

**U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Classification Appeal Decision  
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [Name of appellant]

**Agency classification:** Supervisory Human Resources Specialist  
(Information Systems), GS-201-13

**Organization:** [Appellant's organization/location]  
Department of the Navy (DON)  
U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)

**OPM decision:** Supervisory Human Resources Specialist  
(Information Systems), GS-201-13

**OPM decision number:** C-0201-13-09

//Judith A. Davis for

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Robert D. Hendler  
Classification and Pay Claims  
Program Manager  
Merit System Audit and Compliance

2/17/2012

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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 (Introduction)*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

**Decision sent to:**

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## **Introduction**

On June 15, 2011, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) San Francisco Oversight accepted a classification appeal from [name of appellant]. On July 5, 2011, we received the agency's complete administrative report. The appellant's position is currently classified as Supervisory Human Resources Specialist (Information Systems), GS-201-13. However, he believes due to the complexity of his non-supervisory duties and responsibilities, particularly in working with Navy headquarters human resources information technology staff, his position warrants upgrading to the GS-14 level. The appellant works in the [appellant's organization and work location], Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR), DON, DOD. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

## **Background**

Prior to appealing to OPM, the appellant's servicing human resources office [name of office] initially classified the appellant's position as Supervisory Human Resources Specialist (Information Systems), GS-201-14. The record shows that in its review [servicing HR office] staff determined the position warranted upgrading based upon "impact of the person on the job" stating that due to his technical expertise, especially difficult work assignments, unusual freedom from supervision, and close working relationship with DON's OCHR headquarters information technology staff, he had substantially changed the scope of the work performed in the position. To document the appellant's "impact" his current position description (PD) [number] was annotated to reflect additional duties and responsibilities, especially those assignments done on behalf of the OCHR headquarters Human Resources Systems Division which oversees development, deployment, implementation, and management of all agency human resources (HR) information technology (IT) systems.

Before taking final action to upgrade the appellant's position to the GS-14 level, [servicing HR office] submitted the appellant's revised PD and classification evaluation to DON's Principal Classifier (PC) for review and advisory classification. In his December 20, 2010, position evaluation, DON's PC determined that an "incumbency determination based on the expertise of the incumbent" was not supportable, and the duties added to the appellant's PD to justify an increase in grade did not enhance the final classification. In [servicing HR office] January 12, 2011, response to the PC's evaluation, it disagreed with his conclusions asserting the additional duties performed by the appellant and his technical expertise had changed the complexity and scope of the work and fully supported an upgrade to the GS-14 level. In his February 11, 2011, supplemental classification review responding to [servicing HR office] January 12, 2011, response, the PC determined the key factors in dispute did not support the higher factor levels assigned by [servicing HR office], thus the position was appropriately graded at the GS-13 level. Because the PC directed [servicing HR office] to classify the appellant's position at the GS-13 level, the appellant filed a classification appeal with OPM.

## **General issues**

The appellant makes various statements about the classification review process and fact-finding done by DON's PC. In adjudicating this appeal, our responsibility is to make our own

independent decision on the proper classification of his position. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing his current duties and responsibilities to OPM position classification standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. Because our decision sets aside any previous agency decisions, the classification practices used by the agency's PC are not germane to this decision.

The appellant and his first- and second-level supervisors from [servicing HR office] state that by virtue of the appellant's technical expertise, freedom from supervision, complex assignments, and close working relationship with OCHR-IT personnel he has changed the scope of the position to the point they believe the position warrants a change in classification due to his personal impact on the position. The concept of "impact of the person on the job" is addressed in both the *Introduction* and *The Classifier's Handbook*. This concept holds that because of exceptional competence an employee may have such an impact on the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements of his/her position that it changes the classification of the position. However, the mere fact an individual in a position possesses higher qualifications or stands out from other individuals in comparable positions is not sufficient reason by itself to classify the position to a higher grade. When "impact of the person on the job" is a factor, the PD should clearly state the higher level duties and responsibilities. Nevertheless, the position's final grade must be based on comparison to grade level criteria in appropriate classification standards. In the appellant's case, the agency added duties to his PD which it believes support a higher grade level. While we have considered those duties in this decision, as discussed later we find that by application of the grading criteria in the Job Family Position Classification Standard (JFS) for Administrative Work in the Human Resources Management Group, GS-0200 (GS-0200 JFS), the appellant's technical expertise and performance of additional duties described in his PD have not materially changed the final classification (grade level) of the position.

