

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, Suite 972
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3109

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

Appellant:	[Appellant]
Agency classification:	Military Personnel Clerk (OA) GS-204-6
Organization:	United States Marine Corps
OPM decision:	Human Resources Assistant (Military, OA) GS-203-6
OPM decision number:	C-0203-06-01

/s/

Timothy P. Heath
Classification Appeals Officer

3/26/01

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 series and 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 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]

Human Resources Office
Department of the Navy

Director, Civilian Human Resources Office
Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps
2 Navy Annex
Code HRHB
Room 1213
Washington, DC 20380-1775

Chief, Classification Branch
Field Advisory Services Division
Defense Civilian Personnel
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1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
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Introduction

On October 30, 2000, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted a classification appeal for the position of Military Personnel Clerk, GS-204-6, [installation]. The appellant is requesting that her position be classified as Program Support Assistant, GS-303-7.

This appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.). 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 believes that the work she is performing is more comparable to the GS-303 Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series. She also states that duties added to her position have increased the volume of work she must perform as well as the scope of responsibility and complexity of the job. The supervisor agrees that the new assignments have increased the amount of paper work in the application process, and that it now takes more time to qualify candidates. He also believes this creates difficulties and increases the complexities of duties. Finally, the appellant also states that her duties are similar to those performed by Military Personnel Technicians, GS-204-7, who work in the U.S. Navy Officer program.

Volume of work is not a factor considered in determining the grade level of a position. By law, we must make a decision solely by comparing the current duties and responsibilities of the position to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). The agency has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are graded consistently with OPM standards, guidelines, and appeal decisions. If the appellant considers her position so similar to others that they all warrant the same classification, the appellant may pursue the matter by writing to her human resources office. In doing so, the appellant 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 the appellant's, the agency must correct their classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain to the appellant the differences between her position and the others.

Position information

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

The appellant processes applications for the Marine Corps Officer Candidate programs to ensure that applicants provide adequate and appropriate information. She spends 40 percent of her time processing applications, 25 percent screening applicants for medical requirements, and 35 percent performing administrative/clerical duties. Her work includes reviewing applications for completeness and accuracy by verifying the academic status, accreditation, dates, any criminal

history, and any other background information on candidates. She screens and reviews medical documents for completeness and accuracy, schedules appointments and consultations, and ensures that physicals have been documented. She performs other routine administrative/clerical duties such as processing mail, answering phone calls, maintaining files, developing letters, and other office duties. In addition, she inputs, validates, and submits all Electronic Security Personnel Questionnaires into the system; and she works with “hot leads” which involves Internet networking.

The appellant works under the general direction of the Selection Officer who spends most of his time recruiting offsite. The appellant manages the office while the supervisor is absent; therefore, she receives very little administrative supervision. She carries out her assigned duties independently; however, complex issues are discussed with the supervisor. The appellant’s work is reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness.

Series determination

The agency determined that the appellant’s position is best covered by the Military Personnel Clerk and Technician Series, GS-204. In December 2000, OPM issued a new Job Family Standard (JFS) for Assistance Work in the Human Resources Management Group, GS-200. The Personnel Clerical and Technician Series, GS-203, and the Military Personnel Clerical and Technician Series, GS-204, were combined into a single series, Human Resources (HR) Assistance, GS-203.

The appellant believes that the work she performs compares to the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303. This series includes positions that perform or supervise clerical, assistant, or technician work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out the work of an organization and involves application of procedures and practices within the framework of established guidelines. Positions classified in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, involve *specialized* work for which no appropriate occupational series has been established.

Positions in the Human Resources Assistance Series, GS-203, provide support for HR specialists performing work in HR information systems; in HR services to military personnel; and in classification, recruitment and placement, employee benefits, human resource development, performance management, and employee and labor-management relations. They work in HR offices, examining or job information centers or offices, or administrative support offices. They process and document HR actions for a wide variety of employee categories that involve different forms, different authorities, different action codes, and different regulatory authorities, or additional pay systems. HR assistants perform limited work within specialty areas requiring a practical knowledge of a HR specialization. They may also perform work in two or more specialty areas.

