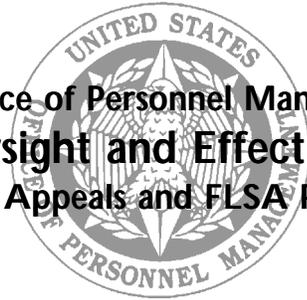


U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Atlanta Oversight Division
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

Appellant: [Appellant]
Agency classification: Health Systems Specialist
GS-671-9
Organization: Department of the Air Force
OPM decision: Supervisory Health Systems Specialist
GS-671-9
OPM decision number: C-0671-09-02

_____/s/
Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

January 6, 2000
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).

Since this decision changes the title of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of this decision, as permitted by 5 CFR 511.702. The servicing personnel office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected position description and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the effective date of the personnel action.

Decision sent to:

[Appellant]

[Personnel Officer]

Chief
AMC Civilian Personnel Center
Civilian Personnel Division
Headquarters Air Mobility Command
Department of the Air Force
201 East Winters Street
Scott Air Force Base, IL 62225-5037

Director
Civilian Personnel Operations
Department of the Air Force
AFPC/DPC
550 C Street West
Randolph Air Force Base, TX 78150-4759

Director of Civilian Personnel
U.S. Department of the Air Force
1040 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1040

Chief, Classification Branch
Field Advisory Services Division
Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

Introduction

On September 23, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted an appeal for the position of Health Systems Specialist, GS-671-9, [organizational location], Department of the Air Force, [geographic location]. The appellant is requesting that her position be classified as Health Systems Specialist, GS-671-11.

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.

General issues

The appellant states that there is an inconsistency in the evaluation of her position when compared to other GS-671 positions. She believes that the work she is performing is similar to GS-671-11 work. She provided copies of position descriptions which are graded at the GS-11 level.

By law, OPM must make classification determinations solely by comparing the current duties and responsibilities of the position to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, 5112). Since comparison to standards, not other positions, is the intended and exclusive method for classifying positions, we may not consider the classification of other positions as a basis for deciding an appeal. In addition, OPM's decisions are independent of any agency evaluations. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements concerning the agency evaluation only insofar as they are relevant to our decision.

Position information

The appellant is assigned to position number [#]. The appellant, the supervisor, and the agency have certified the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant serves as Chief of the TRICARE Support Element for Managed Health Care which includes the Marketing and Educational Health Care service. She is the principal advisor for monitoring activities of medical contracts and contractors to determine that performance meets requirements. She monitors and evaluates the service and operations of the contracts to ensure the efficiency of the contractors. The appellant performs administrative support work such as reviewing and evaluating contract proposals, assisting in negotiating contract proposals, attending conferences, providing input to the Lead Agent and the Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) on inadequacies or problems, preparing monthly reports on performance of contractors, issuing memorandums of understanding (MOUs), monitoring enrollment numbers, and maintaining official contract documentations for the TRICARE Managed Care System. She is also responsible for implementing, monitoring, and managing the marketing and education plans of the TRICARE Managed Care System. This includes estimating funds, determining strategies, analyzing data, and managing briefings for various categories of beneficiaries. She supervises three employees

and develops work plans, assigns duties, sets and evaluates performance standards, sets priorities, approves and disapproves leave, and performs other supervisory duties.

The appellant receives supervision from the Deputy Commander. According to the supervisor, the appellant works independently in carrying out day-to day and ongoing assignments. She works closely with the Lead Agent of Region [#] in support of the TRICARE contract work to discuss problems that may occur. The work is checked by the Deputy Commander in terms of meeting suspense dates, responses from survey cards, complaints, and review of some of the work products.

Standard determination

Health Systems Specialist Series, GS-671, December 1979.
Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide, August 1990.
General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG), April 1998.

Series

The agency placed the position in the Health Systems Specialist Series, GS-671. The appellant does not contest the placement of her position in this series, and we agree.

