the appellant arranges for containers to hold the coins, material handling equipment to move the containers, and space in which to store the filled containers. He advises his supervisor on issues that affect work operations, e.g., delays in processing jobs. The appellant assigns work to staff members and provides technical direction on work problems. He observes work in progress, and coordinates work with other supervisors to meet schedules, e.g., obtaining coin containers from other activity units that use them. The appellant keeps the supervisor informed of problems and performs the full range of administrative responsibilities for his sub-unit.

The appellant's job does not fully meet Situation #2. The appellant exercises the administrative authorities creditable at this level. However, his work planning and direction functions do not fully meet Situation #2. Although large bulk shipments are scheduled to arrive no more than three or four times each month, these jobs involve the project-by-project planning typical of Situation #1. In contrast, week-to-week and month-to-month planning in Situation #2 envisions assembling equipment and materials for work operations that have varied technical and administrative demands, e.g., assembling materials and equipment to repair piping, electrical, mechanical and other systems. Situation #2 involves using employees with different skills; i.e., determining the **types** of workers needed to accomplish different projects, with technical complexities that require dealing with unanticipated workload changes, e.g., work resulting from "open and inspect" work orders. The Branch's work is not so complex as to require investigation to determine the causes of excessive cost or low productivity. Unlike Situation #2, the appellant supervises work requiring a limited range of skills; i.e., operating scales and materials handling equipment and performing arithmetic calculations, which does not lend itself to changes in work sequences or methods. While the appellant provides input on the number of staff needed in his unit, he does not recommend solutions to budget and staffing problems,



engineering requirements and work operations directed by other supervisors. Because Situation #2 is not fully met, Situation #1 must be credited.

### *Factor II, Level of Work Supervised*

This factor concerns the level and complexity of the work operations supervised, and their effect on the difficulty and responsibility of the supervisor's job. The level of nonsupervisory work; i.e., WG, credited under this factor considers all substantive work, whether under the direct or indirect supervision of the job being graded, for which the supervisor is technically accountable. Substantive work is that work which directly carries out the main purpose or mission of the work operations supervised, and primarily determines the technical qualifications required to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the supervisory job being graded. Technical accountability is responsibility for the quantity and quality of the work performed by subordinates, requiring the application by the supervisor of knowledge of the methods, techniques, procedures, tools, materials, and practices of the involved occupation (or occupations).

The record shows that the highest level of nonsupervisory work supervised by the appellant is grade 5. Therefore, this factor is credited at grade 5.

### *Factor III, Scope of Work Operations Supervised*

This factor considers the scope of the job's supervisory responsibility in terms of: (1) the scope of the assigned work function and organizational authority; (2) the variety of functions the job is required to supervise; and (3) the physical dispersion, work coordination, and location of subordinates. This factor is divided into three subfactors, which are in turn subdivided into levels with points assigned to each level. An appropriate level is selected for each subfactor and the corresponding point values are totaled. The total points are then converted to specific levels under Factor III using the conversion chart at the end of the factor.

#### Subfactor A. Scope of Assigned Work Function and Organizational Authority

This subfactor measures the scope of the assigned work function or mission; i.e., the purpose of the job in the organization, the extent and nature of the job's authority in relation to the organizational assignment, and the importance of the job's decision.

The appellant's job meets the threshold for Level A-2 at which supervisors have first or second level supervisory and decision authority over an organizational segment which typically has been established on the basis of being a distinct work function or mission; or a designated geographic location or work area. In this case, the appellant is responsible for uncurrent and mutilated coin processing for the U.S. Mint system. The appellant's supervisor establishes overall processing policy, e.g., limiting the number of large shipments that can be scheduled each month and process vendor shipments on a first-in, first-out basis. As at Level A-2, the appellant makes routine decisions regarding execution of that policy. He deals directly with customers, answering their questions on program procedures, e.g., minimum batch weights for processing and coin denomination sorting requirements, and adjusts work priorities based on special

processing needs. Typical of Level A-2, the appellant uses a leader to help direct day-to-day operations. Although he does not supervise subordinate work groups, decisions typically involve the work or assignments and how they are completed. For example, the activity has started direct shipment of pennies to smelters monthly. In addition to supervising on-site work, the appellant oversees employees who audit the direct shipment process at the smelting facility, e.g., sample the coins and confirm that they are pennies, are mutilated, and do not contain extraneous material.

The appellant's job does not meet Level A-3. Unlike Level A-3, the appellant does not have second level or higher supervisory and decision authority for work functions or a portion of a mission requirement. The organization that he directs does not have the other characteristics of this level; i.e., the need to use several subordinate supervisors and leaders through structured working relationships among subordinate groups of employees, formal procedures for scheduling and assigning work and work results, and the issuance of instructions through subordinate supervisors and leaders. Therefore, this subfactor is credited at Level A-2 (45 points).

