

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



Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242

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

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Occupational Health Technician
GS-640-5

Organization: U.S. Army Medical Department Activity
[appellant's activity]
[appellant's installation]

OPM decision: GS-640-5
title at discretion of agency

OPM decision number: C- 0640-05-01

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon
Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

9/30/98
Date

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

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name and address]

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Introduction

On February 9, 1998, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [appellant's name], an employee in the [activity], U.S. Army Medical Department Activity, [the installation]. [The appellant] is currently employed as an Occupational Health Technician, GS-640-5. In addition to performing health technician duties, the appellant functions as the systems administrator for the U.S. Army Occupational Health Management Information System (OHMIS) for [the activity] at [the installation]. Because of his responsibility for providing computer support to the organization, he believes that his position should be classified as Occupational Health Technician, GS-640-6.

In April 1996, the appellant requested a desk audit from his agency after his immediate supervisor proposed that computer systems administration duties be added to the appellant's position description. An on-site audit conducted by [the installation's Department of Civilian Personnel] found that the position should be at the GS-6 grade level. However, the appellant was not reassigned to the new position description because the Acting Chief of [the appellant's organization] requested further review of the duties. A subsequent audit conducted by [the appellant's servicing] Civilian Personnel Operations Center resulted in the determination that the grade should be GS-5. [The appellant] believes he did not receive credit for his computer related duties when the latter audit was conducted.

The appeal has been accepted and decided under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code. To help decide the appeal, an Oversight Division representative conducted telephone audits with the appellant and his immediate supervisor. In reaching our classification decision, we have reviewed the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his agency, including his official position description [number]. Both the appellant and his supervisor believe the appellant's current position description adequately describes the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Position information

The appellant performs various health screening tests, procedures, and administrative functions in support of the [activity] and serves as the systems administrator for the hospital. On a daily basis, he calibrates all of the occupational health equipment used in performing various health tests. He performs preventive maintenance on the equipment when needed. As the Occupational Health Technical/Systems Administrator at [the installation] for OHMIS, the appellant integrates his basic knowledge of occupational health programs and practices, industrial hygiene practices, hearing conservation programs, and data gathering techniques with knowledge of computer network hardware and software systems applications. The appellant stated that 60 percent of his time is spent performing these duties; the official position description indicates that 40 percent of the appellant's time is spent on these duties. The supervisor is in agreement that the appellant spends at least 60 percent of his time performing the computer related duties, e.g., keeping the systems up and functioning properly, assisting users, retrieving and tracking data, and teaching computer labs.

The appellant performs a variety of duties and responsibilities. Some of the major duties are as follows:

- ▶ conducts tests and screening examinations to include audiogram, pulmonary function testing, respirator fit testing, vision screening, and TB skin testing and obtains blood pressure, height, weight, and temperature readings;
- ▶ administers immunizations such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, flu, and Hepatitis B;
- ▶ recognizes and refers to the occupational health nurse, physician, or physician assistant those employees who have abnormal test results in TB skin test, urinalysis, liver function, pulmonary function, audiogram, and vision tests;
- ▶ calibrates occupational health equipment, performing preventive maintenance and maintaining calibration logs;
- ▶ assists physicians, nurses, and physician assistants during physical examinations by setting up exam rooms, chaperoning, and completing additional lab and consult requisitions;
- ▶ assists in developing, organizing, and conducting medical surveillance programs; Occupational, Safety and Health Administration mandated programs; and health education programs including general health education, hearing conservation, vision conservation, various immunization programs, and bloodborne pathogen programs;
- ▶ retrieves reports and information from OHMIS for users;
- ▶ responds to user requests on defining information requirements for occupational health surveillance programs;
- ▶ performs all OHMIS systems maintenance functions and diagnoses system malfunctions to isolate the source of problems between equipment, system software, and application programs;
- ▶ serves as on-site technical resource for all users, providing instructions on accurate input, hardware utilization, and use of data in all systems; and
- ▶ performs all clerical duties as required to include scheduling of appointments, medical records upkeep, filing, and other administrative duties.

Series, title, and standards determination

The appellant does not question the series or title of his position. We agree with the agency's allocation of the appellant's position to the GS-640 Health Aid and Technician Series. This series is designed as a "catchall" for positions involving nonprofessional health and medical work of such generalized, specialized, or miscellaneous nature that there is no other more appropriate series. This

series covers mixed positions, those which involve a combination of two or more technical functions characteristic of other technician series in the GS-600 group.

The appellant's position involves different kinds of work that are not adequately covered by a single series. It is a mix of work comparable to practical nursing, administrative, and training duties which is appropriate for the GS-640 series. Classification titles are not prescribed for positions in this series, although Health Technician is the suggested title for positions at grades GS-4 and above. The agency has titled this position as Health Technician, and we agree that this is appropriate.

