

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership & Merit System Accountability
Classification Appeals Program

Dallas Field Services Group
Plaza of the Americas, North Tower
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Dallas, TX 75201

Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program
Officer
GS-101-12

Organization: Army Substance Abuse Program
Directorate of Human Resources
U.S. Army Garrison
Army Installation Management Agency
Department of the Army
[location]

OPM decision: GS-101-12
Title to be determined by agency

OPM decision number: C-0101-12-03

Marta Brito Pérez
Associate Director
Human Capital Leadership
and Merit System Accountability

May 18, 2005
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 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

The Dallas Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal on November 3, 2004, submitted through the agency on behalf of [appellant]. The appellant's position is currently classified as an Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program Officer, GS-101-12. He believes his position should be classified at the GS-13 grade level. The position is assigned to the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), Directorate of Human Resources, U.S. Army Garrison, Army Installation Management Agency (IMA), Department of the Army, in [installation location]. We received the agency's complete administrative report on December 16, 2004. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

Background

The appellant and his immediate supervisor certified to the accuracy of the duties described in the position description (PD) of record, number [number], and the appellant requested his agency review the classification. The IMA Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), in an evaluation statement dated June 29, 2004, determined the position was appropriately classified as GS-101-12. The HR Headquarters IMA and the Western Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center (WCPOC) both concurred with the SWRO IMA findings.

General issues

The appellant believes he is performing work similar to other positions classified at the GS-13 grade level. 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). Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. In accordance with 5 CFR 511.612, agencies are required to review their own classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with OPM certificates. The agency has the primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions.

The appellant provided this office with PDs from three other installations graded at the GS-13 level, which include duties and responsibilities similar to his position. Positions which may on the surface appear similar may include significantly different duties and responsibilities that affect the classification. A position description does not stand alone and without knowing the mission and function of the organization in which the position is located, a classification determination cannot be made. One PD includes other functions in addition to the ASAP program. The appellant may formally pursue this matter by writing to his agency headquarters' human resources office by specifying the precise organizational location, series, title, grade, duties, and responsibilities of the positions in question. The agency should explain to him the differences between his position and the others, or grade those positions in accordance with this appeal decision.

The appellant indicates that a major challenge facing the installation is the tremendous population growth from the return of troops stationed overseas and from the transfer of personnel

from those negatively affected by the round of base realignment and closures. This poses a severe obstacle to providing the range of ASAP services, specifically in the testing and educating of additional personnel, if additional ASAP staff is not provided. While this situation may hinder service delivery, it does not, however, complicate the processes and procedures of the alcohol and drug abuse subject matter, which, at the core, remains finite and unchanged.

Position information

The appellant is responsible for the administration of the installation's ASAP, a comprehensive program designed to deal with alcohol, drugs, workplace violence, and employee assistance for the civilian and military workforce in the [installation's] community. The program includes drug testing, employee assistance and referral, education and training, alternative behavioral training, control of violence-in-the-workplace, and risk reduction assessment and analysis. The program provides service to military and civilian personnel and their families, as well as Reservists and National Guard members. The appellant works under the supervision of the Director for the Directorate of Human Resources, a GS-340-14 position.

The appellant spends 25 percent of his time as the first-line supervisor for a staff of nine full-time civilian employees that is supplemented by military personnel to deal with the occasional spike in workload. The permanent staff includes one GS-101-11 Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program Specialist, one GS-1712-9 Training Instructor, one GS-303-7 Risk Reduction Coordinator, one GS-303-7 Installation Biochemical Test Coordinator, one GS-303-5 Substance Abuse Program Assistant, one GS-303-5 Biochemical Test Coordinator, and two GS-303-4 Drug Detection Clerks. Augmenting the staff is a contract employee working in a position determined to be equivalent to the GS-101-11 staff position and a part-time student performing clerical work. The appellant carries out supervisory duties including, but not limited to, planning and assigning work; setting priorities; evaluating performance; and awarding, developing, and training employees.