### **Position information**

Both the appellant and his supervisor have certified to the accuracy of the appellant's official PD [number]. The appellant is the chief of the Information Technology Department (Code 20), at [appellant's work organization]. He serves as the staff advisor to that office and numerous DON and Marine Corp commands on all matters pertaining to the automation of civilian personnel management programs within the geographic area serviced by [appellant's work organization]. That area consists of several western states in the [name of region] Region and overseas activities in Hawaii, Japan, and Guam, totaling approximately 42,000 civilian employees and over 100 commands and elements. His role includes managing a wide range of functions such as network administration, hardware and software technical support, automated data processing (ADP) security, systems training, and local data base administration including development of quality control and metrics reports to ensure a high degree of data base accuracy. He ensures operating IT policies are uniformly implemented and consistently applied across customer activities in his regional area, and provides IT technical support including a "Help Desk" to all organizations and IT users serviced by [appellant's work organization].

In addition to his regional IT servicing role, the appellant works closely with OCHR headquarters Systems Division staff on various DON and DOD wide HR/IT systems issues

including complicated migrations to new automated systems, conversions to/from demonstration project pay plans, and difficult Navy/Marine Corps IT interface problems. He collaborates with OCHR headquarters Systems Division and supports multiple DON-wide enterprise suites, including acting as program manager for the interface between Navy's Total Workforce Manpower System (TWMS) and the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS). Given his IT technical expertise, the appellant is sometimes called upon by OCHR to lead or participate in major DON, DOD, or OPM IT program initiatives, and changes or evaluation of new applications/systems and their impact. Under the direction of the OCHR headquarters Systems Division, he is designated as program manager to determine the feasibility of the Navy adopting the Department of the Army's Automated Payroll Reconciliation System; was involved in the conversion of DON into the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) during 2008-2009, and transition back to the General Schedule (2010); and is working with staff of the Operations Branch, OCHR headquarters Systems Division, to test and verify JAVA program upgrades issued by a private contractor (Hewlett Packard) to determine if they are functional within DCPDS and assess their effect on the Navy/Marine Corps internet IT environment. The appellant also represents all Code 20s from the [names of organizations] on the Tactical Metrics Working Group led by staff of the OCHR headquarters Systems and Business Transformation Department which meets monthly by telephone to discuss and develop quality control findings and improvement measures concerning both closed and open personnel management actions, e.g., timeliness of processing recruitment actions. The appellant indicates he spends up to 75 percent of his work time performing the above non-supervisory functions.

The appellant spends 25 percent of his time supervising staff of the [appellant's work organization] Department. He exercises the full scope of administrative and technical supervision over one IT Specialist (DATAMGT/CUSTSPT), GS-2210-12, one HR Specialist (Information Systems), GS-201-12, three HR Specialists (Information Systems), GS-201-11 (all at the full performance level), one HR Assistant (Information Systems), GS-203-5 (full performance level GS-7), and one Computer Assistant, GS-335-6 (full performance level GS-7).

In reaching our classification decision we have carefully reviewed all information provided by the appellant and his agency including his official PD which we find sufficient for classification purposes and incorporate it by reference into this decision. In addition, to help decide the appeal we conducted separate telephone interviews with the appellant, his immediate supervisor, and the Director, HR Systems Division, OCHR headquarters.

### **Series, title, and standard determination**

The agency has classified the appellant's position in the Human Resources Management Series, GS-201, titling it Supervisory HR Specialist (Information Systems), and the appellant does not disagree. We concur with the agency's selection of basic title and series, with the addition of the prefix "Supervisory" to reflect his supervisory responsibilities over subordinate staff in his unit. As previously discussed, the appellant performs a combination of supervisory and non-supervisory duties. To evaluate the appellant's supervisory duties we applied the grading criteria in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG). To evaluate the grade level of his non-supervisory duties we applied the JFS for Administrative Work in the Human Resources

Management Group, GS-0200, which covers positions classified in the HR Management Series, GS-201.

The appellant does not dispute the grade level assigned by his agency for his supervisory duties. We concur with the final grade of those duties and have briefly evaluated them below by application of the GSSG. The appellant disagrees with the Navy PC's assignment from the GS-0200 JFS of Factor Levels 3-4, 4-4, 5-4, 6-2, and 7-B. However, in the PC's supplemental review of the position dated February 11, 2011, the PC increased the factor level he initially assigned for Factor 6, Personal Contacts, from Factor Level 6-2 to 6-3. After careful review, we concur with the agency and PC's assignment of Factor Levels 1-8, 6-3, 8-1, and 9-1, and thus have not specifically addressed them in our discussion that follows. Therefore, our evaluation is limited to those factor levels in dispute including our assessment of Factor 2, Supervisory Controls, in which we disagree with both the [servicing HR office] and the PC.