The standard for Health Aid and Technician, GS-640, does not provide grade level criteria. The appellant's position, therefore, must be classified by reference to standards that are as similar as possible to the subject position considering the kind of work performed, qualification requirements of the work, level of difficulty and responsibility, and the combination of classification factors which have the greatest influence on the grade level. The appellant's position consists of duties and responsibilities in areas corresponding to three different classification standards. The areas of work regularly assigned and significant to the overall position are represented by the following standards: Practical Nurse Series, GS-620, used to evaluate nursing duties; Medical Instrument Technician Series, GS-649, used to evaluate duties involving the calibration, operation, and maintenance of diagnostic medical equipment; and Computer Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-335, used to evaluate systems administrator duties.

Grade determination

The three standards used to determine the grade level of the appellant's work are written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. The FES employs nine factors. Under the FES, work must be fully equivalent to the factor level described in the standard to warrant credit at that level's point value. If work is not fully equivalent to the overall intent of a particular level described in the standard, a lower level and point value must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect of the work that meets a higher level. Our evaluation of the appellant's position with respect to the nine factors follows.

Evaluation using GS-620 Practical Nurse standard

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts which the employee must understand to do acceptable work and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply those knowledges.

Level 1-3 requires, in addition to basic knowledge and skill found at the lower level, knowledge reflected in licensure followed by training as a practical or vocational nurse and demonstrated skill and experience to perform a moderately difficult range of practical nursing care for the purpose of

serving as a responsible member of the nursing team providing therapeutic, rehabilitative, and preventive care for patients in various stages of dependency.

Level 1-4 requires the type knowledge described at Level 1-3 plus knowledge of a wide variety of interrelated or nonstandard assignments reflected in licensure as a practical or vocational nurse and broad work experience that demonstrates skill sufficient to resolve a range of problems with responsibility for carrying assignments to completion. The knowledge and skill illustrative of assignments at this level are (a) knowledge of a large body of nursing care procedures, patients' illnesses and diseases, patients' charts, nursing care plans and the requirements of the nursing team and skill sufficient to provide care to a selected patient load of critically ill patients and (b) knowledge of the nursing standards and skill sufficient to assess deviations from normal conditions and immediately modify the patient's nursing care plan with delayed notification to the nurse for concurrence in modification to the plan.

The appellant possesses sufficient knowledge and skill to perform TB skin tests; obtain blood pressure, temperature, height and weight readings; and administer injections. He has the ability to recognize abnormal lab test results and to determine when to refer a patient for further examination and examination and testing, based on information obtained during development of the medical history. He completes forms for patient referral to radiology, the laboratory, and specialty clinics. He is knowledgeable of medical reporting procedures, confidentiality, and documentation of procedures performed in patients' medical health records. He assists physicians, nurses, and physician assistants during physical examinations by setting up the exam room, chaperoning, and completing additional laboratory requisitions and referrals to consultants. The knowledges, skills, and abilities required to perform duties of the appellant's position are comparable to Level 1-3.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 1-4 in that it does not require knowledge of a *wide* variety of interrelated or nonstandard assignments and broad work experience as described at that level.

Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 1-3 and credit 350 points.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct and indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

At Level 2-2, the supervisor provides continuing or individual assignments by indicating generally what is to be done, limitations, quality and quantity expected, deadlines, and priority of tasks. The supervisor provides additional, specific instructions for new, difficult, or unusual tasks. The employee uses initiative in carrying out recurring tasks independently without specific instructions, but refers deviations, problems, and unfamiliar situations to the supervisor for decision or help. The supervisor assures that finished work and methods used are technically accurate and in compliance with instructions or established procedures through daily rounds.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor makes patient assignments by defining the patient cases to the employee who is responsible for a patient load of critically-ill patients. The employee sets priorities and deadlines for the patient care during the tour without prompting from the supervisor and independently plans and carries out patient care duties.

The appellant's supervisor defines recurring work assignments, however, the appellant independently plans his own work within the boundaries of the program and the needs of the patients. His patient load does not consist of critically-ill patients. The services he administers are for preventive purposes with generally healthy patients. Therefore, the tasks he performs do not fully meet Level 2-3. Thus, the supervisory controls for the appellant's position equate to Level 2-2.

We evaluate this factor at Level 2-2 and credit 125 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. Guides used include established procedures and policies, traditional practices, and reference materials.