Based on our analysis, we find that the primary responsibilities of the appellant’s position involve a variety of duties associated with processing military transactions which are properly covered in the GS-203 series, such as reviewing documentation for completeness and adequacy, resolving processing problems, and providing information on actions.

Title determination

In accordance with the titling practices outlined in the standard, the basic title for this occupation is *Human Resources Assistant*, GS-203. Work that involves support of military HR programs and functions may use the parenthetical title (*Military*). The parenthetical title *Office Automation (OA)* is added to the title when the position requires significant knowledge of office automation systems and a fully qualified typist to perform word processing duties. The position description indicates that a fully qualified typist is required; therefore, the parenthetical designation is appropriate.

The appropriate title for this position is *Human Resources Assistant, (Military, OA)*.

Standard determination

JFS for Assistance Work in the Human Resources Management Group, GS-0200, December 2000. Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, August 1991.

Grade determination

The JFS for Assistance Work in the Human Resources Management Group uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are evaluated on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required in terms of nine factors common to non-supervisory General Schedule positions. A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor level. For a position factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor level description in the standard, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

The position is evaluated as follows:

Factor 1- Knowledge Required by the Position:

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work, such as the steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts; and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge. The agency credited Level 1-4 for this factor.

At Level 1-4 the work requires a knowledge of, and skill in applying, an extensive body of HR rules, procedures, and operations sufficient to:

- perform a wide variety of interrelated and/or non-standard HR support work;
- plan, coordinate, develop facts and/or resolve support problems in one or more HR specialties;

- use personal computers with office applications to perform operations or to prepare complex documents containing tables or graphs; and
- use online HR resources to obtain information accessible over the Internet, as needed.

The appellant meets Level 1-4. She performs a variety of clerical/administrative duties requiring interrelated processes. This includes processing applicant packages, screening documents, verifying factual data relating to records, and ensuring that the documents are in conformity with procedures and established regulations. She plans, coordinates, and resolves routine problems in her day-to-day assignments. She is knowledgeable of and applies an extensive body of HR rules and military procedures. She is skilled in the use of the computer, including the Internet, to access, input, and retrieve information.

At Level 1-5, the work requires knowledge of, and skill in applying, a comprehensive body of HR rules, procedures, and technical methods sufficient to:

- carry out limited projects;
- analyze a variety of routine facts;
- research minor complaints or problems that are not readily understood; and
- summarize HR facts and issues.

Examples of work at this level include researching appeals or other inquiries relating to the validity of efficiency or fitness ratings to establish the conditions existing at the time the rating was rendered; studying the military personnel records of both the member being rated and rating officials, Board testimony and proceedings, Inspector General's investigations and reports, and organizational records, duty code books, medical records, and similar documents; analyzing the information in relation to the requirements, spirit, and intent of governing regulations; and determining the propriety (or lack thereof) of the rating of record.

The appellant does not fully meet Level 1-5. The work does not require the degree of research, judgment, and analytical skills as indicated at this level. The appellant makes decisions based on a defined set of guidelines, and the qualifications and eligibility criteria for each program are well established. She screens applications to ensure that all necessary documentation is provided which will support the agency's determination of eligibility.

Level 1-4 is credited for 550 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 for carrying out assignments, and how completed work is reviewed. The agency credited Level 2-3 for this factor.

At Level 2-3, the highest level described in the standard, the supervisor makes assignments by outlining or discussing issues, and defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The supervisor

provides assistance in unusual assignments that do not have clear precedents. The employee independently:

- plans the work;
- resolves problems;
- carries out successive steps of assignments;
- makes adjustments using established practices and procedures;
- recommends alternative actions to the supervisor;
- handles problems and/or deviations that arise in accordance with instructions, policies, and guidelines; and
- refers new or controversial issues to the supervisor for direction.

The supervisor reviews work products for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policies and requirements.