The remainder of the appellant's time is occupied with program management work including planning, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluating the various functions of the unit. The variety and availability of services differ among the serviced populations, specifically military versus civilian personnel, but the program takes a multi-tiered approach towards preventing substance abuse by stressing education, testing, and counseling. Although ASAP's functional priorities change to mirror those of the installation's Commanding General (CG), the biochemical testing program generally takes precedence over others since drugs may easily and cheaply be obtained from across the Mexican border. Urine testing is a strong deterrent to the use of illegal drugs and facilitates early identification of substance abuse. Consequently, while the Department of the Army requires testing soldiers at the rate of one random sample per year, the CG requires military personnel to be randomly tested at a higher rate. Civilian employees in positions designated for drug testing as a condition of employment are also tested. The appellant screens and evaluates individuals referred before admission into ASAP counseling or referral for long-term counseling. As the manager of the testing program, the appellant ensures the sampling quality control and keeps the CG informed of trends or developments in alcohol and drug abuse within the installation.

The appellant manages the Risk Reduction Program aimed at enhancing combat readiness by preventing alcohol and drug abuse. Risk reduction focuses on identifying and reporting on those high-risk behaviors frequently associated with substance abuse. The appellant collects and analyzes data to identify the extent of high-risk activities exhibited at the installation. High-risk behaviors include spouse and child abuse; safety accidents and injuries; crimes against people and property; sexually transmitted diseases; traffic offenses; financial problems; and suicide gestures or attempts. Findings are communicated through different mediums and to diverse audiences. As an active member of the Installation Prevention Team, the appellant contributes to developing the Installation Prevention Plan, which articulates an integrated approach to combating the effects of high-risk behaviors through a combination of education, support, awareness, and deterrence. The ASAP staff develops, modifies, and presents training to educate soldiers on those high-risk and substance abuse behaviors. Since education is a critical component to discouraging and reducing the abuse of alcohol and drugs, the ASAP staff provides preventative and rehabilitative training to military and civilian personnel on the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse, available treatment options, and on identifying and responding to employees with substance abuse.

The appellant also oversees the operation of the installation's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is offered primarily to civilian employees and their families. The EAP provides eligible individuals the opportunity to address any personal problems impacting their work performance, but direct services are available through ASAP if the issue is alcohol or drug related. For other problems, e.g., stress, marital issues, and financial problems, assessment and referral services may be arranged through an appropriate agency.

The appellant's PD and other material of record furnish additional information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are performed. We find the PD contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we hereby incorporate it by reference into this decision.

To help decide this appeal, we conducted telephone audits with the appellant on January 27, February 2, and February 15, 2005, in addition to telephone interviews with the appellant's first-level supervisor on February 9, 2005, and second-level supervisor on February 23, 2005. We also interviewed the IMA SWRO's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Control Officer on February 15, 2005, as he has direct knowledge of the appellant's work. In deciding this appeal, we fully considered the audit findings and all information of record provided by the appellant and his agency.

Series, title, and standard determination

The appellant does not contest the agency's determination of the series and title for his position. The duties and responsibilities of the position are to advise on, administer, and supervise work in a combination of the social sciences, where such work is not classifiable in another series of the occupational group. We agree the position is appropriately assigned to the Social Science Series, GS-101.

Since OPM has not prescribed titles for positions in this series, the agency may construct a descriptive title by following the guidance in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*. The General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) is a cross-series guide used to determine the grade level of supervisory positions in the General Schedule. Since the appellant's position meets the requirements for coverage of the GSSG, the prefix "Supervisory" should be added to the title.

The agency has evaluated the work by comparison with the General Schedule Supervisory Guide and the appellant does not disagree. We agree with that determination based on the amount of time involved in the supervision of staff and related program management responsibilities based on that work supervised.

Grade determination

The grade level for supervisory positions is determined through application of the criteria in the GSSG. The cross-series guide uses a point-factor method that assesses six factors common to supervisory General Schedule positions. Evaluators assign a point value to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor levels. 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 to meet a particular factor level description in any significant aspect, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned. If, however, an equally important aspect that meets a higher level balances the deficiency, the next higher level is assigned. The assigned point total is then converted to a grade using the conversion table in the standard.

The appellant disagrees with the agency's evaluation of Factors 1 and 4A. After carefully reviewing the record, we concur with the agency's determinations of Factors 2-1, 3-2c, 4B-2, 5-6, and 6-4. The following evaluation will focus only on those factors with which the appellant disagrees.

Factor 1, Program Scope and Effect

This factor assesses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including its organizational and geographical coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization. To credit a particular factor level, the criteria for both scope and effect must be fully met.

Subfactor 1a: Scope

This element addresses the general complexity and breadth of (1) the program directed; and (2) the work directed, the products produced, or the services delivered. The geographic and organizational coverage of the program within the agency structure is addressed under this element. In evaluating the population affected under this factor, we may only consider the total populations serviced directly and significantly by a program.