At Level 3-2, ward policies, practices, and assigned procedures are well known by the employee so that reference to the guidelines is rarely necessary. The employee varies the order and sequence of procedures and uses judgment in selecting the most appropriate application of the guidelines. Unusual developments are referred to the supervisor. Guidelines used by the appellant are best described at Level 3-2. He uses Army operations manuals, policies, and guidelines. He exercises judgment in selecting appropriate procedures and references. The appellant refers to the supervisor or to headquarters technical officials when existing guides do not apply to the situation or when significant deviations are needed.

We evaluate this factor at Level 3-2 and credit 125 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty involved in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-2, the work consists of duties that involve related steps, processes, or methods. The decisions regarding what needs to be done involve various choices requiring the employee to recognize the existence of and differences among a few easily recognized situations. Actions to be taken or responses to be made differ in such things as the source of information, the kind of transactions or entries, or other factual differences.

At Level 4-3, the work requires responsibility for a patient load of critically-ill patients which involves independent performance of nursing care functions usually alone in a hospital ward during one tour.

The complexity of the appellant's position meets Level 4-2. He obtains medical information from patients and decides when to refer certain problems to specialists, nurses, and physicians for further examination. He can recognize abnormal lab results and know when to make further referrals. He explains examination procedures to employees, administers immunizations, and assists nurses and physicians during examinations.

Level 4-3 is not met because the appellant's position does not require him to work with critically-ill patients, as described at that level.

We evaluate this factor at Level 4-2 and credit 75 points.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work and the depth of the assignment and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-2, the purpose of the work is to provide nursing care that includes personal care, diagnostic support procedures, treatment procedures, patient charting, and patient teaching. The appellant's position is comparable to Level 5-2 in that his work is performed in support of registered nurses (RN's) and physicians which directly facilitates the treatment given to patients. The results of his work have a significant effect on the physical well-being of his patients and their work environment. Consequently, the scope and effect of the appellant's work meets and does not exceed level 5-2.

We evaluate this factor at Level 5-2 and credit 75 points.

Factor 6, Personal contacts

This factor includes face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain.

At Level 6-2, personal contacts are with patients, nursing personnel, and medical staff in the hospital and with the patient's family members. The appellant's personal contacts meet Level 6-2 in that he has contact with patients, RN's, and physicians. His contacts do not exceed those described at Level 6-2.

We evaluate this factor at Level 6-2 and credit 25 points.

Factor 7, Purpose of contacts

Purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant issues. The personal contacts which serve as the basis for the level selected for this factor must be the same as the contacts which are the basis for the level selected for Factor 6.

At Level 7-2, contacts with patients are for the purpose of (1) motivating the patient to accept the illness and to persuade the patient to stay with the regimen; (2) demonstrating to the patient how to provide self-care; and (3) explaining to or advising the patient on proper follow-up care, the consequences of improper care, or general diet and nutrition for good health maintenance. Contacts with doctors and other hospital staff are for the purpose of coordinating work efforts.

At Level 7-3, work involves contact with patients who are unusually difficult to care for or communicate with because of such problems as lack of self-control, resistant or abusive behavior, or impediments in ability to understand or follow instructions.

The appellant's contacts are most similar to those at Level 7-2 in that his contacts with patients involve explaining examination procedures, screening patients to obtain occupational health histories, and advising on use and care of protective equipment. The appellant's contacts with RN's and physicians are for coordinating tests and examinations for patients; providing and obtaining information; assisting in developing, organizing, and conducting medical surveillance and health education programs; and assisting during physical examinations. The appellant does not work with unusually difficult patients and therefore does not meet level 7-3.

We evaluate this factor at Level 7-2 and credit 50 points.

Factor 8, Physical demands

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment.

At Level 8-2, the work involves long periods of moving about the work unit. The work requires regular and recurring bending, lifting, stooping, lifting and repositioning patients, or similar activities.

At Level 8-3, the work requires regular and recurring ability to physically control or defend against emotionally ill patients.

The physical demands placed on the appellant meet Level 8-2. His work involves some prolonged periods of standing, walking around the clinic, stooping, bending, and lifting moderately heavy items up to 50 pounds while performing his varied duties. He does not have to control or defend against emotionally ill patients, as described at Level 8-3.

We evaluate this factor at Level 8-2 and credit 20 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and safety regulations required.

Work at Level 9-2 involves regular and recurring exposure to infection and contagious diseases where special gloves, gowns, or masks are required as safety precautions. Level 9-3 work environment involves a high risk of regular and recurring exposure to potentially dangerous situations such as noxious gases, fumes, and explosives. There are regular and recurring situations where physical attack by patients requires safety training.

The work of the appellant involves regular exposure to infection, contagious diseases, and various kinds of needles which require safety precautions, sterile procedures, and special gloves. The dangers mentioned at Level 9-3 do not exist for the appellant.