#### *Evaluation of supervisory duties using the GSSG*

The GSSG is a cross-series guide used to determine the grade level of supervisory positions in the General Schedule. The GSSG has six evaluation factors, each with several factor-level definitions and corresponding point values. Positions are evaluated by crediting the points designated for the highest level met under each factor, and converting the total to a grade by using the point-to-grade conversion chart in the guide. Our evaluation with respect to the six GSSG factors follows.

#### *Factor 1, Program scope and effect*

##### *Scope*

This element addresses the general complexity and breadth of the program (or program segment) directed; or the work directed, the products produced, or the services delivered. The geographic and organizational coverage of the program (or program segment) within the agency structure is included under this element.

##### *Effect*

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

Both the scope and effect of the appellant's position meet Level 1-2. Like Level 1-2, he directs an administrative HR IT function which directly supports most of the HR day-to-day activities typical of an operating agency HR field office, i.e., [name of HR office]. These include recruitment and examining, benefits and performance, and employee and labor relations to which he furnishes management information through HR systems delivery and database management. Comparable to Level 1-2, the IT services and products provided significantly affect [name of HR office] operations and personnel management program objectives.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 1-3. Although [name of HR office] overall supports civilian employees in a broad geographic area, the immediate focus of the appellant is to support the [name of HR office] internal functions through database management and IT systems delivery. Unlike Level 1-3, his IT functions and services provided do not impact a wide range of DON IT activities, the work of other agencies, or the operations of outside interests. Moreover, although assigned to a field activity providing HR services to a very large serviced population, his work does not directly involve or substantially impact the provision of essential HR support operations to numerous, varied, and complex technical, professional, and administrative functions. Rather, he provides support to the other [name of HR office] operating components that provide such support to their serviced activities.

Both scope and effect are evaluated at Level 1-2 and 350 points are credited.

### *Factor 2, Organizational setting*

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

The appellant's position meets Level 2-2 where the position is accountable to a position that is one reporting level below the first SES, flag or general officer, or equivalent or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain. The appellant reports to the Deputy HR Director of [name of HR office] who shares fully in the duties and responsibilities of the HR Director. Under those circumstances, the GSSG directs that a position reporting to a full deputy is credited as reporting to the chief, in this case the HR Director. Because the appellant's position meets this requirement, Level 2-2 is assigned.

This factor is evaluated at Level 2-2 and 250 points are credited.

### *Factor 3, Supervisory and managerial authority exercised*

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities which are exercised on a recurring basis.

The appellant's position meets Level 3-2c in that he carries out a least three of the first four, and a total of six or more of the authorities and responsibilities listed under that level. Like Level 3-2c, he: (1) plans work to be accomplished by subordinates, adjusts priorities, and prepares schedules for completion of work; (2) assigns work to subordinates based on the difficulty of assignments and employee capabilities; (3) evaluates the performance of subordinates; (4) advises, counsels, and instructs employees on work and administrative matters; (5) interviews candidates for positions in his unit and recommends promotions or reassignments; (6) hears and resolves complaints from employees, and refers group grievances and serious unresolved complaints to higher level supervisors; (7) is authorized to take minor disciplinary measures and recommends other action in more serious cases; (8) identifies developmental and training needs of employees and arranges for such training; (9) finds ways to improve work production or increase the quality of work directed; and (10) develops performance standards (measures) for performance elements of positions in his unit.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 3-3a or b. Unlike Level 3-3a, he does not have the managerial authority to set a series of annual, multi-year, or similar types of long range work plans and schedules for in-service or contracted work. He is not closely involved with high level program officials in the development of overall goals and objectives for programs or program segments. Additionally, the position does not meet the intent of Level 3-3a to credit significant decision-making involvement in bureau-wide staffing, budgetary, policy and regulatory matters. Such matters are addressed at higher levels within the DON.

The appellant's position also does not meet Level 3-3b. Although he exercises all of the delegated supervisory authorities and responsibilities described at Level 3-2c of this factor, unlike the requirements of Level 3-3b he does not exercise at least eight of the fifteen responsibilities listed at that level. Moreover, the workload he supervises is not so large or complex as to require the regular and recurring exercise of such responsibilities. Consequently, Level 3-3b cannot be awarded.

This factor is evaluated at Level 3-2 and 450 points are credited.

*Factor 4, Personal contacts*

Factor 4 is divided into two parts: Subfactor 4A, Nature of contacts; and Subfactor 4B, Purpose of contacts. The nature of the contacts credited under Subfactor 4A, and the purpose of those contacts credited under Subfactor 4B, must be based on the same contacts.