The appellant meets Level 2-3. She independently plans her work, carries out the successive procedures that are required to review and complete transactions, and handles routine problems according to established procedures and precedents. Unusual or controversial problems are brought to the supervisor.

There is no evidence that the appellant's position exceeds this level.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 3 - Guidelines:

This factor covers the nature of guidelines used, and the judgment needed to apply them. The agency credited Level 3-2 for this factor.

At Level 3-2, the employee uses a number of established, procedural guidelines, such as work samples; references; and operating procedures and manuals. The employee uses judgment in locating and selecting appropriate guidelines, manuals, references, and procedures for application to specific cases. The employee refers significant proposed deviations or situations to which existing guidelines cannot be applied to the supervisor or a higher-grade co-worker.

The appellant meets Level 3-2. The appellant refers to the Navy Medical Manual and Naval Air Manual when performing her work. Other guidelines and instructions are available and clearly indicate the procedures to be followed for various types of assignments. She uses judgment to select the appropriate guidelines necessary for each transaction. According to the appellant, she is very familiar with most of the guidelines and does not refer to them often. Situations not governed by regulations or procedures are referred to the supervisor or a higher level employee.

At Level 3-3, the guidelines often lack specificity or are not completely applicable to the work requirements or circumstances. The employee selects the most appropriate guideline and decides

how to complete the various transactions. In some situations, guidelines do not apply directly to assignments and require the employee to make adaptations to cover new and unusual work situations.

The appellant does not meet the full intent of Level 3-3. Guidelines used by the appellant normally apply to her transactions. According to the supervisor, instructions are clearly defined and self-explanatory. If situations come up that are not governed by written instructions, the appellant is required to seek guidance through the chain of command.

Level 3-2 is credited for 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 in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work. The agency credited Level 4-2 for this factor.

At Level 4-2, the work consists of related steps, processes, and standard explanations of methods or programs in an HR function. The employee makes decisions on appropriate actions from various choices among easily recognizable situations, and uses information that is factual in nature. The employee recognizes different processes required to assist customers and HR specialists, and acts or responds differently in factual ways depending upon the variety of organizations served, the variety of positions filled, and similar factors.

The appellant meets Level 4-2. The appellant receives applications from officers to review, screen, and process for the purpose of determining if candidates are qualified for the various officer programs. This involves ensuring that the application packages are complete and meet the requirements of the programs. Although there are seven officer programs that are available for enrollment, the procedures for the various transactions are the same or similar and require the same standards. Completed packages are sent to the District Office for final approval and processing.

At Level 4-3, the work consists of different and unrelated steps in accomplishing HR assignments and processes. The employee analyzes factual data, identifies the scope and nature of problems or issues, and determines the appropriate action from among many alternatives. The employee identifies and analyzes HR issues and/or problems to determine their interrelationships and to determine the appropriate methods and techniques needed to resolve them.

The appellant does not meet Level 4-3. Her work consists of related steps and processes that routinely involve processing packages, screening documents, verifying factual information and records, and ensuring that documents are in conformity with procedures and established guidelines. There is no evidence that the appellant must analyze data or identify the nature of problems or issues before she can determine what techniques may be needed to resolve them. Her assignments are more limited and process oriented than this level describes.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect:

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, as measured by the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization. The agency credited Level 5-2 for this factor.

At Level 5-2, the work involves technical services and practices such as screening job applicants on minimum qualifications for initial entry into a competitor inventory; or verifying job content in establishing identical additional jobs. Work also involves applying specific rules or procedures to complete actions in the HR organization. Work affects the accuracy and reliability of further efforts to perform HR functions within the organization. Work also affects the accuracy of employee records, pay, benefits, and other personnel data maintained by the HR office.

The appellant meets Level 5-2. The purpose of the appellant's work is to identify the officers who qualify for the Marine Corps Officer Candidate programs. She assures that regulatory requirements are met academically and medically. She screens, reviews, and processes applications for seven different officer programs. Her work affects the accuracy of the candidates' submissions. She performs routine administrative duties such as arranging travel and meetings; preparing letters, forms, and reports; reviewing and sorting mail; assisting callers by phone and on the Internet; filing the security questionnaires electronically; and maintaining the budget.

