

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and ELSA 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: [Appellants' names]

Agency classification: Budget Analyst
GS-560-9

Organization: [Appellants' activity]
U.S. Marine Corps
Department of the Navy
[City, state]

OPM decision: Budget Analyst
GS-560-9

OPM decision number: C- 0560-09-03

Signed by Denis J. Whitebook _____
Denis J. Whitebook
Classification Appeals Officer

March 6, 1998 _____
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:

[Appellants' names and addresses]

[Address of appellants'
servicing personnel office]

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United States Marine Corps
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Director, Plans, Programs, and Diversity
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Introduction

On October 20, 1997, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellants]. Their positions are currently classified as Budget Analyst, GS-560-9. However, they believe the grade level should be GS-11. The appellants work in the [their activity], U.S. Marine Corps, Department of the Navy, [city and state]. We have accepted and decided their appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

The appellants request that the grade of their positions be determined by comparison to other similar jobs in the U.S. Marine Corps, and make comparisons of their positions to a Navy PDWriter position description for GS-11 Budget Analysts. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellants' positions to other similar jobs or position descriptions as a basis for deciding their appeal.

Like OPM, the appellants' agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. However, the agency also has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellants consider their positions so similar to others that they all warrant the same classification, they may pursue the matter by writing to the Marine Corps' personnel headquarters. In doing so, they should specify the precise organizational location, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the positions in question. If the positions are found to be basically the same as theirs, the agency must correct their classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain to them the differences between their positions and the others.

The appellants note that their current position description exhibits a definite increase of duties compared with their former position description with no commensurate increase in grade level. As stated above, by law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines. We cannot compare the appellants' current position description to their former position description in arriving at our classification decision.

The appellants also note that [one appellant] acts for the budget officer in his absence. However, duties performed in another employee's absence cannot be considered in determining the grade of a position (*The Classifier's Handbook*, chapter 5).

To help decide the appeal, we conducted a phone audit of the appellants' positions on February 12, and 13, 1998. The audit included all three appellants and a later telephone conversation with their immediate supervisor.

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed the audit findings and all information furnished by the appellants and their agency, including their official position description [number].

Position information

The appellants perform various budgetary analyses in the formulation, justification, execution, and review of assigned portions of the appropriated fund budget. The appellants instruct the fund administrators and program managers in the preparation of annual budget submissions. Each of the appellants is cross-trained in the duties of the other Budget Analysts and is prepared to perform those duties in each one's absence. Each appellant is rotated to one of the other Budget Analyst positions every two years. The appellants' PD and other material of record furnish much more information about their duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Series, title, and standard determination

We find that the appellants' positions are properly covered by the Budget Analysis Series, GS-560, titled Budget Analyst, and graded using the GS-560 standard. Neither the agency nor the appellants disagree.

Grade determination

The budget analysis standard 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. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

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 knowledge required by these positions meets Level 1-6. At Level 1-6 the work requires a good practical knowledge of the missions, functions, goals, objectives, work processes, and sources of funding of assigned budget activities in order to relate needs and accomplishments of serviced activities to anticipated and actual dollar figures in the budget. The appellants, likewise, must have a working knowledge of their assigned budget activities in order to interpret budget guidance, precedent-setting decisions, procedures, formats and regulations to assure the Budget Officer, fund administrators, and other fiscal personnel that budget forecasts, estimates and submissions conform to requirements, guidelines, and financial objectives.

Level 1-6 requires a knowledge of sources of factual information about the programs and finances of the assigned areas of the budget. Similarly, the appellants must be knowledgeable of the sources of funding and whether funds are reimbursable dollars from another command, an allotment, transfer of funds, revenue from working capital funds, etc.

The appellants' assignments do not fully meet Level 1-7. Level 1-7 requires a detailed, intensive knowledge of budgetary and financial relationships between the assigned budgets and budgets and programs of other agency components and organizations. While the appellants do interface with programs of other agency components and organizations such as the Marine Corps Systems Command, and the [name of command], they indicated during our phone audit that they do not require a detailed, intensive knowledge of budgetary and financial relationships between their assigned budgets and budgets of these other agency components and organizations.

At Level 1-7 the work requires knowledge and skill in the application of methods and techniques for analyzing and evaluating the effects of continuing changes in program plans and funding on the accomplishment of the organization's budget and program milestones [e.g., cost-benefit analysis, planning-programming-budgeting, program evaluation review techniques (PERT), management by objectives, decision theory, probability theory, linear programming, and inventory replacement theory]. The appellants revise their assigned budgets, make recommendations for future funding due to continuing changes in program plans and funding, and may conduct cost analysis. However, they do not regularly apply the referenced methods and techniques.