Positions in this series provide support to health care management officials by analyzing, evaluating, advising on and/or coordinating health care delivery systems and operations. Such positions may be located within an operating health care facility or at a higher organizational level. In addition to a high degree of analytical ability, positions in this series require a specialized knowledge of the basic principles and practices related to the management of health care delivery systems. These positions do not have line authority.

The appellant's position is properly placed in the Health Systems Specialist Series, GS-671.

Title and guide determination

The position is properly titled Health Systems Specialist and is best graded by means of the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide. Since the appellant's supervisor states that the position performs supervisory duties 50 percent of the time, the supervisory work will be evaluated using the GSSG. Positions that meet the supervisory requirements should be titled accordingly. The GSSG is used to grade supervisory work and related managerial responsibilities that, among other things, constitute a major duty occupying at least 25 percent of the position's time.

Grade determination

The Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES) which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard or guide describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore,

if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

HEALTH SYSTEMS SPECIALIST RESPONSIBILITIES:

The appellant disagrees with the agency evaluation of factors 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. We have reviewed factors 3, 7, 8, and 9 and agree with the agency evaluation. Therefore, only those factors contested by the appellant will be addressed in the appeal decision.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position:

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts required to do acceptable work and the nature and extent of skill necessary to apply this knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, knowledge must be required and applied. The agency credited this factor with Level 1-6. The appellant believes Level 1-7 should be credited.

At Level 1-6, knowledge requires skill in applying analytical and evaluative techniques to the identification, consideration, and resolution of issues or problems of a procedural or factual nature. The issues or problems deal with readily observable conditions (e.g., office or shop layout, work-flow, or working conditions), written guidelines covering work methods and procedures such as performance and production standards, and information of a factual nature (e.g., number and type of units actually produced or capability of equipment). Included at this level is knowledge of the theory and principles of management and organization including administrative practices and procedures common to organizations, such as those pertaining to areas of responsibility, channels of communication, delegation of authority, routing of correspondence, filing systems, and storage of files and records. Assignments typically involve using qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques such as: literature searches; work measurement; task analysis and job structuring; productivity charting; determination of staff to workload ratios (e.g., span of control); organizational design; space planning; development and administration of questionnaires; flowcharting of work processes; graphing; and calculation of means, modes, standard deviations, or similar statistical measures.

At Level 1-7, in addition to the knowledge of Level 1-6, assignments require knowledge and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to issues or studies concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations carried out by administrative or professional personnel, or substantive administrative support functions (i.e., internal activities or functions such as supply, budget, procurement, or personnel which serve to facilitate line or program operations). This level includes knowledge of pertinent laws, regulations, policies and precedents which affect the use of program and related support resources (i.e., people, money, or equipment) in the area studied. Projects and studies typically require knowledge of the major issues, program goals and objectives, work processes, and administrative operations of the organization. Knowledge is used to plan, schedule, and conduct projects and studies to evaluate and recommend ways to improve

the effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or support setting. The assignments require knowledge and skill in adapting analytical techniques and evaluation criteria to the measurement and improvement of program effectiveness and/or organizational productivity. Knowledge is applied in developing new or modified work methods, organizational structures, records and files, management processes, staffing patterns, procedures for administering program services, guidelines and procedures, and automating work processes for the conduct of administrative support functions or program operations. Knowledge may also be applied in analyzing and making recommendations concerning the centralization or decentralization of operations.

Similar to Level 1-6, the appellant applies a knowledge of conventional and well-documented analytical techniques in performing her work. She is knowledgeable of procedures, practices, rules, and regulations for a variety of administrative duties. She manages the program to ensure that the needs in terms of the health care delivery system for civilians and beneficiaries of the organization are met. She serves as the coordinator and focal point for identifying the services required, resolves procedural issues, and maintains files and records of the official contracts. She is knowledgeable of a wide range of medical treatment services and benefits that are available for beneficiaries. She monitors the civilian contractor program, identifies discrepancies, investigates potential problems, and reports them to the Lead Agent.