At Level 1-2a, the program segment or work directed is administrative, technical, complex clerical, or comparable in nature. The functions, activities, or services provided have limited geographic coverage and support most of the activities comprising a typical agency field office, an area office, a small to medium military installation, or comparable activities within agency program segments.

At Level 1-3a, the position directs a program segment that performs technical, administrative, protective, investigative, or professional work. The program segment and work directed typically have coverage encompassing a major metropolitan area, a state, or a small region of several states.

The appellant's position approaches Level 1-3a in that he directs a staff providing administrative and technical services to the organizational equivalent of a large multi-mission military installation by facilitating the mission readiness of the post's approximately 14,000 military and civilian personnel. As one of the largest Army posts in the United States, [installation] is utilized as a stopping ground for troops mobilizing or returning from overseas. Consequently, the ASAP's serviced population fluctuates significantly. Combining the CG's aggressive drug testing rate with the increasing population, the ASAP collects, on average, 50,000 urine samples a year for shipment to an off-post drug testing laboratory. The appellant indicates the rate of positive tests is below the Army average of 1.5 percent. The more complex and intensive counseling services are generally isolated to the civilian employees required to enroll in counseling after testing positive for illegal substances or to those eligible individuals voluntarily requesting EAP services. ASAP policies and procedures dictate that clients with long-term behavioral or medical problems are referred elsewhere. Military personnel with substance abuse problems are normally sent for treatment to the clinical counseling staff at the [name] Medical Center

Although the appellant's geographic area of responsibility approaches Level 1-3a, scope also considers the nature of services provided. The standard expands on the factor level definition for Level 1-3a with the following illustration: "Directs administrative services (personnel, supply management, budget, facilities management, or similar) which support and directly affect the operations of a bureau or a major military command headquarters; a large or complex multi-mission military installation; an organization of similar magnitude, or a group of organizations which, as a whole, are comparable." Being responsible for a program designed to deter and contain the alcohol and drug abuse of the [installation] community, the appellant is directing a more limited program segment than that envisioned at Level 1-3a. Unlike Level 1-3a, the appellant is not responsible for the full range of human resources management services, as described by the illustration. Instead, he oversees one component of the considerably larger personnel function that includes, but is not limited to, staffing, classification, position management, incentives and awards, and benefits. Since the appellant's position does not meet the threshold for Level 1-3a due to the limited nature of program functions directed, Level 1-2a is assigned for this element.

Subfactor 1b: Effect

This element addresses the impact of the work on the mission and programs of the customers, the activity, the agency, other agencies, the general public, or others.

At Level 1-2b, the services or products support and significantly affect installation level, area office level, or field office operations and objectives, or comparable program segments; or provide services to a moderate, local, or limited population of clients or users comparable to a major portion of a small city or rural county. An example of this effect may include directing budget, management, staffing, supply, protective, library, payroll, or similar services which support a small Army, Navy, or Air Force base with no extensive research, development, testing, or comparable missions; a typical national park; a hospital; or a non-defense agency field office of moderate size and limited complexity.

At Level 1-3b, the services directly and significantly impact a wide range of agency activities, the work of other agencies, the operations of outside interests, or the general public. At the field activity level (involving large, complex, multi-mission organizations, and/or very large serviced populations), the work directly involves or substantially impacts the provision of essential support operations to numerous, varied, and complex technical, professional, and administrative functions.

The effect of the work supervised by the appellant is comparable to that described at Level 1-2b, since he directs program services which support and significantly affect the installation. The appellant's position again approaches Level 1-3b in that the size of the organization serviced, i.e., a large, complex, multi-mission organization with a substantial serviced population, is equivalent to that envisioned at this level. In contrast with Level 1-3b, the appellant directs a program providing services that do not directly and significantly impact a wide range of agency activities, the work of other agencies, the operations of outside interests, or the general public. His is an administrative position whose direct effect is internal to the installation. The work he directs is concerned with the single but important function of substance abuse testing, educating, and counseling rather than essential support operations found at Level 1-3b, e.g., the full range of complex human resources services. While the testing and awareness education programs are directed at a larger population, the more intensive efforts are directed at the small percentage of the population who has positive test results. Although the appellant's work may facilitate the installation's ultimate mission of combat readiness, the chief responsibility for these matters resides with higher echelon organizations within the activity. Level 1-2b is assigned for this element.

