

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
MERIT SYSTEMS OVERSIGHT AND EFFECTIVENESS
DALLAS OVERSIGHT DIVISION
CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION

Under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant]

Position: Management Assistant (OA), GS-344-6
Position Number: [number]

Organization: Immigration and Naturalization Service
Department of Justice
[installation city and state]

Decision: Management Assistant (OA), GS-344-6
(Appeal denied.)

OPM Decision Number: C-0344-06-01

Approved by:

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

8/2/96
Date

Copy of decision sent to:

[appellant's name and address]

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INTRODUCTION

The position is assigned to the [installation], in the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The agency has classified the position as Management Assistant (OA), GS-344-6. The appellant believes that the duties performed warrant the position being upgraded to a Budget or Program Analyst, GS-7 or higher. She filed an appeal with this office under the provisions of chapter 51 of title 5, United States Code.

This is the final administrative decision of the Government, subject to discretionary review only under the conditions and time limits specified in sections 511.605 and 511.613 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

POSITION INFORMATION

The [installation], consists of two units each of 14 employees, each supervised by a Supervisory Detention and Deportation Officer, reporting to the Assistant District Director of the Detention and Deportation Branch, and the appellant's position which reports directly to this Assistant District Director. In addition, the appellant's position provides some support to two separate organizations within INS, the [subinstallation] (with a staff of 31) and a [city] suboffice (with a staff of 5). The appellant basically works independently, but in support of the District (which consists of about 300 employees) and the Assistant District Director for Detention and Deportation. Assignments are either made and overseen generally by the supervisor or developed through the normal flow of a recurring workload.

SERIES AND TITLE DETERMINATION

We reviewed standards for several series based on the appellant's contention that the position might better meet the standards for a budget or program analyst position and because of the variety of duties contained in the appellant's position description.

The GS-560 Budget Analysis series includes positions for which the primary duties are to perform, advise on, or supervise work in any of the phases or systems of budget administration in use in the Federal sector when such work mainly requires knowledge and skill in the application of related laws, regulations, policies, precedents, methods, and techniques of budgeting. Positions in this series are concerned with the performance of such functions as budget and cost estimate formulations to support plans, programs, and activities; presentation and defense of budget estimates before fund reviewing and granting authorities; review and evaluation of budget requests; administration and review of requests for apportionments and allotments; review, control, and report of obligations and

expenditures; and development, determination, and interpretation of budgetary policies and practices. Work in this series also includes analyzing and recommending alternative methods of financing agency program and administrative operations; implementing legal and regulatory controls over the apportionment, allotment, allocation, obligation, and/or expenditure of funds in approved budgets; and providing advice on effective and efficient means for the acquisition and use of funds to support agency programs and activities.

Excluded from this series are positions engaged in the performance of cost analysis functions which primarily require knowledge of pertinent business and industrial practices, procurement and contracting, engineering, or an occupational specialization other than the Budget Analysis Series, GS-560. The appellant's position involves preparing statistical summaries of expenditures, budget projections, and budget allocations relative to the functions of detention and deportation. The appellant maintains information on salaries and expenses for the staff, procurement activities, funds availability, and contracting activities. [The appellant] responsibilities do not involve administration or review of apportionments and allotments, development or interpretation of budgetary policies and practices, analysis of alternative financing methods, nor analysis of methods for funds acquisition. The appellant's position does not require knowledge of laws, regulations, or policies related to budgeting or the Federal budget process, most often found in a position assigned to a regional or national budget and finance office. Therefore, the appellant's position is not classifiable to the GS-560 Budget Analysis series.

The Management and Program Analysis Series, GS-343, standard includes positions which primarily serve as analysts and advisors to management on the evaluation of the effectiveness of government programs and operations or the productivity and efficiency of the management of Federal agencies or both. Positions in this series require knowledge of the substantive nature of agency programs and activities; agency missions, policies, and objectives; management principles and processes; and the analytical and evaluative methods and techniques for assessing program development or execution and improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Some positions also require a basic understanding of general budgetary and financial management principles and techniques as they relate to long range planning of programs and objectives. The work requires skill in application of fact finding and investigative techniques; oral and written communications; and development of presentations and reports.