The appellant's work approaches Level 1-7, however, the full intent is not met. The appellant does not develop or modify work methods, organizational structures, records and files, management processes, or perform similar tasks affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations. The focus of her work is on gathering information from others, facilitating the flow of information between parties, and preparing cost projections; monitoring contracts and Humana performances; and providing service to the beneficiaries and civilians in dealing with the administrative issues of the health care policies and procedures. The appellant's function is to ensure that the services desired are met and provided and are within established guidelines.

Level 1-6 is credited for 950 points.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls:

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work. The agency credited this factor with Level 2-3. The appellant believes Level 2-4 should be credited.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor assigns specific projects in terms of issues, organizations, functions, or work processes to be studied and sets deadlines for completing the work. Where two or more projects are involved, the supervisor may assign priorities among the various projects as well as deadlines for the attainment of specific milestones within a project. The supervisor or higher grade analysts provide assistance on controversial issues or on the application of qualitative or quantitative analytical methods to the study of subjects for which precedent studies are not

available. The employee plans, coordinates, and carries out the successive steps in fact-finding and analysis of issues necessary to complete each phase of assigned projects. Work problems are normally resolved by the employee without reference to the supervisor, in accordance with accepted office policies, applicable precedents, organizational concepts, management theory, and occupational training. Work is reviewed for conformance with overall requirements as well as contribution to the objectives of the study. Complete work products such as evaluation reports and staff studies are also reviewed for consistency of facts and figures, choice of appropriate analytical methods, and practicality of recommendations. Findings and recommendations developed by the employee are reviewed prior to release, publication, or discussion with management officials.

At Level 2-4, work is within a framework of priorities, funding and overall project objectives (e.g., cost reduction, improved effectiveness and efficiency, better workload distribution, or implementation of new work methods). The employee and supervisor develop a mutually acceptable project plan which typically includes identification of the work to be done, the scope of the project, and deadlines for its completion. Within the parameters of the approved project plan, the employee is responsible for planning and organizing the study, estimating costs, coordinating with staff and line management personnel, and conducting all phases of the project. This frequently involves the definitive interpretation of regulations and study procedures, and the initial application of new methods. The employee informs the supervisor of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems with widespread impact. Completed projects, evaluations, reports, or recommendations are reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives. Completed work is also reviewed critically outside the employee's immediate office by staff and line management officials whose programs and employees would be affected by implementation of the recommendations. Work is reviewed for conformance with overall requirements as well as contribution to the objectives of the study. Complete work products such as evaluation reports and staff studies are also reviewed for consistency of facts and figures, choice of appropriate analytical methods, and practicality of recommendations. Findings and recommendations developed by the employee are reviewed prior to release, publication, or discussion with management officials.

Similar to Level 2-3, the appellant's duties and responsibilities are ongoing and continuing. The supervisor rarely assigns special projects. The appellant's work is performed following well-established procedures, regulations, and policies, and controversial or policy issues are discussed with the supervisor prior to final commitments being made. The appellant functions with considerable independence in carrying out the recurring aspects of the work, and she resolves most problems encountered by application of established policies and precedents.

Level 2-4 is not fully met. According to the supervisor and the information in the appeal record, the appellant handles her work independently based on established policies and practices; interprets regulations; plans, coordinates, and carries out the assignments; and selects the approaches and methods to solve most problems. She also plans the overall strategy for the accomplishment of the TRICARE Managed Care System mission. However, the appellant's work assignments do not typically require her to make definitive interpretations of regulations and procedures, apply new

work methods, or resolve the more controversial problems. The supervisor makes final decisions on issues which are controversial or for which no precedents exist. The appellant makes decisions on recurring problems. There is no evidence that her work is reviewed outside of her immediate office by other officials.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 4, Complexity:

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality required to perform the work. The agency credited this factor with Level 4-3. The appellant believes that Level 4-4 should be credited.