#### Subfactor B. Variety of Function

This subfactor evaluates the difficulties of technical supervision of work functions which may vary from being essentially similar to markedly dissimilar. Similar or related work functions have a common or related body of knowledge, skills, work procedures, and tools, e.g., pipefitting and plumbing, carpentry and woodworking, aircraft mechanic and aircraft engine mechanic, or machining and machine tool operating. Supervision of dissimilar or unrelated work functions requires broader technical knowledge and planning and coordination skills than those required for supervision of similar work functions.

The appellant's job meets Level B-1 where supervisors direct the work of subordinates in one or more similar or related occupations at grades 1-7. As at this level, the appellant supervises subordinates in a single occupation at grade 5.

The appellant's job does not meet Level B-2 where supervisors direct the work of subordinates in dissimilar or unrelated occupations at grades 1-7. Therefore, this subfactor is credited at Level B-1 (25 points).

#### Subfactor C. Workforce Dispersion

This subfactor evaluates the varying levels of difficulty associated with monitoring and coordinating the work of nonsupervisory and supervisory personnel who vary from being collocated to widely dispersed. Dispersion of workforce considers the duration of projects, number of work sites, frequency of dispersion, and the necessity to monitor and coordinate the work. It is possible to have no points credited for this subfactor if subordinate employees are located in the same contiguous work area with the supervisor, when dispersion occurs infrequently, or when dispersion is inherent, and the work is performed in the absence of direct supervision, e.g., operating a motor vehicle.

At Level C-1, subordinate employees are located in several buildings or at work sites within a defined location such as a military base, National Park, or large Federal complex consisting of many multifloor buildings and support facilities. Work assignments vary in terms of duration; however, most assignments at this level are of limited duration; i.e., assignments are typically accomplished within a few days or weeks. In addition, this level also includes off-base; i.e., within the local commuting area, facility support and maintenance assignments.

The appellant's job does not meet Level C-1. This subfactor does not simply assess whether a subordinate workforce is dispersed; it assesses the extra difficulty, if any, associated with monitoring and coordinating the work of a dispersed staff. This difficulty is a product of a number of factors: frequency of dispersion, the number of work sites, the duration of projects, and the necessity to monitor and coordinate the work because of its dispersion. The appellant's staff primarily works in an area contiguous to his office. The staff's moving coins from one floor to another does not place greater monitoring and coordination demands on the appellant. The staff's off-site work is infrequent and involves work that does not require direct supervision. Therefore, no credit is given for this subfactor.

This factor is credited with subfactor A-2 (45 points) and subfactor B-1 (25 points). No credit is given for subfactor C. A total of 70 points falls within the range of 70 to 110 points which equates to Level B.

#### *Tentative Grade Assignment*

According to the Grading Table for Supervisory Situation #1 Level B coupled with a grade 5 level of work supervised equates to the grade 4 supervisory level.

#### *Grade Adjustment*

Both upward and downward changes from the tentative grade are required based on certain circumstances. A situation requiring a downward adjustment is offset by an upward adjustment. Grade level adjustments may not exceed one grade level.

#### Downward

A downward adjustment is indicated when the tentative grade would be the same grade as the supervisor's superior. The appellant reports to a GS employee. Therefore, this situation does not apply.

#### Upward

Upward grade adjustments are indicated for borderline jobs and work situations that impose special or unusual demands on the supervisor.

### *Borderline Jobs*

An upward adjustment is indicated when the supervisory job substantially exceeds the situation credited under Factor I and the base level of work determined under Factor II is not the highest level of subordinate work for which the supervisor has full technical responsibility.

The appellant's work situation does exceed the level credited under Factor I. However, the base level of work under Factor II is the highest level of nonsupervisory work for which he is technically responsible. Therefore, a grade adjustment based on borderline conditions is not appropriate.

### *Special or Unusual Demands*

In some situations, special staffing requirements may impose a substantially greater than normal responsibility for job design, job engineering, work scheduling, training, counseling, motivating, and maintaining security. This may occur under special employment programs and at correctional institutions having *exceptionally* difficult attitudinal, motivational, control, and security problems. An upward grade adjustment is indicated when exceptional conditions affect the majority of the subordinate workforce and are permanent and continuing; require the tailoring of assignments, tasks, training, security, and other supervisory actions to individuals; and require regular and recurring counseling and motivational activities.

The appellant occasionally supervises one or two people detailed to assist with work. However, this temporary change in the workforce does not impose a substantially greater than normal responsibility on the appellant's job. Therefore, no upward grade adjustment can be credited for special demands.

Neither a downward or upward adjustment to the tentative grade 4 supervisory level is indicated.

### **Decision**

The appellant's job is properly graded as Weighing Machine Operator Supervisor, WS-5424-4.