Level 1-2 is credited for this factor and 350 points are assigned.

Factor 4, Personal contacts

This is a two-part factor that assesses the nature and purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities.

Subfactor 4A: Nature of contacts

This element covers the organizational relationships, authority or influence level, setting, and difficulty of preparation associated with the personal contacts. To be credited, the level of contacts must contribute to the successful performance of the work, be a recurring requirement, have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the position, and require direct contact.

At Level 4A-2, contacts are with members of the business community or the general public; higher ranking managers, supervisors, and staff of program, administrative, and other work units and activities throughout the field activity, installation, command, or major organizational level of the agency; representatives of local public interest groups; case workers in congressional district offices; technical or operating level employees of State and local governments; reporters for local and other limited media outlets reaching a small, general population. Contacts may be informal, occur in conferences and meetings, or take place through telephone, radio, or similar contact, and sometimes require nonroutine or special preparation.

The appellant's personal contacts meet Level 4A-2. ASAP functions, especially those involving drug testing and prevention education, are mandated by AR 600-85, and require the active participation of all levels of military and civilian staff. As the program manager, the appellant's regular and recurring contacts include all of the installation's military and civilian managers, supervisors, and employees. For example, the appellant meets with the CG and key members of his staff to keep them abreast of installation trends in substance abuse. As the installation's liaison for alcohol and drug issues, the appellant also maintains regular and recurring contact with individuals outside the installation. Sharing a border with Mexico often escalates the number of substance abuse issues. As a result, the appellant regularly shares or reports information to Federal and state law enforcement agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Administration, on reported offenses involving illegal substance possession, use, sale, or trafficking. To promote healthy community affairs, the appellant contacts various organizations including local civic groups and schools. Similar to Level 4A-2, the appellant's contacts are with individuals of all ranks within his installation and occur primarily in distinct but routine settings. Contacts take place in face-to-face meetings or through telephone, electronic mail, or comparable mediums. Some preparation is required, e.g., briefings with the CG requires updating mostly quantitative data associated with the drug testing program and reporting of high-risk behaviors.

At Level 4A-3, frequent contacts are comparable to any of the following: high ranking military or civilian managers, supervisors, and technical staff at bureau and major organizational levels of the agency; with agency headquarters administrative support staff; or with comparable personnel in other Federal agencies; key staff of public interest groups (usually in formal briefings) with significant political influence of media coverage; journalists representing influential city or county newspapers or comparable radio or television coverage; congressional committee and subcommittee staff assistant below staff director or chief counsel levels; contracting officials and high level technical staff of large industrial firms; local officers of regional or national trade associations, public action groups, or professional organizations; and/or state and local government managers doing business with the agency. Contacts include those that take place in meetings and conferences and unplanned contacts for which the employee is designated as a

contact point by higher management. They often require extensive preparation of briefing materials or up-to-date technical familiarity with complex subject matter.

The appellant's level of contacts does not meet Level 4A-3. The appellant believes the higher level should be credited for his frequent contacts with the installation's high ranking military and civilian managers and supervisors. However, in contrast to Level 4A-3, the appellant does not frequently contact high ranking military or civilian managers, supervisors, and technical staff at bureau and major organization levels of the agency. His regular contacts are primarily at the installation level staff rather than higher levels within Army. Level 4A-3 can be credited only if the appellant's work situation fully meets the level description for the contact's organizational relationship and authority level, as well as the setting and difficulty of preparation in which the contact occurs. Unlike the 4A-3 level, the appellant's contacts do not regularly require extensive preparation of briefing materials or up-to-date technical familiarity with a complex subject matter. For example, briefings with the CG are held on a regular basis and do require presenting current information in various forms, but they do not require the type of preparation described at Level 4A-3.

Level 4a-2 is credited for this element and 50 points are assigned.

Summary

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Program Scope and Effect	1-2	350
2. Organizational Setting	2-1	100
3. Supervisory & Managerial Authority Exercised	3-2c	450
4. Personal Contacts		
A. Nature of Contacts	4A-2	50
B. Purpose of Contacts	4B-2	75
5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed	5-6	800
6. Other Conditions	6-4	<u>1120</u>
<i>Total</i>		2945

The total of 2,945 points falls within the GS-12 range (2755 – 3150) on the grade conversion table provided in the GSSG.

Decision

The position is properly classified as a Supervisory GS-101-12. The title is to be determined by the agency.