At Level 4-3, the work principally involves dealing with problems and relationships of a procedural nature rather than the substance of work operations, issues, or other subjects studied. At this level, the employee analyzes the issues in the assignment, then selects and applies accepted analytical techniques such as task analysis, work simplification, work-flow charts, workload measurement, and trend analysis to the resolution of procedural problems affecting the efficiency, effectiveness, or productivity of the organization and/or workers studied. Projects usually take place within organizations with related functions and objectives, although organization and work procedures differ from one assignment to the next. Typical organizational efficiency assignments involve observing work in progress to identify and resolve problems in work-flow, work methods and procedures, overall workload, forms and record keeping, span of control, and organizational structure.

At Level 4-4, the work involves gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues, and developing recommendations to resolve substantive problems of effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or program support setting. This is in addition to improving conditions of a procedural nature which relate to the efficiency of organizations and workers described at the previous level. By way of contrast with level 4-3, work at this level requires the application of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques that frequently require modification to fit a wider range of variables. Subjects and projects assigned at this level usually consist of issues, problems, or concepts that are not always susceptible to direct observation and analysis (e.g., projected missions and functions). Difficulty is encountered in measuring effectiveness and productivity due to variations in the nature of administrative processes studied (e.g., those associated with processing information, reorganizing to meet changes in mission, or providing support services). Information about the subject is often conflicting or incomplete, cannot readily be obtained by direct means, or is otherwise difficult to document. Characteristic of this level is originality in refining existing work methods and techniques for application to the analysis of specific issues or resolution of problems.

Level 4-3 is met. The appellant's work largely involves using accepted methods and techniques to handle the procedural aspects for a number of administrative medical tasks that involve different steps, procedures and methods. The appellant performs administrative support functions that involve gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues, conducting surveys, providing monthly surveillance reports, issuing MOUs, conducting briefings, implementing advertisements for marketing, ensuring compliance with contractors, and reporting on noncompliance issues. Typically, the appellant's responsibility extends to ensuring that the desired services of health care delivery are provided.

The position does not meet the complexity or scope required at Level 4-4. The appellant analyzes issues in the assignments, then selects and applies accepted analytical techniques such as task analysis and trend analysis to ensure that the Military Treatment Facility complies with all requirements and policy changes and modifications for TRICARE contracts. Although the appellant is recognized as the expert in managing the TRICARE Managed Care System and the marketing and education responsibilities, her duties do not compare to the substantive problems encountered at Level 4-4. By contrast, the appellant serves as a management advisor at the field level and her work relates directly to the TRICARE contracting work.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factor 5, Scope and effect:

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work and the effect of the work products or services. The agency credited this factor with Level 5-3. The appellant believes Level 5-4 should be credited.

At Level 5-3, the purpose of the work is to plan and carry out projects to improve the efficiency and productivity of organizations and employees in administrative support activities. Employees at this level identify, analyze, and make recommendations to resolve conventional problems and situations in workflow, work distribution, staffing, performance appraisals, organizational structure, and/or administration. Employees may be assigned portions of broader studies of largely administrative organizations or participate in the evaluation of program effectiveness at the operating level. Work may also involve developing detailed procedures and guidelines to supplement established administrative regulations or program guidance. Completed reports and recommendations influence decisions by managers concerning the internal administrative operations of the organizations and activities studied. The work may involve identifying problems, studying, analyzing, and making recommendations concerning the efficiency and productivity of administrative operations in different components of an organization.

At Level 5-4, work involves establishing criteria to measure and/or predict the attainment of program or organizational goals and objectives. Work at this level may also include developing related administrative regulations, such as those governing the allocation and distribution of personnel, supplies, equipment, and other resources, or publishing program guidance for

application across organizational lines or in varied geographic locations. Work contributes to the improvement of productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency in program operations and/or administrative support activities at different levels and/or geographical locations within the organization and affects the plans, goals, and effectiveness of missions and programs at these various levels or locations.