Although we can see some elements of the appellant's position in this standard (i.e., development of presentations and reports, a general knowledge of budgetary principles, and knowledge of the agency's mission and programs), the primary purpose of the appellant's position is to provide technical support of management

and program analysis which does not require an indepth knowledge of management principles and processes nor the analytical and evaluative methods needed for assessing program development or execution in improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Although some management and program analysts perform work similar to that performed by management and program assistants, the characteristics and requirements of the work as well as management's intent for establishing the position must be considered.

Employees who perform support or assistance work follow established procedures and methods. They may occasionally develop or recommend new procedures, but these are typically related to the employee's assignment or work unit. Support work can be based on practical knowledge of the purpose, operation, procedures, techniques, and guidelines of the specific program area or functional assignment. Support personnel typically learn to do the work on the job through what may sometimes be many years of experience.

Employees who would typically be classified in an analyst position would require a high level of analytical ability combined with a comprehensive knowledge of the functions, processes, theories, and principles of management and the methods used to gather, analyze, and evaluate information. This type of work often involves planning and developing systems, functions, and services; formulating, developing, recommending, and establishing policies, operating methods, or procedures; and adapting established policy to the unique requirements of a particular program. Skills typically would be gained through college level education or progressively responsible experience exceeding a support or technical expertise level.

The GS-344 Management and Program Clerical and Assistance Series standard includes positions involved in supervising or performing clerical and technical work in support of management and program analysis. The work requires a practical knowledge of the purposes, methods, and techniques of management and/or program analysis and the structures, functions, processes, objectives, products, services, and resource requirements of a Government program or organization.

Employees in this series perform many different kinds and combinations of work at different organizational levels. Some employees perform basic procedural tasks needed to complete management or program analysis projects and processes (i.e., maintaining, gathering, and compiling records of organizational and workflow charts, staffing levels, mission and function statements, program resource use and availability, internal audit reports, performance and management indicator reports, and/or proposed program goals, budgets, or staff levels). Work in this position might include making and verifying routine calculations such as standard cost estimates, production rates, staff hours, and workload figures. The employee

might monitor and review past and present program resource use and forecasted requirements to identify trends, compile or study reports on program workload figures and production rates, interview and observe operating personnel to collect information and produce charts of workflow patterns, or compare staff levels to identify overstaffed or understaffed occupations.

Some employees in the GS-344 series work independently to control and maintain installed administrative or information management systems (i.e., forms, records, mail, directives, or publication management systems). Most employees in this series use one or more automated systems to perform their duties, including word processing, spreadsheet, data base, project management, graphic design, and management information systems. An employee would use these automated systems to create statistical diagrams, monitor program status and funding use, calculate figures such as production rates and staff hours, or create models of offices to be used in workflow, production, space use, or other types of studies.

About 40 to 50 percent of the appellant's position involves this type of work in that [the appellant] receives, collects, assembles, and tabulates statistical data relating to monthly, quarterly, and annual reports of arrests, prosecutions, and convictions of illegal aliens. The appellant collects factual information relating to statistics, expenses, media events, and operational developments and presents this information either orally or in writing for further analysis by management staff. [The appellant] prepares statistical summaries, charts, graphs, and tables for inclusion in written reports or presentations. The appellant observes workflow processes in order to determine the most efficient and effective way of handling statistical reporting, budgetary requests, and other required reports. [The appellant] receives, posts, assembles, tabulates, and monitors expenditures in order to ensure budgetary accountability and status of funds. The appellant creates and maintains operational and administrative files in order to bring to the attention of management any trends or developments which might augment analyses of program direction and planning. [The appellant] monitors budget allocations to ensure fund maintenance and to review overtime charges.

In reviewing the type of work assignments completed by the appellant and in weighing management's intent for the position, we find that the appellant's position is properly classified to the GS-344 Management and Program Clerical and Assistance series.

Management assistants apply clerical and technical procedures, methods, and techniques to support management analysis functions involving improving the efficiency of internal administrative processes. This includes studying and recommending improvements to organizational structures, processes, or workflow, including the use of staff, funding, and other resources. Management Assistant is

the title for all positions at grade level GS-5 and above that primarily perform work in support of management analysis functions and processes.