At Level 1-7, analysts typically perform work that affects various lower echelons (for instance, subordinate bureaus, services, commands, or installations) that have their own budget officials. However, there are no such echelons below the [appellants' activity]. Although the Installations and Logistics Directorate of the [appellants' activity] has a budget section, it does not constitute a lower echelon as described above.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1-6 and 950 points are credited.

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 appellants' positions meet Level 2-3. At Level 2-3, typically, work assignments involve continuing responsibility for specific areas of the budget. Likewise, the appellants each have assigned budgets and programs for which they have continuing responsibility. At Level 2-3 the employee is responsible for independently planning and carrying out information gathering and analysis activities involving the application of standardized policies and regulations, and currently used methods and practices of budgeting. Likewise, the appellants independently plan and carry out information gathering and analysis activities involving the application of procedures provided by Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps (HQMC) or higher authority.

The work does not meet Level 2-4. At Level 2-4 the employee assesses the long-term effects of new or revised legislation on the budget and programs of the employing organization. While the appellants assess and apply new and revised instructions and guidance to their assigned portions of the budget, they do not regularly assess new or revised legislation for long-term effects on the budget and programs of the [appellants' activity].

At Level 2-4, the employee selects the analytical methods to be used in estimating funding needs (e.g., decision theory, program evaluation review techniques, linear regression, and/or linear programming). The appellants do estimate funding needs for their assigned budgets and programs. However, they do not regularly perform the level of analysis exemplified by the analytical methods referenced above.

This factor is assigned Level 2-3 and 275 points are credited.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment necessary to apply them.

At Level 3-3, guidelines available and regularly used in the work are in the form of budgetary policies, precedents, and regulations; and specific, substantive, program goals, production schedules, and work processes. Comparable to Level 3-3, the appellants' PD shows that guidelines available and regularly used in the work are the Navy Comptroller's Manual/SECNAV Instructions, Marine Corps Orders and Bulletins, NAVCOMPT Instructions, DOD Instructions, and [appellants' activity] Orders and Bulletins.

Level 3-3 requires judgment in interpreting, adapting, and applying guidelines such as instructions in budget formulation and budget execution to the analysis and development of budget estimates and annual work plans for continuing programs and organizations. Likewise, during the budget formulation process, the appellants review budget estimates submitted by program managers for compliance with rules, regulations, and procedures. They also devise and recommend procedures to implement budgetary processes, policies, and regulations issued by higher command or HQMC.

Level 3-4 is not met. At Level 3-4, guidelines regularly applied consist of broad budgetary guidance, such as circulars, directives, and regulations issued by the Office of Management and Budget which relate to the division of Federal funds among agency programs. By contrast, though the appellants may apply some broad budgetary guidance, they typically apply narrower guidelines such as the manuals, instructions, orders, and bulletins mentioned earlier.

Employees at Level 3-4 typically develop guidelines to be followed by budget officers and program managers at subordinate organizational levels or offices in various geographic regions. The appellants, on the other hand, devise and recommend procedures to be followed by fund administrators and program managers of the [appellants' activity].

Also, the factor level examples at Level 3-4 describe a broader type of guidance. In the first example, employees develop budgetary guidelines covering the formulation of budget estimates for nationwide supply operations of an organization or agency. As discussed above, the appellants develop budgetary guidelines covering the formulation of budgets at the [their activity]. In the second example, employees at Level 3-4 establish criteria and methods for analyzing and evaluating the performance of budgetary functions within an entire Department of Defense agency or major military command. Again, the appellants' assignments primarily affect budgets and programs that are within [their activity].

This factor is assigned Level 3-3 and 275 points are credited.

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.

As described at Level 4-3, the appellants perform varied duties in the budget process which require the application of a series of different and unrelated methods, practices, and techniques of budgeting. As also described at this level, the appellants' duties include developing cost data for alternative work plans, forecasting funding needs, and providing advice on the applicability of regulations.

The positions do not meet the complexity required at Level 4-4. At Level 4-4 the program funding may extend for several years or more and the employee assists program managers and staff officials in interpreting the impact of, and planning for multi-year budgetary and program changes. The appellants typically work with programs that are funded annually. Although the appellants do work on a biennial budget, they primarily assist program managers and staff officials in interpreting and planning one-year budgetary and program changes.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-3 and 150 points are credited.

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.

At Level 5-3, work products, advice and services rendered, and clearances issued affect the amount and timely availability of money to pay for personnel salaries and expenses, equipment, routine maintenance services, and similar administrative and support activities in appropriated or industrially funded organizations. Likewise, the appellants' work affects the amount and timely availability of money to pay for personnel salaries and related expenses or materials and services.