Level 5-3 is met. The purpose of the appellant's work is to carry out administrative assignments to ensure beneficiaries access to high quality medical care. She is responsible for resolving problems related to the contracts in support of the TRICARE Managed Care System. This includes implementing new guidance and procedures as they are issued. In addition, she inspects contracts, identifies problems, analyzes facts, researches information, resolves routine discrepancies, and makes recommendations concerning the efficiency and productivity of the contractors.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 5-4. The purpose of the appellant's work is not to improve productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency at many different levels or many geographical locations. She works with the organization to develop ways to improve programs and processes that are required to achieve the goals of the TRICARE Managed Care System operations. Her work does not regularly affect many different levels or geographic locations nor does it regularly affect agencies other than Air Force.

Level 5-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factor 6, Personal contacts and Factor 7, Purpose of contacts:

Factor 6 covers the people and conditions or settings under which contacts are made. It includes face-to-face contacts and telephone and radio dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. Factor 7 covers the reasons for the contacts described in Factor 6. The agency credited Factor 6 with Level 6-2. The appellant believes Level 6-3 should be credited. The appellant agrees with the agency evaluation of Level 7-b for Factor 7.

At Level 6-2, personal contacts are with employees, supervisors, and managers of the same agency, but outside of the immediate office, or employees and representatives of private concerns in a moderately structured setting.

At Level 6-3, personal contacts are with persons outside the agency which may include consultants, contractors, or business executives in a moderately unstructured setting. This level may also include contacts with the head of the employing agency or program officials several managerial levels removed from the employee when such contacts occur on an as needed basis.

Level 6-2 is met. This is comparable to the appellant's contacts which are primarily with employees, supervisors, managers, contractors, and other Air Force personnel involved with TRICARE and marketing and education management.

Level 6-3 is not met. There is no indication of the appellant routinely having contacts at this level.

Factor 6 is evaluated at Level 2 and Factor 7 at Level b. According to the chart in the Guide, this equates to 75 points.

Factors 6 and 7 are credited with 75 points.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-6	950
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6. Personal Contacts 7. Purpose of Contacts	6-2 7-b	75
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	1885

A total of 1885 points equates to GS-9, 1855 to 2100 points, according to the grade conversion table in the guide.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The GSSG is used to determine the grade of General Schedule (GS or GM) supervisory positions in grades GS-5 through GS-15. 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 descriptions for that factor and crediting the points designated for the highest factor-level which is fully met, in accordance with the instructions specific to the factor being evaluated. The total points accumulated under all factors are then

converted to a grade by using the point-to-grade conversion table in the GSSG. The position is evaluated as follows:

Factor 1, Program Scope and Effect:

This factor assesses 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 addressed under this element.

At Level 1-2, the program segment or work directed is administrative, technical, complex clerical, or comparable in nature, has limited geographic coverage, and supports 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, the position directs a program segment that performs technical, administrative, protective, investigative, or professional work covering 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, comparable to a small city. Providing complex administrative or technical or professional services directly affecting a large or complex multimission military installation also falls at this level.

Level 1-2 is met. The appellant directs work that is administrative in nature which supports the mission of the TRICARE and managed care activities for Region [#].

Level 1-3 is not met. The appellant does not direct work that meets the scope and magnitude described at this level. The work directed by the appellant does not serve an area comparable in size to a major metropolitan area, a State, a small region of States, or a small city, and she does not provide services directly affecting a large or complex multimission military installation.

b. Effect

This element addresses the impact of the work, the products, and/or the programs described under "Scope" on the mission and programs of the customer(s), the activity, other activities in or outside of the Federal Government, the agency, other agencies, the general public, or other entities.