*Subfactor 4A: Nature of contacts*

The appellant's position meets Level 4A-2. Like this level, contacts involved in his supervisory and related managerial work include higher ranking managers, supervisors, and staff of IT and administrative units, including at command levels throughout the regional area serviced by his field activity [name of HR office]. He also has contact with members of the IT business community on IT related matters impacting [name of HR office]. The position does not meet Level 4A-3 because the appellant does not have frequent contacts with any of those listed under that level.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level 4A-2 and 50 points are credited.

*Subfactor 4B: Purpose of contacts*

The appellant's position meets Level 4B-2. Like this level, his contacts are made to ensure IT information provided is accurate and consistent, and to coordinate the work directed in his unit with that of others outside his immediate organization including administrative staff at various command levels. The position does not meet Level 4B-3 because he is not faced with justifying, defending, or negotiating with those contacted on project or IT program issues; in obtaining or committing resources; or gaining compliance with policies, regulations, or contracts.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level 4B-2 and 75 points are credited.



*Factor 5, Difficulty of typical work directed*

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

Based on our review, the highest grade level which best characterizes the nature of the basic (mission oriented) non-supervisory work performed under the appellant's supervision, and which constitutes 25 percent or more of the workload of the organization, is GS-12.

Using the conversion chart in the GSSG for Factor 5, a GS-12 base level equates to Level 5-7 and 930 points are credited.

*Factor 6, Other conditions*

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions contribute to the difficulty and complexity of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities. There are two steps involved in assigning a level under Factor 6: (1) select the highest level that the position meets, and (2) if the level selected in step 1 is either 6-1, 6-2, or 6-3, refer to the *Special Situations* section of Factor 6. If the position meets 3 or more of the situations, then a single level is added to the level selected in the first step. If the level selected under step 1 is either 6-4, 6-5, or 6-6, the *Special Situations* section does not apply, and no level is added to the one selected in step 1.

The appellant's position meets Level 6-5. Like this level, his supervision requires significant and extensive coordination and integration of a number of important projects or program segments of technical and administrative work comparable in difficulty to the GS-12 level. In his supervisory and related managerial role the appellant makes major recommendations which directly and substantially affect the IT operations of [name of HR office] and commands which it serves. Like Level 6-5, the appellant makes major recommendations in at least three of the areas listed under that level including: (1) which IT projects should be initiated, dropped, or curtailed based upon the needs of his organization and those units served; (2) recommending the optimum mix of reduced operating costs and assurance of continued IT program effectiveness, including introducing new automated processes to increase the effectiveness of HR service delivery and consolidate HR IT data base information; and (3) recommending the resources to devote to the overall IT program when staff years and a significant portion of the organization's budget is involved.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 6-6. Unlike this level, his supervision and oversight does not require exceptional coordination and integration of a number of very important and complex program segments or programs of technical, managerial, or administrative work comparable in difficulty to the GS-13 or higher level. Additionally, he does not manage his organization through subordinate supervisors, and/or contractors who each direct substantial workloads comparable to the GS-12 or higher level.

This factor is evaluated at Level 6-5 and 1225 points are credited. Because Level 6-5 is assigned, as discussed above the *Special Situations* section does not apply.

*Summary evaluation of supervisory duties*

By application of the GSSG, we have evaluated the appellant's supervisory duties as follows:

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. <i>Program scope and effect</i>	1-2	350
2. <i>Organizational setting</i>	2-2	250
3. <i>Supervisory &amp; managerial authority exercised</i>	3-2	450
4. <i>Personal contacts</i>		
<i>Nature of contacts</i>	4A-2	50
<i>Purpose of contacts</i>	4B-2	75
5. <i>Difficulty of typical work directed</i>	5-7	930
6. <i>Other conditions</i>	6-5	<u>1225</u>
Total points		3330

A total of 3330 points falls into the GS-13 grade range (3155-3600) by reference to the point-to-grade conversion chart in the GSSG. Therefore, the appellant's supervisory duties are graded at the GS-13 level.

*Evaluation of non-supervisory duties and responsibilities using the GS-0200 JFS*

The GS-0200 JFS uses the FES format, which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor-level in a standard describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor-level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect that meets a higher level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level. Each factor level has a corresponding point value. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

As previously discussed, our evaluation using the GS-0200 JFS is limited to those factor levels in dispute, including our assessment of Factor 2, Supervisory Controls, in which we disagree with both the [name of servicing HR office] and DON's PC.