We evaluate this factor at Level 9-2 and credit 20 points.

Summary

In sum, we have evaluated the appellant's practical nurse duties as follows:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-3	350
2. Supervisory controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-2	75
5. Scope and effect	5-2	75
6. Personal contacts	6-2	25
7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-2	20
Total points:		865

The point total for the nine factors is 865. In accordance with the grade conversion table in the standard, a total of 865 points falls within the GS-5 grade range (855-1100).

Evaluation using GS-649 Medical Instrument Technician standard

The GS-649 Medical Instrument Technician Series includes positions that perform diagnostic examinations or medical treatment procedures as part of the diagnostic or treatment plan for patients. The work involves operating or monitoring diagnostic and therapeutic medical instruments and

equipment associated with cardiac catheterization, pulmonary examinations and evaluations, heart bypass surgery, electrocardiography, electroencephalography, hemodialysis, and ultrasonography. Positions in this series require a knowledge of the capabilities and operating characteristics of one or more kinds of instruments and a practical knowledge of human anatomy and physiology. Positions also require a practical understanding of medical data generated by patient/equipment connections.

The appellant's position consists of duties and responsibilities in areas corresponding to those in the Medical Instrument Technician series. He performs a variety of examinations and tests in support of the occupational health program which includes pulmonary function testing, audiology testing, vision screening, and respiratory mask fitting. He recommends proper respiratory protection to patients based upon exposure and mask fitting results. He determines the patient's proper mask size, type, and fit. He maintains and calibrates, daily, all of the equipment used for testing patients.

The following is our evaluation of the appellant's medical instrument technician duties in terms of the nine FES factors in the GS-649 standard.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

At Level 1-3, duties involve the knowledge of the basic instruments and diagnostic or treatment procedures commonly used in the specialization; ability to position patients for examination or treatment; an elementary understanding of basic anatomy and physiology; skill to perform routine diagnostic or treatment procedures; knowledge of normal and abnormal results to recognize and report obvious abnormalities; and knowledge of sterilization methods to clean instruments to prevent the spread of infectious and contagious diseases.

In addition to the knowledges and skills described at Level 1-3, Level 1-4 requires a practical knowledge of instruments used in the specialization to make adaptations and adjustments and interpret test results based on previous experience and observation. This level requires a practical knowledge of intricate examination or treatment procedures to perform such duties as aiding cardiovascular surgeons in all aspects of cardiac catheterization and related invasive cardiovascular procedures, operating and monitoring dialysis system for chronic patients; and performing a variety of ultrasound examinations according to physician instructions that require an in-depth knowledge of specific organs.

The appellant's medical instrument technician duties do not exceed those of Level 1-3. He possesses sufficient knowledge and skill to perform a variety of tests and examinations, some of which require professional certification to administer. The pulmonary function test requires completing and passing a National Industrial Occupational Safety and Health approved spirometry course to maintain the required certification in pulmonary function testing. The hearing screening tests he performs require maintaining an audiometric certification. He conducts vision screening and tests for proper fit of respirator masks. He has the ability to recognize abnormal lab results that requires referral for further examination and testing. He maintains equipment according to established procedures.

Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 1-3 and credit 350 points.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

At Level 2-2, the supervisor makes continuing assignments that show what is to be done, possible problems, quality and quantity of work expected, and priority of assignments. The supervisor provides additional instructions or guidance on procedures for new and difficult assignments. The technician independently carries out recurring examinations or treatments without instructions but refers deviations from regular procedures, unanticipated problems, and unfamiliar situations not covered by instructions to the supervisor for decision or help. The technician uses judgment and initiative in selecting procedures and observing if instruments are functioning properly. The work is checked on a spot-check basis by the supervisor to assure that finished work and procedures are technically accurate and in compliance with usual procedures and practices.

The appellant performs a variety of tests and examinations. He independently sets up the equipment, calibrates it, and performs preventive maintenance to keep it working properly. Similar to Level 2-2, the appellant handles problems and deviations in work assignments in accordance with instructions, policies, or previous training. The supervisor reviews finished work for accuracy and compliance.

Supervisory controls for the position do not exceed Level 2-2, thus, we evaluate this factor at Level 2-2 and assign 125 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

At Level 3-2, well-established procedures for doing the work are available. Specific guidelines include written descriptions of standard tests or treatment procedures, written or oral instruction from the physician, instrument manuals for assembly and maintenance of the medical instrument; and instructions for procedural and administrative aspects of the assignment.

The appellant's guidelines are best described at Level 3-2. Standard operating procedures, which he assisted with developing, are used for performing test. Various guides and Army operations manuals are also available for his use. He exercises judgment in selecting the most appropriate application of the guidelines.