At Level 1-2, 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, the activities, functions, or services accomplished directly and significantly impact a wide range of agency activities, the work of other agencies, the operations of outside interests (e.g., a segment of a regulated industry), or the general public. At the field activity level, (i.e., large, complex multimission organizations or very large serviced populations), the work directly involves or substantially impacts the provision of essential support services to numerous, varied, and complex technical, professional, or administrative functions.

Level 1-2 is met. The services provided effect the [Air Force Base Group] health services operations and support the needs of the military and civilian components of the Medical Health Service System.

Level 1-3 is not met. The appellant's work does not impact a wide range of agency functions, other agencies, or the operations of outside interests or the general public.

Since both elements are evaluated at Level 1-2, the overall evaluation of this factor is Level 1-2.

Level 1-2 is credited for 350 points.

Factor 2, Organizational Setting:

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

At Level 2-1, the lowest level for this factor, the position is accountable to a position that is two or more levels below the first Senior Executive Service, flag or general officer, or equivalent or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain.

At Level 2-2 the position is accountable to a position that is one reporting level below the first SES, flag or general officer, or equivalent or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain.

Level 2-1 is met. The organizational chart shows that the appellant is accountable to a position that is two levels or more below the Captain, the commanding officer of the squadron.

Level 2-1 is credited for 100 points.

Factor 3, Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised:

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities that are exercised on a recurring basis. To be credited with a level under this factor, a position must carry out the authorities and responsibilities to the extent described for the specific level. Levels under this factor apply equally to the direction of specialized program management organizations, line functions, staff functions, and operating and support activities.

Level 3-2 describes three situations, any one of which is sufficient to credit this level. Since the appellant does not supervise production-oriented work or contractor employees, the first two situations, a and b, are not applicable. The third situation, c, covers positions that carry out at least 3 of the first 4, and a total of 6 or more of the following 10 authorities and responsibilities: (1) plan work to be accomplished by subordinates, set and adjust short-term priorities, and prepare schedules for completion of work; (2) assign work to subordinates based on priorities, selective consideration of the difficulty and requirements of assignments, and the capabilities of employees; (3) evaluate work performance of subordinates; (4) give advice, counsel, or instruction to employees on both work and administrative matters; (5) interview candidates for positions in the unit and recommend appointment, promotion, or reassignment to such positions; (6) hear and resolve complaints from employees, referring group grievances and more serious unresolved complaints to a higher level supervisor or manager; (7) effect minor disciplinary measures, such as warnings and reprimands, recommending other action in more serious cases; (8) identify developmental and training needs of employees, providing or arranging for needed development and training; (9) find ways to improve production or increase the quality of the work directed; and (10) develop performance standards.

Level 3-3 describes two situations. In the first situation, the position exercises delegated managerial authority to set a series of annual, multi-year, or similar long-range work plans and schedules for in-service or contracted work; assure implementation by subordinate organizational units of program goals and objectives; determine which goals and objectives need additional emphasis; determine the best solution to budget shortages; and plan for long range staffing needs. Positions in this situation are closely involved with high-level program officials or comparable agency staff personnel in developing overall goals and objectives for assigned functions or programs. The second situation covers second-level supervisory positions who perform the full range of supervisory functions described at Level 3-2, and at least 8 of the 15 conditions described at Level 3-3, including such matters as using subordinates to direct or lead work, exercising significant advisory or coordinating responsibilities, assuring equity of performance standards and ratings among subordinate units, directing a program segment with significant resources, making decisions on matters elevated by subordinate supervisors, exercising personnel authority over subordinate supervisors and employees, approving serious disciplinary actions, making non-routine decisions, and approving the expenditure of funds.

Level 3-2c is met. According to the information obtained during the interviews, the appellant spends between 25 and 50 percent of her time supervising and she meets numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10 as described above.

Level 3-3 is not met. Contrary to the first situation, the appellant does not have program responsibility for setting goals and objectives, resolving budget issues, or planning long range staffing needs nor is she involved with high-level program officials in developing goals and objectives for agency contracting functions. The appellant does not supervise other supervisors, therefore, the second situation is not met either.