*Factor 2, Supervisory controls*

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the responsibility of the employee, and the degree to which work is reviewed by the supervisor. At Level 2-4, the supervisor outlines overall objectives and available resources. The employee and supervisor, in consultation, discuss time frames, scope of the assignment including possible

stages, and possible approaches. The employee determines the most appropriate principles, practices, and methods to apply in all phases of assignments, including the approach to be taken, degree of intensity, and depth of research in management advisories. The employee frequently interprets regulations on his/her own initiative, applies new methods to resolve complex and/or intricate, controversial, or unprecedented issues and problems, and resolves most of the conflicts that arise. At this level the employee keeps the supervisor informed of progress and of potentially controversial matters. The supervisor reviews completed work for soundness of overall approach, effectiveness in meeting requirements or producing expected results, the feasibility of recommendations, and adherence to requirements. The supervisor does not usually review methods used.

At Level 2-5, the supervisor provides administrative and policy direction in terms of broadly defined missions or functions of the organization. The employee is responsible for a significant program or function; defines objectives; interprets policies promulgated by authorities senior to the immediate supervisor and determines their effect on program needs; independently plans, designs, and carries out the work to be done; and is a technical authority. The supervisor reviews work for potential impact on broad agency policy objectives and program goals; normally accepts work as being technically authoritative; and normally accepts work without significant change.

The appellant's position meets Level 2-4. Like this level, the appellant's supervisor outlines overall objectives of HR IT assignments, discusses time frames, and the impact on and availability of local program resources when the appellant participates on projects which are part of broader agency-wide program initiatives assigned by the Director, HR Systems Division from headquarters OCHR. In such cases the supervisor discusses the scope of the assignment and role of [name of HR office] including stages and general approach. Like Level 2-4, the appellant determines the most appropriate IT practices and technical approaches in all aspects of assignments, including the degree of research necessary to locally implement agency-wide IT management directives and advisories. The appellant independently interprets IT guidance, testing and applying new IT methods and software to resolve complex issues such as reconciling payroll records with personnel records and studying the interface between DCPDS and TWMS. Similar to Level 2-4, he keeps the supervisor apprised of work progress and potentially controversial issues, e.g., possible compromise of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in HR IT systems. As stated in the appellant's PD, the supervisor reviews his work for soundness of approach, effectiveness in meeting headquarters driven project requirements and producing expected results. The supervisor does not review the IT technical methods used by the appellant to complete assignments.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 2-5. Unlike this level, when making assignments the supervisor does not solely provide administrative and policy direction in terms of broadly defined missions or functions of the organization. The record shows assignments are made with guidance on timeframes, discussion of resources needed, and scope of the assignment including the degree of OCHR headquarters participation. Although the appellant works with considerable independence typical of Level 2-4 and is recognized for his technical expertise, he is not responsible for oversight or implementation of a broad program or function such that the review of his work would consist of assessment of the policy or programmatic decisions being made.

Similarly, he does not interpret policies to determine broad HR IT program needs, but rather works within the established parameters and guidance promulgated by higher headquarters. Further, the nature of his work is not such that it would have an impact on “broad agency policy objectives and program goals.” Although he regularly consults with agency level HR IT staff, makes recommendations on IT issues, and participates in agency-wide projects, he does not independently plan, design, and carry out such projects without technical and policy review.

The level of responsibility represented by Level 2-5 is predicated on the delegated authority for a broad program or function of such breadth that only policy and administrative direction could be reasonably applied. It represents not merely a high degree of technical independence but also a corresponding management role that is well beyond the scope of authority and responsibility inherent in the appellant’s position. It derives not only from an employee’s expertise in a given field and the corresponding technical latitude afforded, but also from the employee’s role in the organization and the authority delegated to define the basic content and operation of the program or function beyond just the technical aspects of individual project assignments. Such authority is vested in higher level OCHR management positions.

This factor is evaluated at Level 2-4 and 450 points are credited.

### *Factor 3, Guidelines*

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

At Level 3-4, the employee uses guidelines and precedents that are very general regarding agency policy statements and objectives. Guidelines specific to assignments are often scarce, inapplicable or have gaps in specificity that require considerable interpretation and/or adaptation to issues and problems. The employee uses judgment, initiative, and resourcefulness in deviating from established methods to modify, adapt, and/or refine broader guidelines to resolve specific complex and/or intricate issues and problems; treat specific issues or problems; research trends and patterns; develop new methods and criteria; and/or propose new policies and practices.

At Level 3-5, the employee uses guidelines that are often ambiguous and express conflicting or incompatible goals and objectives, requiring extensive interpretation. The employee uses judgment and ingenuity and exercises broad latitude to determine the intent of applicable guidelines; develop policy and guidelines for specific areas of work; and formulate interpretations that may take the form of policy statements and guidelines. At this level, top agency management officials and senior staff recognize the employee as a technical expert.