The appealed position does not exceed Level 3-2. Therefore, we evaluate is factor at Level 3-2 and credit 125 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

At Level 4-2, the work consists of standardized and related duties involving several sequential steps, processes, and methods to perform a variety of diagnostic or treatment tasks of limited difficulty. Deciding what needs to be done involves requiring the technician to recognize the existence of and

differences among a few easily recognized alternatives. Actions taken vary with the differences in type of test or treatment ordered by the physician.

At Level 4-3, work includes a variety of duties involving performance of different specialized diagnostic and treatment procedures, methods, and techniques. The work typically requires interpreting a variety of conditions and elements such as the patient's condition, medication, or the performance of the instrument to be sure of test results. The chosen course of action is selected from several alternatives. When procedures do not give acceptable results, a different procedure is selected. At this level, emergency situations require precise timing and coordination of action with others while making quick and accurate adjustments to the instrument in response to physician orders or patient condition.

The appellant's position is credited at Level 4-2 in that his medical instrument technician work includes performing a variety of diagnostic tests of limited difficulty. He performs audiology testings, pulmonary function testing, vision screening, and respiratory mask fittings. He has the ability to recognize abnormal results of the exams or tests performed and either performs or refers patients to a nurse or physician for follow-up testing. He recommends the proper respiratory protection for patients based upon exposure and mask fitting results. He determines the appropriate type, size, and fit. He is certified to perform respiratory fittings which involve checking for leaks in the respirator. He instructs individuals on the care and use of the proper hearing protection. He is required to be knowledgeable of the equipments' proper working order. Before starting the audio testing, the appellant has to set the equipment on a specific number for the machine to respond correctly. The appellant checks for the designated number to assure the equipment is recording properly. He also troubleshoots all of the equipment he uses in various other tests and examinations, repairing any problems discovered.

The appellant's work does not exceed Level 4-2 in that his duties do not require selecting the chosen course of action from several alternatives. Further, he does not encounter emergency situations which require employing precise timing and coordination of action with others while making quick and accurate adjustments to the instrument in response to physician orders or patient condition. Therefore, the appellant's work does not meet Level 4-3.

We evaluate this factor at Level 4-2 and credit 75 points.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

Level 5-2 describes work which involves performing a variety of specific diagnostic procedures and treatment techniques which represent a significant segment of the total diagnostic and treatment plan for the patient. The work has a significant affect on the accuracy and reliability of further treatment.

At Level 5-3, the work involves performing a variety of specialized diagnostic and treatment procedures during regular and recurring critical care situations. The work has a significant impact on the well-being of the patient.

The appellant's position meets Level 5-2 in that his work consists of performing a variety of tests and examinations related to the occupational health program. The tests and examinations are for administrative and voluntary health maintenance purposes. He performs tests and examinations for employees exposed to potential and actual health hazards in the work site. He recognizes abnormalities in test results and, based on the results and the employee's history, refers the employee to a nurse or physician for follow-up. The results have an impact on the physical well-being of the employees and their work environment. The appellant does not perform his work during regular and recurring critical care situations as described at Level 5-3.

We credit this factor at Level 5-2 with 75 points.

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

Personal contacts include face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. The purpose of the personal contacts range from factual exchanges in information to situations involving significant issues. The standard combines these two factors as follows:

Persons contacted

1. Employees within the service area and with patients in a highly structured situation, in the presence of a higher grade technician.
2. Employees within the hospital, but outside the immediate work unit; patients; their families; physicians; nurses; other professional and technical personnel or students or faculty from affiliated universities.

Purpose

- a. To exchange information.
- b. To coordinate work efforts and resolve technical problems.

The appellant's personal contacts are with employees, physicians, nurses, laboratory personnel, and other technicians for the purpose of exchanging information in addition to coordinating work efforts and resolving technical problems. He explains examination procedures to employees and obtains information from them relating to their medical histories. He confers with nurses and physicians about patients' abnormal lab results and with other technicians regarding troubleshooting the medical equipment.

Therefore, Factors 6 and 7 are evaluated at 2b and credited with 75 points.

Factor 8, Physical demands

At Level 8-2, work requires regular and recurring physical exertion. It may involve walking; frequent bending; reaching and stretching to set up and take apart equipment; lifting and positioning patients; and carrying, pushing, or pulling moderately heavy objects.

The appellant's work involves standing for long periods, stooping, bending and lifting moderately heavy items up to 50 pounds. He has to position patients when assisting physicians and nurses with examinations. As he operates the examination equipment, calibrates it, and performs preventive maintenance on it, he has to sometimes reach and stretch to adequately perform these duties. Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 8-2 and credit 20 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

At Level 9-2, technicians perform the work in a setting involving regular and recurring exposure to infectious and contagious diseases, odors, and other risks which require special health and safety precautions such as wearing protective clothing like gloves, masks, or lead aprons.