Level 3-2c is credited for 450 points.

Factor 4, Personal Contacts:

This is a two-part factor which assesses the nature and the purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities. The same contacts that serve as the basis for the level credited under Subfactor 4A must be used to determine the correct level under Subfactor 4B.

Subfactor 4A, Nature of Contacts

This subfactor covers the 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 the 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.

At Level 4A-1, contacts are with subordinates within the organizational unit(s) supervised, with peers who supervise comparable units within the larger organization, with union shop stewards, and/or with the staff of administrative and other support activities when the person contacted is within the same organization as the supervisor. Contacts are typically informal and occur in person at the work place of those contacted, in routine meetings, or by telephone.

At Level 4A-2, frequent contacts are with members of the business community or the general public; higher ranking managers, supervisors, and staff of other units throughout the activity or at levels below bureau or major military command level; representatives of local public interest groups; case workers in Congressional district offices; technical or operating personnel in State and local government; reporters for local or other limited media outlets; or comparable contacts. These contacts may be informal, occur in conferences and meetings, or take place through telephone, televised, radio, or similar contact, and sometimes require non-routine or special preparation.

Level 4A-1 is met. The appellant's contacts are most frequently with subordinates within the organization in an informal setting.

Level 4A-2 is not met. The appellant does not normally have contacts with persons at this level.

Level 4A-1 is credited for 25 points.

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.

At Level 4B-1, the purpose of contacts is to discuss work efforts for providing or receiving services; to exchange factual information about work operations and personnel management matters; and to provide training, advice, and guidance to subordinates.

At Level 4B-2, the purpose of contacts is to ensure that information provided to outside parties is accurate and consistent; to plan and coordinate the work directed with that of others outside the subordinate organization; and/or to resolve differences of opinion among managers, supervisors, employees, contractors or others.

Level 4B-1 is met. The appellant provides advice to employees on work efforts, resolves problems, and informs employees of operational changes and procedures.

Level 4B-2 is not met. The purpose of the appellant's contacts is not to resolve differences among others outside of the organization. There is no evidence in the appeal record that she encounters significant organizational conflicts outside of her subordinate organization.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4B-1 for 30 points.

Factor 5, Difficulty of Typical Work Directed:

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization(s) directed, as well as other line, staff, or contracted work for which the supervisor has technical or oversight responsibility, either directly or through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or others.

The appellant supervises a subordinate staff of three (2 GS-962-7 civilians and 1 military performing work equivalent to GS-7 or 8) involved in clerical and technical functions in support of the TRICARE Managed Care System activity.

According to the chart in the GSSG, the highest level of base work supervised by the appellant, GS-7 or 8 or equivalent, equates to Level 5-4.

Level 5-4 is credited for 505 points.

Factor 6, Other Conditions

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 substantially 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.

At Level 6-2, two situations are described. The first situation states that the work supervised or overseen involves technician and/or support work comparable in difficulty to GS-7 or GS-8, or work at the GS-4, 5 or 6 level, where the supervisor has full and final technical authority over the work which requires coordination and integration of work efforts either within the unit or with other units in order to produce a completed work product or service. (Full and final technical authority means that the supervisor is responsible for all technical determinations arising from the work, without technical advice or assistance on even the more difficult and unusual problems, and without further review except from an administrative or program evaluation standpoint. Credit for this should be limited to situations involving an extraordinary degree of finality in technical decision making.) The required coordination at this level ensures consistency of product, service, interpretation, or advice and conformance with the output of other units, with formal standards or agency policy. Supervisors typically coordinate with supervisors of other units to deal with requirements and problems affecting others outside the organization. For the second situation the position directs subordinate supervisors of work comparable to GS-6 or lower, where coordinating the work of the subordinate units requires a continuing effort to assure quality and service standards and is limited to matters of timeliness, form, procedure, accuracy, and quantity.