The appellant’s position meets Level 3-4. In addition to Federal and Navy IT reference manuals, laws, regulations, agency instructions, and software/hardware application instructions, the appellant also uses guidelines and precedents that are very general regarding agency policy and objectives for testing, adapting, and implementing new HR IT systems within DON. The latter have included general policy statements on the application and use of TWMS in Navy, its interface with DCPDS, and general guidelines regarding implementation of electronic Official Personnel Folders in DON. Such guidelines contain gaps in specificity requiring the appellant to interpret and adapt them to issues and problems at hand. Consequently, using judgment,

initiative, and deviating from established guidelines, the appellant develops new IT methods, criteria, and measures to treat specific implementation problems. For example, working with IT staff he designed and developed a process for extracting and interfacing data from TWMS and uploading it into DCPDS including telework information, billet identification, employee emergency contact information, documentation of training requests, etc. He has also assisted in developing new HR IT policies to determine how to implement new changes in IT systems, e.g., updating System Authorization Access Requests (SAR) by individual employees. Like Level 3-4, the appellant is involved in proposing new HR IT practices. For example, he is currently studying the possibility of adopting Department of the Army's Automated Payroll Reconciliation System for Navy use, which would replace Navy's manual system for reconciling employee payroll and personnel data. His recommendations on feasibility will be made to the Director, HR Systems Division at OCHR headquarters.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 3-5. Although guidelines used by the appellant are sometimes inapplicable in resolving particular HR IT issues, unlike Level 3-5 they are not ambiguous and express conflicting or incompatible goals and objectives thus requiring extensive interpretation. While the appellant uses judgment in applying and interpreting guidelines, he does not exercise broad latitude to the point of solely developing HR IT policy, and formulate interpretations that may take the form of policy statements and guidelines on overall HR IT systems. Such policy making responsibilities are found at OCHR organizations above the appellant's level, i.e., HR Policy and Programs Department, HR Systems and Business Transformation Department at OCHR headquarters. Although due to the appellant's IT programming background his technical expertise is regularly called upon by senior staff to participate in various HR IT working groups and test proposed software for DON implementation, his expertise is not exercised within the context of the guidelines and related judgment specified at Level 3-5.

This factor is evaluated at Level 3-4 and 450 points are credited.

#### *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.

At Level 4-5, the work consists of addressing issues that significantly affect long-range implementation of substantive operational and/or policy program(s) throughout an agency, bureau, service, or major military command with numerous subordinate HR offices; resolving different and unrelated problems and issues that affect long-range implementation and administration of substantive interrelated mission-oriented programs(s); conducting studies to develop responses to management on new requirements in program operations, legislation, or agency regulations; analyzing disputed interrelated information that must be reconstructed from circumstantial evidence requiring substantial depth of analysis over a relatively short period; responding to unanticipated changes in judicial and/or administrative law and policy and the conflicting goals and objectives that may result from these changes.

At Level 4-5, the employee understands and interprets interrelated program issues that affect long-range program planning, design, and execution; integrates the work of a team into authoritative report(s) outlining options, recommendations, and conclusions reached; researches statutory, regulatory, court and/or administrative precedents, and other legal opinions or documentary material; and/or interprets and evaluates questionable or discrepant information and synthesizes intricate information to arrive at legally supportable conclusions.

At Level 4-5, the employee develops new HR techniques and/or establishes new criteria or approaches and methods for program implementation and evaluation requiring a substantial depth of research and analysis which serve as precedents for others; performs analyses that are complicated by major areas of uncertainty in the appropriate approach, methodology, or interpretation because of continuing program changes, technological developments, or conflicting requirements; and/or works on cases that involve matters that are contentious and/or susceptible to widely varying interpretations; and require creating new techniques, establishing criteria, or developing new information.

A work illustration at Level 4-5 in the GS-0200 JFS for HR Specialist (Information Systems), GS-0201, describes assignments at that level involving analyzing, developing, testing, and implementing segments of an HR information system(s) to be used by agency, bureau, regional, and field level HR offices. The employee at this level performs such duties as responding to current and future needs of the agency's HR community by developing and implementing the present and future information data requirements in accordance with the needs of HR programs throughout the various organizational levels; recommends and initiates system changes to automate agency-wide HR manual reporting requirements; ensures effective information systems applications of OPM and agency regulations and requirements governing HR administration and management information reporting requirements; and develops quality control criteria, profile reports, error control criteria, and various system queries to perform continuous review of the system and to maintain accuracy, control, and reliability of data maintained in the information system. The employee must exercise considerable originality so that the system is continually responsive to the myriad of HRM needs throughout the organization.