The work performed by the appellant in the [activity] environment involves everyday risks which require normal safety precautions, and the appellant may also be exposed to infectious and contagious diseases. Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 9-2 and credit 20 points.

Summary

In sum, we have evaluated the appellant's medical instrument technician duties as follows:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-3	350
2. Supervisory controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-2	75
5. Scope and effect	5-2	75
6. &7. Personal contacts and Purpose	2 b	75
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-2	20
Total points:		865

The point total for the nine factors is 865. In accordance with the grade conversion table in the standard, a total of 865 points falls within the GS-5 grade range (855-1100).

Evaluation using GS-335 Computer Clerk and Assistant standard

The GS-335 Computer Clerk and Assistant Series covers positions involving performance of data processing support and services functions for users of digital computer systems to include such work as: (1) receiving, maintaining, and issuing data storage media for computer operations; (2) collecting and sequentially staging input media with associated program instructions for processing; (3) collecting, maintaining, and distributing program and systems documentation; and (4) collecting raw information, preparing flow charts, and coding in program languages. The work requires knowledge of external data processing sequences, controls, procedures, or user and programming languages, rather than in-depth knowledge of computer requirements or techniques associated with development and design of data processing systems.

The appellant serves as the systems administrator at [the installation] for OHMIS. This system consists of the following three separate modules: Health Hazard Information Module (HHIM), Medical Information Module (MIM), and the Hearing Evaluation Automated Registry System (HEARS). The appellant is responsible for maintaining the hardware and software for OHMIS. He applies a basic knowledge of system hardware and software in troubleshooting system problems, assists users in learning or operating various software, and conducts training classes. He is assigned duties as the Information Systems Security Officer that involve maintaining confidentiality procedures such as assuring the medical records data base is sealed and assigning passwords on each of the 10 computers for which he is responsible. The duties and responsibilities of the systems administrator correspond to those in the Computer Clerk and Assistant Series.

The following is our evaluation of the appellant's computer clerk and assistant duties in terms of the nine FES factors in the GS-335 standard.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

At Level 1-3, work requires knowledge of standardized data processing rules, operations, and procedures which enable employees to resolve common or recurring problems or to perform standardized variations in work methods. Employees at this level use knowledge of a system control language to adjust data definition and command variables during each processing cycle for an assigned block of programs and to identify and resolve control related processing problems involving options in format, content, and dependency. Some employees use knowledge of a user oriented processing language in order to provide output support to subject matter users. Such work involves using entry, command, and action codes to retrieve standardized reports, schedule, and control a number of job requests and produce and distribute products according to job priorities.

At Level 1-4, employees perform a *wide* range of preparing, advising, assisting, coding, and procedure related problem-solving duties using knowledge of data processing rules, operating procedures, and processing methods similar to those described at Level 1-3. In addition, work at this level involves knowledge of one or more of the following:

- ▶ at least one programming language such as COBOL, FORTRAN, PL/1 or ALGOL;
- ▶ system control language at a level that provides for devising run control streams according to general instructions and review of product specifications;
- ▶ system hardware, software and program capabilities and limitations for multiprogramming systems operating in more than two partitions.
- ▶ terminology, codes, abbreviations, and graphics for preparing systems documentation or programs; or
- ▶ program data contents, standardized jobs within programs, and methods for defining and retrieving nonstandard data and reports.

The appellant's work is most similar to Level 1-3 in that it requires knowledge of fundamental data processing methods, practices, techniques, personal computer equipment, and software operations. The appellant must possess the ability to diagnose and resolve problems for users and provide training or guidance to them in operating computer systems and various software programs. He uses semantic query optimization (SQO), a type of system control language for devising run control streams, to retrieve input for developing forms, spread sheets, and various reports.

Level 1-4 is not met because the appellant's work does not require performing a *wide* range of problem-solving duties as described at this level. Further, the appellant's knowledge needed to make changes in controls when using SQO falls short of the full knowledges required at Level 1-4.

Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 1-3 and credit 350 points.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibilities, and the review of completed work. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the employee, priorities and deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. Responsibility of the employee depends on the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives. The degree of review of completed work depends upon the nature and extent of the review (e.g., close and detailed review of each phase of the assignment, detailed reviews of the finished assignment, spot-check of finished work for accuracy, or review only for adherence to policy).