At Level 5-3, the work involves treating a variety of routine problems, questions, or situations within the HR office. Work also involves resolving problems using established procedures such as rating employees, in specific lower-grade jobs, for promotion on the basis of their relative abilities; ranking employees into categories; applying appropriate standards in determining the titles, grades, and series codes of lower-grade positions; and counseling employees on a variety of minor disciplinary problems. The work has a direct effect on the quality and adequacy of employee records, program operations, and services provided through the HR office. The work also affects the social and economic well-being of persons serviced through the HR office.

The full intent of Level 5-3 is not met. Due to the routine and standard nature of the appellant's work, her assignments do not typically involve the variety of problems or have the broad impact on the organization intended at this level.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts and Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts:

These factors measure the nature and purpose of personal contacts with persons who are not in the supervisory chain. Factor 6 assesses face-to-face as well as telephone contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain. In General Schedule occupations, the purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial

issues and differing viewpoints, goals, and objectives. The personal contacts which serve as the basis for the level selected for Factor 7 must be the same contacts as those that are the basis for the level selected for Factor 6. The agency credited Level 2a for these factors.

Personal Contacts

At Level 2, the highest level described, the personal contacts include employees and managers in the agency, both inside and outside the immediate office or related units, as well as applicants, retirees, beneficiaries, and/or the general public, in moderately structured settings. Contact with employees and managers may be from various levels within the agency.

Level 2 is met. The appellant has routine contacts with military personnel applying for the officer programs and employees and managers within the agency.

There is no evidence that the appellant's contacts exceed this level.

Purpose of Contacts

At Level a, the purpose of the contacts is to acquire, clarify, or exchange facts or information needed to complete assignments.

The appellant meets Level a. She obtains and provides factual information to complete her review of documents.

At Level b, the purpose of the contacts is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts, or to resolve issues or operating problems by influencing or persuading people who are working toward mutual goals and have basically cooperative attitudes.

Level b is not met. The appellant does not plan or coordinate the work of others, nor does she have to persuade individuals to cooperate.

The combination of Level 2 for *Personal Contacts* and Level a for *Purpose of Contacts* equates to 45 points according to the chart in the standard.

Factor 6 and Factor 7 are credited with Level 2a for 45 points.

Level 8-1 Physical Demands:

This factor measures the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee in performing the work assignment, including the agility and dexterity required, and the extent of physical exertion. The agency credited Level 8-1 for this factor.

At Level 8-1, the work is sedentary. Some work may require periods of standing at a counter. Employees frequently carry light items such as employee files or pamphlets. The work does not require any special physical effort.

The appellant's work is mainly sedentary, with no special physical demands. This is comparable to Level 8-1.

Level 8-1 is credited for 5 points.

Factor 9 - Work Environment:

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings, and the safety precautions required. The agency credited Level 9-1 for this factor.

At Level 9-1, the work area is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated. The work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts that require normal safety precautions.

The appellant works in an office setting with no unusual risks or discomforts, which is comparable to Level 9-1.

Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-4	550
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-2	75
5. Scope and Effect	5-2	75
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	2a	45
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	1155

A total of 1155 points falls within the range for GS-6, 1105 to 1350 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the standard.

EVALUATION OF THE OFFICE AUTOMATION WORK:

The office automation work is evaluated against the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, which is also written in the FES format. These duties do not impact the grade of the position, therefore, a summary evaluation follows:

SUMMARY		
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	5-1	25
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	1a	30
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	Total	740

A total of 740 points equates to GS-4, 655 to 850 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the guide.

Summary

The HR support work is grade controlling and equates to GS-6, and the office automation duties equate to GS-4.

Decision

The position is properly classified as a Human Resources Assistant (Military, OA), GS-203-6.