U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeal and FLSA Programs

Philadelphia Oversight Division
600 Arch Street, Room 3400
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1596

Pay Category Appeal Decision
Under section 5103 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant:	[appellant's name]
Agency classification:	Electronics Mechanic WG-2604-11
Organization:	[name] Division [name] Directorate [name] Army Depot Department of the Army [location]
OPM decision:	Federal Wage System
OPM decision number:	C-2604-00-01

Robert D. Hendler
Classification Appeals Officer

1/29/02

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* (PCS's), appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name]

[name], Chief
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Introduction

On April 9, 2001, the Philadelphia Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a pay category appeal from [appellant's name]. His job is currently graded as Electronics Mechanic, WG-2604-11. He believes that the job should be in the Information Technology Management Series, GS-2210, which replaced the Computer Specialist Series, GS-334, in May 2001. The appellant works in the [name] Division; [name] Directorate; [name] Army Depot, Department of the Army, [location]. We accepted and decided this appeal under 5 U.S.C. 5103. We received the complete appeal administrative report on November 16, 2001.

General issues

The appellant states in his appeal letter that he has been working as a GS-334-11 since October 1995. He says that a member of the activity human resources staff told him this was the classification planned when he was assigned to perform Forward Repair Activity (FAR) work in 1995. In the attachments to his appeal letter, he says that his position description (PD) of record (# [number]) does not accurately describe his work. We received a classified copy of the new PD (# [number]) on November 11, 2001. This PD, responding to the appellant's PD accuracy issues, was developed by the agency for the appeal administrative report. On November 9, 2001, the appellant e-mailed his disagreement with the new PD to his agency and to us. The agency declined to reassign the appellant to the new PD until the appeal was adjudicated.

A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position or job by an official with the authority to assign work. A position or job is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by an employee. Pay category appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a job, and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities currently assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision classifies a real operating job, and not simply the PD. Therefore, this decision is based on the work currently assigned to and performed by the appellant, i.e., the work he currently performs on Medical Health Systems equipment. His FAR work, which ended on or before 1999, is not representative of his current work assignments and may not be considered in our analysis of his position. Our decision also sets aside any previous agency decision.

We conducted an on-site audit with the appellant and interviewed his acting immediate supervisor, [name], Chief, [name] Division, on January 23, 2002. In deciding this appeal, we fully considered the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his activity at our request. We find that the new PD, classified by the installation commander, contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

Job information

The appellant states in his appeal and rationale that he supports a wide variety of networking hardware including routers, switches, firewalls (dedicated computers with special security

software and hardware), concentrators, cacheflows, bridges, hubs, encryption/compression, and Risc servers from many vendors. The appellant states that all of these have their own proprietary internet operating system (IOS) and operating system (OS) using different languages and command line interfaces (CLI's). He says that he uses CLI's to analyze, diagnose, test, configure and verify IOS/OS functionality. The appellant states that he analyzes and configures networking systems into local area networks (LAN's). He simulates operations, verifies that interfaces function, and that the IOS can support any other interface that may be added later.

He says that he does not fix any component at the board level, but isolates whether the error is in the hardware or software. The appellant receives equipment taken out of service without documentation of failures and develops the testing procedure to identify the problems. If equipment is under warranty, he must verify that it is a covered system problem. The appellant says that equipment returned from the field is often password protected. He must use his computer skills to gain entrance to system software to perform his work, and to restore root privileges. All results are documented and sent to the requesting vendor or activity.

The new PD states that the appellant installs, repairs, tests, troubleshoots, overhauls and diagnoses problems in a variety of electronic digital computer and networking hardware system, equipment and peripheral devices. He isolates the problem and replaces defective components, aligns and adjusts repaired equipment, and conducts operational testing of both hardware and software. He uses software diagnostic programs to isolate problems and determine corrective action. The appellant assists equipment users by telephone using these troubleshooting techniques, e.g., reloading software. If the equipment cannot be made operational, it is sent to his activity for repair.

Pay category determination

Section 5102 of 5 U.S.C. requires that a pay category determination be made as the first step in the position classification process. Section 5102(c)(7) exempts from the General Schedule (GS) employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts, or unskilled, semiskilled, or skilled manual-labor occupations, and other employees in positions having trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge as the paramount requirement. The *Introduction to the PCS's* defines paramount requirement as the essential, prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the primary duty or responsibility for which the position has been established. Whether a position is in a trade, craft, or manual labor occupation depends primarily on the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements; i.e., the most important, or chief, requirement for the performance of a primary duty or responsibility for which the position exists. If a position clearly requires trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge to perform its primary duty, the position is under the Federal Wage System (FWS). Paramount does not rely on percentages of work time.

The appellant's rationale relies on extracts from the definitions of network services and systems administration of Information Technology Management, GS-2210, work in the Job Family Standard (JFS) for Administrative Work in the Information Technology Group, GS-2200. For example, he states that he performs networking services defined on page 10 of the JFS since he analyzes and defines network requirements; defines and maintains network architecture

infrastructure; configures and optimizes network servers, routers, and switches; monitors network performance, diagnoses and resolves network problems; installs, tests, maintains, and upgrades network "Internet Operating Software," etc. GS-2210 network analysis, definition, and configuration involves making decisions on such matters as what networks will be fielded and supported, including the hardware to purchase and the system software used to operate the hardware. It does not cover the appellant's connecting and testing hardware to assure that components can communicate with one another and loading the correct version of operating software. Network monitoring covers assessing whether network are achieving their performance objectives. It does mean operationally testing whether components scheduled to be installed at individual sites can communicate with each other before they are shipped. GS-2210 network operating software installation, testing, maintenance, and upgrading covers fielding and supporting software based on the systems analysis and design previously discussed. It does not cover the appellant's downloading and installing the most recent commercial off the shelf software release from the web. The networking and systems administration functions cited by the appellant in his rationale are assigned to other organizations and commands.

As discussed on page 19 of the GS-2200 JFS, some single-grade interval GS positions perform limited computer equipment installation and repair work. For example, some Computer Assistant, GS-335, positions configure hardware and software according to instructions, install small local area networks, and expand personal computer memory. They may need to apply knowledge of security software protocols to assign passwords and resolve password problems. Similar to these functions, the appellant uses directly applicable manufacturer configuration and other instructions and procedures to bypass password barriers to access equipment shipped in from the field.

However, the appellant's primary and paramount duties flow from the mission and function of the organization in which he works. Those duties entail the fielding, upgrading, integration and repair of computer and peripheral equipment in a depot level repair production environment. This work requires trade knowledge of electronics principles and practices in determining whether computer and peripheral equipment operating problems are hardware and/or software based. If hardware based, he uses trades skill and knowledge to make repairs, including replacing bad drives and other components. The troubleshooting techniques that he uses and the depth of these repairs reflect the primary and paramount trades nature of his work. Therefore, the appellant's job is properly allocated to the FWS.

Decision

The appealed job is covered by the FWS.