At Level 2-2, the supervisor gives instructions for nonrecurring work assignments, deviations from normal schedules or new procedures. Within established procedures the employee independently performs recurring work making adjustments to accommodate deviations in work methods based on experience and precedent actions. Unfamiliar situations or deviations from established practices are referred to the supervisor or computer specialists for resolution. Completed work is reviewed on the basis of system reports, customer comments, specialist or operator notification of problems during processing. Review is to determine that the employee has used proper procedures and methods and that the work is completed within established deadlines.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor provides direction on objectives and priorities for new work, deadlines, and deadline changes for new and established work. The employee identifies, plans, and carries out the work to be done and submits completed work to users without supervisory review. This level enables the employee to adapt or develop new work procedures and instructions for application by self and others. Supervisory assistance is sought and problems discussed when conflicts arise that are out of the ordinary or beyond the knowledge or skill of the employee. Completed work is reviewed for conformity to deadlines and accepted practices. Work methods are not normally reviewed unless a recurring, common pattern of problems develops.

The appellant's position meets Level 2-2. His new work requirements or special assignments are received through discussions with the supervisor who is a Supervisory Occupational Health Nurse. She basically explains her goals and desires to the appellant for certain kinds of reports. For example, the supervisor may need a list of patients who had received tetanus shots up to a certain date. The appellant goes into the system and by use of SQO is able to retrieve the needed data. The appellant's completed work is usually evaluated for compliance with objectives, deadlines and effectiveness in

satisfying user requirement. The majority of the work to be accomplished is identified by the appellant through his own initiative or through requests received from other system users. The appellant independently identifies the work to be done, plans and carries out the steps required, and submits or performs work for users without supervisory review. The appellant seeks assistance from computer specialist without first obtaining the supervisor's concurrence when he encounters a problem which he cannot solve.

The appellant's position does not fully meet Level 2-3 in that his work does not require adaptation or development of new work procedures and instructions for application.

Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 2-2 and credit 125 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

At Level 3-2, guidelines may be in the form of equipment manuals, program manuals, user guides, flowcharts, and other guidance with details of what is to be done. Selection of an appropriate guideline is usually clear. However, the guidelines may provide for judgmental deviations in the work processed, such as alternative methods for coding, applying system control language, or performing a retrieval through a terminal. Digression from guidelines which has not been established by experience and precedent is referred to the subject matter expert.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 3-2 in that guidelines used in the work performed include user guides, system manuals, technical references and textbooks, technical literature, and data base elements. As at this level, the appellant uses his judgment in resolving most equipment or software malfunctions. The appellant only solicits technical assistance from higher headquarters for difficult, unprecedented problems. Generally, if a system malfunctions or goes down, the appellant takes the necessary steps to identify, replace, and install parts (e.g., computer chips).

Therefore, we evaluate the appellant's position at Level 3-2 and assign 125 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

At Level 4-2, the employee performs a few different although related tasks, using specified procedures and methods such as arranging for input conversion from one medium to another, modifying job control stream to provide for product variations, and adjusting priorities. The employee decides what needs to be done, identifies and carries out methods and variations within established procedures, and makes other similar decisions to perform such work. The actions to be taken are determined by the product description on each job request. The employee selects and applies established procedures and methods to satisfy product requirements. For example, an employee at this level may use a query and control language in support of several users, each having access to a different data base, with differing access, product definition, and manipulation options.

At Level 4-3, the employee performs a variety of tasks involving discrete methods and procedures, or a variety of related tasks that require a sequence of actions involving differing methods and procedures. The decision regarding what is to be done results from studying each assignment or processing each problem situation. The employee identifies the sequence of standard and variable procedures and methods needed to prepare and process the assignment or to resolve error conditions.

Work involving this level of complexity includes the following.

- ▶ In work directly supporting specialists, the employee may participate in each phase of a project ranging from problem definition by the user through implementation of a program. This includes working in such phases as information collecting, analyzing, charting, coding, testing, documenting, and implementing.
- ▶ In production control, the employee works with a variety of subject matter program applications and a wide variety of output options. The employee explains system capabilities, limitations, and output variations to users; advises on the formulation of job requests based on customer description of product requirements; describes remote entry methods and language variations; and resolves problems for terminal users who encounter system related problems during remote processing.

The complexity of the appellant's duties is comparable to Level 4-2 in that he supports the hospital as systems administrator, performing such duties as downloading and backing up the system. He conducts week-long classes to assist users of OHMIS. Once a month, the appellant meets with users to discuss problems with the system and to assist them in resolving those problems. At times he writes step-by-step instructions for users. He reviews new programs to ascertain if any of them will be helpful to users of the system.

The appellant's work does not involve the level of complexity described at Level 4-3. His work does not require providing direct support to specialists nor does it require him to schedule work for different computer systems. Overall, the complexity of the appellant's work does not exceed Level 4-2.