Level 6-2 is met. The appellant oversees work comparable to the GS-7 and 8 levels and coordinates the work efforts to ensure that service provided is complete and consistent with agency standards and policies.

Level 6-2 is credited for 575 points.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

1. Variety of Work (Not Credited)

This situation is credited when more than one kind of work, each kind representing a requirement for a distinctly different additional body of knowledge on the part of the supervisor, is present in the work of the unit. A "kind of work" requires substantially full qualification in distinctly separate areas, or full knowledge and understanding of rules, regulations, procedures, and subject matter of a distinctly separate area of work.

The subordinate staff performs work related to providing benefits information and assistance, performing procurement functions, and other clerical and technical work in support of the TRICARE Managed Care System. The appellant is not required to have distinctly different areas of knowledge to perform her supervisory duties.

2. *Shift Operations* (Not Credited)

This situation is credited when the position supervises an operation carried out on at least two fully staffed shifts.

The appellant does not supervise shift operations.

3. *Fluctuating Work Force or Constantly Changing Deadlines* (Not Credited)

Fluctuating work force is credited when the workforce supervised by the position has large fluctuations in size and when they impose on the supervisor a substantially greater responsibility for training, adjusting assignments, or maintaining a smooth flow of work while absorbing and releasing employees.

The appellant's organization is relatively stable. Throughout the realignment and restructuring of the contracting functions for the command, the staff has basically remained in place with the exception of one position which was vacated and will not be filled.

4. *Physical Dispersion* (Not Credited)

This situation is credited when a substantial portion of the workload for which the supervisor is responsible is regularly carried out at one or more locations which are physically removed from the main unit (as in different buildings or widely dispersed locations in a large warehouse or factory), under conditions that make day-to-day supervision difficult to administer.

The work is carried out in one office location.

5. *Special Staffing Situations* (Not Credited)

Credit for this situation is given when (1) a substantial portion of the workforce is regularly involved in special employment programs or in a similar situation which requires involvement with employee representatives to resolve difficult or complex human resources management issues and problems; (2) requirements for counseling and motivational activities are regular and recurring; and (3) job assignments, work tasks, working conditions, and/or training must be tailored to fit the special circumstances.

There is no evidence that the appellant is involved in special employment programs that require adjustments to work assignments, tasks, work environment, or require regular and recurring special counseling or motivational activities.

6. *Impact of Specialized Programs* (Not Credited)

This situation is credited when supervisors are responsible for a significant technical or administrative workload in grades above the level of work credited in Factor 5, provided the grades of this work are not based upon independence of action, freedom from supervision, or personal impact on the job.

The appellant is not responsible for other positions above the grade level credited in Factor 5.

7. *Changing Technology* (Not Credited)

This situation is credited when work processes and procedures vary constantly because of the impact of changing technology, creating a requirement for extensive training and guidance of the subordinate staff.

There is no evidence in the appeal record to indicate a requirement for extensive training and guidance due to changing technology.

8. *Special Hazard and Safety Conditions* (Not Credited)

This situation is credited when there is a need to make provisions for significant unsafe or hazardous conditions occurring during performance of the work of the organization.

The work does not routinely involve hazardous working conditions. Some field site visits may require compliance with normal environmental safety and Occupational Safety and Health Administration procedures.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Program Scope and Effect	1-2	350
2. Organizational Setting	2-1	100
3. Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised	3-2c	450
4. Personal Contacts		
A. Nature of Contacts	4A-1	25
B. Purpose of Contacts	4B-1	30
5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed	5-4	505
6. Other Conditions	6-2	575
	TOTAL	2035

A total of 1770 points equates to GS-9, 1855 to 2100 points, according to the point-to-grade conversion chart in the GSSG.

Summary

The supervisory responsibilities equate to the GS-9 level and the Health Systems Specialist responsibilities equate to the GS-9 level. The overall grade of the position is, therefore, GS-9.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Supervisory Health Systems Specialist, GS-671-9.