At Level 5-3, advice affects the accuracy of budget forecasts and/or compliance with legal and regulatory guides, such as the Anti-Deficiency Act. As is comparable to Level 5-3, the appellants analyze, review, validate, and edit all budget inputs to ensure that they adhere to Comptroller or higher authority-developed requirements. They review estimates submitted by program managers for compliance with rules, regulations, and procedures.

The appellants' positions do not meet Level 5-4. At level 5-4 the purpose of the work is to formulate and/or monitor the execution of long-range (e.g., three-to-five year) detailed budget forecasts and plans to fund the implementation of substantive programs and projects of the employing component or agency. The appellants' work does not have this same scope. Their assignments involve mainly annual or biennial budgets of [their activity].

The examples of work characteristic for Level 5-4 refer to work situations where the employee develops guidance for use in subordinate echelons and components of the employing organization such as civilian bureaus and services, regions, or military commands and installations; works on the administrative budget of an organization with subordinate organizational segments, most of which have their own budget staffs that independently accomplish the formulation and execution of the administrative budget; and formulates both current and out-year budgets for research, development, test, evaluation, and procurement of components for weapons systems. The appellants' work situations are not this broad. The guidance they develop is primarily for use at [their activity] which does not have subordinate echelons and components as described; their assigned budgets are for [their activity] which does not have subordinate organizational segments as described; nor do the appellants formulate budgets for research, development, test, evaluation, and procurement of components for weapons systems.

This factor is evaluated at Level 5-3 and 150 points are credited.

Factor 6, Personal 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. The appellants' personal contacts are evaluated at Level 6-2. Typical of this level are contacts with project managers responsible for substantive technical programs or their designated representatives; engineers, chemists, and other technical subject matter specialists; program analysts; and other budget and financial analysts at various levels within the agency, in field or headquarters locations. Likewise, the appellants' contacts are typically with project managers and other budget and financial analysts at various levels within the Marine Corps, in field or headquarters locations.

The appellants' positions do not reach Level 6-3. At this level contacts are with individuals from outside the agency who represent the budget and program interests of other Federal agencies, contractors, private business and financial interests, state and local governments, foreign governments, public and private institutions, Congressional staff members, or other Federal agencies. Characteristic of this level are contacts with the director or deputy director of the employing agency

(which for the appellants is the Department of the Navy), key officials of comparable rank and authority in other agencies, and OMB budget examiners. The appellants' contacts on the other hand are primarily with individuals within the Marine Corps or other Federal agencies who are engaged in budgetary functions which affect the budget of the [appellants' activity].

At Level 6-3, contacts normally take place at formal budget briefings, conferences, hearings, or negotiations which are arranged well in advance. The appellants' contacts with individuals outside the agency are typically more informal, more immediate, and are usually made by way of telephone contact.

This factor is evaluated at Level 6-2 and 25 points are credited.

Factor 7, Purpose of contacts

Factor 7 covers the reasons for the contacts described in Factor 6.

Factor 7 is evaluated at Level 7-2. At that level, contacts typically are for the purpose of resolving budgetary issues and problems and carrying out budgetary transactions to achieve mutually agreed upon financial and program objectives. The appellants' contacts, likewise, are for the purpose of identifying, analyzing, and evaluating budgetary problems and for developing solutions.

The appellants' positions do not reach Level 7-3. At Level 7-3 the purpose of contacts is to persuade program managers and other officials in positions of decision-making authority with widely differing goals and interests to follow a recommended course of action consistent with established budget policies, objectives, and regulations. The examples at Level 7-3 include such things as presenting, explaining and defending controversial budget requests of the employing organization at meetings and conferences with officials at higher levels of budgetary and administrative review within the employing agency. While the appellants work on budgetary problems which may involve conflicting goals and objectives, the problems are typically resolved within [their activity] rather than at higher levels within the Department of the Navy.

This factor is evaluated at Level 7-2 and 50 points are credited.

Factor 8, Physical demands

The physical demands on the appellants meet Level 8-1. As is typical at this level, the appellants' work is usually performed in an office setting and is sedentary.

This factor is evaluated at Level 8-1 and awarded 5 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

The appellant's work environment is evaluated at 9-1. As is typical at this level, the appellants' work is usually performed in an office setting which is adequately lighted and climate controlled.

This factor is evaluated at Level 9-1 and awarded 5 points.

Summary

In summary, we have evaluated the appellants' positions as follows:

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	6-2	25
7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
Total Points:		1885

The appellants' positions warrant 1885 total points. Therefore, in accordance with the grade conversion table on page 21 of the standard, their positions are properly graded at GS-9.

Decision

The appellants' positions are properly classified as Budget Analyst, GS-560-9.