Therefore, we credit Level 4-2 and assign 75 points.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

Scope and effect cover the relationship between the nature of the work (i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment) and the effect of the work products or services both within and outside the organization. In General Schedule occupations, effect measures such things as whether the work output facilitates the work of others, provides timely service of a personal nature, or affects the adequacy of research conclusions. The concept of effect alone does not provide sufficient information to properly understand and evaluate the impact of the position. The scope of the work completes the picture, allowing consistent evaluations.

At Level 5-2, employees perform a range of duties in scheduling, production control, library, or other computer support positions according to established procedures and methods. Results of the work are complete products or complete segments of other products or work processes. The work affects the accuracy of processing by providing for data contention and other potential conflicts during processing and by coding according to specifications. Reliability and acceptability are affected by completion of the work within deadlines, ensuring against media and control related processing failures, and providing the requested output.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 5-2 in that the purpose of his work associated with his systems administrator duties is maintaining the OHMIS in an operational state at all times. His work in this area facilitates the work of OHMIS users.

We evaluate this factor at Level 5-2 and credit 75 points.

Factor 6, Personal contacts

At Level 6-2, contacts are with specialists and other recipients of computer processing services who are employees of the same agency, but outside the data processing organization; employees of other agencies or nongovernmental organizations who use the data processing service; or contractors' representatives such as vendor repair technicians or customer service engineers. Contacts are structured and routine, and the role of each participant is readily determined.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 6-2 in that his personal contacts are mainly with OHMIS users within the immediate organization and in the same agency but outside the immediate organization.

We evaluate this factor at Level 6-2 and credit 25 points.

Factor 7, Purpose of personal contacts

In General Schedule occupations, the purpose of personal contacts may range from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives.

At Level 7-2, the purpose of contacts is to plan or coordinate changes in scheduling requirements or priorities due to data or equipment related problems; to participate with users in planning and coordinating new or modified requirements when the work fits generally within system options and schedules; or to plan user participation, methodology, and deadlines for new projects.

The purpose of contacts in the appellant's position is to plan, coordinate, and advise on work within the OHMIS area of responsibility.

We evaluate this factor at Level 7-2 and credit 50 points.

Factor 8, Physical demands

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. This includes physical characteristics and abilities (e.g., specific agility and dexterity requirements) and the physical exertion involved in the work (e.g., climbing, lifting, pushing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, or reaching). To some extent, the frequency or intensity of physical exertion must also be considered (e.g., a job requiring prolonged standing involves more physical exertion than a job requiring intermittent standing).

At Level 8-1, the work is generally sedentary, although there may be some nominal walking or standing for short periods of time, or carrying of light loads (i.e., paper, books, reports) that require only moderate physical ability and physical stress. The appellant's position meets Level 8-1. It does not meet Level 8-2 which requires extended periods of standing, walking, stretching, bending, stooping, or carrying of loads (i.e., paper, books, tapes) that may weigh as much as 45 pounds. Although the appellant's position may require unpacking and installing new computer equipment or repositioning equipment that at times requires carrying heavier loads or stooping or bending, these occasions are not numerous enough to meet the definition of extended periods of time. The majority of the appellant's time is spent at a computer workstation.

Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 8-1 and credit 5 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

This factor considers the risk and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. Although the use of safety precautions can practically eliminate a certain danger or discomfort, such situations typically place additional demands upon the employee in carrying out safety regulations and techniques.

At Level 9-1, the work involves common risks or discomforts, requiring normal safety precautions typical of offices, meeting rooms, libraries, and other such areas. The work area is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated. Employees in or adjacent to computer rooms may be within environmentally controlled areas and, although relatively cool, require only normal clothing to compensate for minor discomfort.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 9-1 in that he performs his work in areas that are adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated.

We evaluate this factor at Level 9-1 and credit 5 points.

Summary

In sum, we have evaluated the appellant's computer clerk and assistant duties as follows:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-4	350
2. Supervisory controls	2-3	125
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-3	75
5. Scope and effect	5-2	75
6. Personal contacts	6-2	25
7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	5
Total points:		835

The point total for the nine factors is 835. In accordance with the grade conversion table in the standard, a total of 835 points falls within the GS-4 grade range (655-850).

Decision

The appellant's health technician work is properly graded at GS-5 using the practical nurse and medical instrument technician standards, and his computer work is properly graded at GS-4 using the computer clerk and assistant standard. The record indicates that the health technician work is officially assigned on a regular and continuing basis, occupies at least 25 percent of the appellant's time, and requires knowledges and skills that would be needed in recruiting for his position if it became vacant. Therefore, the appellant's position is properly classified as GS-640-5 and titled at the agency's discretion.