Another work illustration at Level 4-5 in the GS-0200 JFS describes an HR Specialist (Information Systems), GS-0201, who participates as a key team member in developing, testing, and implementing the HR management information system and related process locations for a department with sites throughout the country. In working with a team of computer applications experts, the employee provides necessary input from a broad range of HR management laws, regulations, principles, and practices, and translates that information into terms understandable by computer experts. The employee summarizes, evaluates, and develops recommendations relating to current and future administrative management processes and procedures and their development and implementation, and documents, analyzes, evaluates, and tests the developed software to ensure it meets the agency's needs. The employee exercises considerable originality and ingenuity to continually demonstrate to agency management that the outlay of considerable funds is cost-effective in terms of the immediate availability of agency-wide HR data to all management levels.

At Level 4-6, the work consists of broad, highly difficult assignments that require analyzing key agency programs involving issues of broad scope and intensity which are precedent setting and of long duration, and/or frequently require directing team efforts for concurrent projects. At this level, the employee works on largely undefined issues, problems, and conditions of a highly variable nature requiring extensive probing and analysis to determine the nature and scope of the problems and issues; and may assign tasks, coordinate a team's efforts, and consolidate the team's findings into a completed product. The employee encounters extreme difficulty in identifying and isolating the nature of issues or problems into their components. Problems are particularly stubborn and require continuing efforts to establish new concepts and techniques for resolving problems.

The appellant's position meets Level 4-5. Like this level, at the direction of OCHR headquarters he is involved in HR IT projects addressing issues that significantly affect the agency's implementation of substantive IT operations and data processing systems at the agency, command, or regional levels. Assignments he is involved in affect the HR IT operations of five subordinate [names of HR offices] reporting to OCHR. The [HR offices] provide HR IT services to many separate Naval and Marine Corps commands throughout the regional areas of each [HR office]. For example, he was closely involved with OCHR headquarters in the long-range planning to convert Navy wide civilian personnel data into the NSPS, particularly in gathering and recording data on the hierarchies (i.e., supervisory/employee position reporting and organizational relationships) prior to full implementation of NSPS. Similarly, he was significantly involved in the HR IT aspects of Navy's transition back to the General Schedule (GS).

Similar to Level 4-5, the appellant is involved in conducting studies for management on potentially new requirements in HR IT program operations. These include his work on the Automated Payroll Reconciliation System and assessment of Army's automated tool for recording and sorting payroll data. Like Level 4-5, in carrying out these responsibilities he understands and interprets interrelated program issues (e.g., interface between Navy's TWMS and DCPDS), and is involved along with computer specialists in the design and execution of upgrades. He is also a leader on the headquarters sponsored Tactical Metrics Working Group to perform agency-wide quality control assessments of HR IT data to determine timeliness of both open and closed personnel actions including appointments, promotions, awards, etc., and makes reports to OCHR suggesting data processing improvements. These headquarters driven projects require that he analyze substantial amounts of data and recommend new approaches for HR IT data processing including automation of manual records to keep up with continuing program changes and technological developments.

Like Level 4-5, many of the appellant's assignments favorably compare to the illustrative work examples at that level summarized above. These include his analysis and recommendations for upgrades concerning the Automated Payroll Reconciliation System and use of Army's server to record and update data. This would impact agency-wide civilian personnel data and be implemented at all field level HR service center offices. His work as a team member with the Tactical Metrics Working Group and his lead role with TWMS and DCPDS interface illustrate his close involvement with quality/error control criteria and development of new measures to ensure accurate and timely information within HR data management information systems.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 4-6. Unlike this level, his assignments are not so broad, difficult, and complex requiring analysis of key agency programs. Although some of his projects involve analysis of agency-wide HR IT data, they do not include analysis of broad DON programs covering issues of significant scope and intensity and which are precedent-setting. In addition, they are not of the long duration characteristic of Level 4-6 and, while he has participated in HR IT teams studying information management systems and processes, his assignments have not required he direct teams for concurrent projects. In contrast to Level 4-6 the appellant does not work on largely undefined HR IT issues and problems, and he is not faced with extreme difficulty in identifying and isolating them into their components.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-5 and 325 points are credited.

*Factor 5, Scope and effect*

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

At Level 5-4, the scope of the work involves resolving or advising on complex problems and issues that typically require analyzing and/or troubleshooting a wide range of unusual conditions. The work ultimately affects the objectives and effectiveness of agency HR activities, missions, and programs. The assessment, analysis, and ultimate resolution of problems promote the overall quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of program operations.

At Level 5-5, the work involves analyzing, evaluating, and developing major aspects of agency-wide HR programs that require isolating and defining unknown conditions, resolving critical problems, or developing new concepts and methodologies; and issues of sensitivity and potential controversy that when resolved may promote advances in principal HR program plans, goals, objectives, and milestones. At Level 5-5, the work establishes precedents for other technical experts to follow. Findings and recommendations are typically of major significance to agency management officials, and often serve as the basis for new legislation, regulations, or programs. Work at this level may also influence and persuade top management officials to change major HR policies or procedures.

The appellant's position meets Level 5-4. Like this level, he resolves or advises on HR IT issues and problems presented by staff from units within the regional area serviced by [appellant's work organization] and by OCHR IT headquarters staff. Issues include network administration, hardware and software technical support, ADP security, system training on new or updated programs, and data base administration. In providing assistance on headquarters assignments, the appellant analyzes and/or troubleshoots a broad range of unusual IT situations including, for example, identifying problems and resolving the interface between TWMS and DCPDS, and troubleshooting new features introduced into TWMS (e.g. tracking modules for SF 52s) to evaluate whether they achieve the objectives for which designed. His role on the Tactical Metrics Working Group to examine each hiring process agency-wide and develop quality control measures and reports on accuracy and timeliness of actions reflects the complexity of IT



problems addressed. Comparable to Level 5-4, the preceding assignments ultimately affect the HR IT objectives of his agency, and directly impact the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of DON's information data management systems.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 5-5. Although he is involved in resolving complex, sometimes unusual HR IT problems of various information management systems, unlike Level 5-5 he does not analyze and develop major aspects of agency-wide HR IT programs requiring defining unknown conditions or developing new concepts and methodologies. In addition, at his organizational level he does not deal with sensitive and potentially controversial issues that when resolved promote advances in principal HR IT program plans, objectives, and milestones. Responsibility for dealing with such issues is found at higher levels within OCHR, particularly at the headquarters HR Systems and Business Transformation Department. Unlike Level 5-5, the appellant's work neither establishes precedents for other technical experts to follow, nor do his findings and recommendations serve as the basis for new legislation, regulations, or programs. As previously addressed, his work promotes the overall quality and efficiency of data management systems, but the record shows he is not involved in persuading Navy's top management officials to change major HR IT policies or procedures. Such management advisory and consultative services are provided by the Director, HR Systems Division at OCHR headquarters.

This factor is evaluated at Level 5-4 and 225 points are credited.

*Factor 7, Purpose of contacts*

Factor 7 addresses the purpose of contacts identified in Factor 6, Personal contacts.

At Level C, contacts are made to influence and persuade employees and managers to accept and implement findings and recommendations. The employee may encounter resistance due to such issues as organizational conflict, competing objectives, or resource problems. At this level, the employee must be skillful in approaching contacts to obtain the desired effect; e.g., gaining compliance with established policies and regulations by persuasion or negotiation.

At Level D, contacts are made to present, justify, defend, negotiate, or settle matters involving significant or controversial issues; e.g., recommendations affecting major programs, dealing with substantial expenditures, or significantly changing the nature and scope of organizations.

The appellant's position meets Level C. Like this level, in carrying out his lead role for TWMS, participating in the Tactical Metrics Working Group, resolving Navy Marine Corps Internet issues, converting positions into the NSPS and transitioning back to the GS, and participating in various HR IT quality control initiatives, the appellant must regularly influence and persuade IT employees and managers using data management systems to implement program changes and/or correct mass personnel actions entered in error into various data bases. Like Level C, at times he encounters resistance to changes or proposed software upgrades due to agency resource limitations, and thus must exercise persuasion and be skillful in approach to gain compliance with changes in HR IT policies or newly mandated IT procedures.

The appellant's position does not meet Level D. Unlike this level, his contacts do not require that he regularly justify, defend, negotiate, or settle matters involving significant or controversial issues, including recommendations affecting major programs, involving substantial expenditures, or significantly changing the nature and scope of organizations. Such requirements in dealing with contacts are found in positions at higher headquarters organizations within the agency.

Factor 7 is evaluated at Level C.

*Summary of FES factors*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-8	1550
2. Supervisory Controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-4	450
4. Complexity	4-5	325
5. Scope and Effect	5-4	225
6. & 7. Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts	6-3/7-C	180
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
<i>Total</i>		3190

A total of 3190 points falls within the GS-13 range (3155-3600) on the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-0200 JFS. Therefore, the appellant's non-supervisory duties are graded at the GS-13 level.

*Summary*

By application of the grading criteria in the GSSG, we find the appellant's supervisory duties meet the GS-13 grade level. Additionally, by application of the grading criteria in the GS-0200 JFS we find the appellant's non-supervisory work meets the GS-13 level. Therefore, the appellant's position is graded at the GS-13 level.

**Decision**

The appellant's position is properly classified as Supervisory Human Resources Specialist (Information Systems), GS-201-13.