Program Assistant is the title for all positions at GS-5 and above that primarily involve the performance of work in support of program analysis functions and processes. Program assistants support such program analysis areas as planning, analyzing, and evaluating the effectiveness of line or operating programs by developing agency program objectives, identifying required resources, measuring program progress and quality of service, and devising actions to resolve program problems in meeting goals and objectives.

The appellant's position is more clearly aligned with the functions of a management assistant. The agency has classified the position as Management Assistant (Office Automation), GS-344. The appellant believes [the] position should be a Management or Program Analyst, GS-343. We agree that the position is properly classified to the GS-344 series and properly titled Management Assistant. Office automation duties are evaluated by applying the criteria in the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide which assesses the use of office automation technology. This guide is used in combination with the GS-344 standard to evaluate the appellant's position. The parenthetical title "Office Automation" (or abbreviation OA) is added to the title of positions excluded from the Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-326, when such positions require significant knowledge of office automation systems and a fully qualified typist to perform word processing duties.

The application of the guide as it relates to the appellant's position is discussed under "Grade Level Determination" as the grade level for positions with office automation responsibilities is established by the guide or standard resulting in the highest grade level for the duties assigned.

The appellant's position also includes other duties which would be covered by different occupational series (i.e., doing purchasing and contracting, making logistical arrangements, performing matron duties in escorting or searching female detainees, and executing other clerical duties). Individually, these other duties are primarily clerical and represent less than 15 to 20 percent of the work done by the appellant. In reviewing the knowledges required of the position, the purpose of the position established, and the position's organizational function, we have determined the GS-344 series best represents the main intent of the appellant's position and the paramount knowledge required. The classification decision will be based on the GS-344 series standard and the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide.

GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION

The position is graded by reference to the grade-level criteria in the classification standard for the Management and Program Clerical and Assistance series, GS-344, and the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide. The standard and the guide use the Factor Evaluation System (FES) method which places positions in grades by comparing their duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements with nine factors common to nonsupervisory 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 and/or the benchmark job descriptions in the standard or guide. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated 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 in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor-level description in the standard or guide, 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 or guide.

The following is our evaluation of the position in terms of the criteria of the GS-344 standard.

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts which the employee must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply those knowledges. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, a knowledge must be required and applied.

The position requires the employee to be knowledgeable of detention and deportation program goals, policies, and commitments. Knowledge of general budgetary requirements and statistical reporting is needed. The position requires the employee to be skillful in oral and written communications and to have extensive capabilities with various computer programs and applications. The position also requires the employee to have practical knowledge of budget, personnel, and procurement processes and regulations; domestic and overseas travel regulations; and agency security regulations governing the safeguarding of sensitive materials.

At Level 1-4, work requires knowledge of an extensive body of management technical rules, guidelines, and regulations. This level requires knowledge of basic objectives and policies governing various management operations. Some assignments require skill in applying basic data gathering techniques (i.e., standard interviewing or surveying methods) to collect various types of factual information. Some employees use written and oral communication skills to prepare and present reports describing data collection methods, processes, or procedures and recommended improvements to management operations. Assignments may involve limited aspects of higher level work.

Illustrations of work at this level include an employee who controls the maintenance and development of various administrative directives, an employee who monitors or manages records within an organization by periodically inspecting files of other work units to ensure all records are correctly stored and labeled, an employee who uses knowledge of objectives and regulations governing staffing allowances to verify the staff levels of work units by collecting data on the quantity or type and level of positions in the units, an employee who monitors and studies the workflow of work units to gather information to assist in the design of office layouts or workflow diagrams, or an employee who tracks progress in meeting work objectives and use of resources in order to establish and maintain records of forecasted milestones and available funding of labor and equipment or supplies.

The appellant's position meets Level 1-4 in that [the appellant] maintains and develops statistical information on budget estimates, staffing levels, and workflow trends. The appellant's reports or presentations of statistics and recommendations are supplied to management officials for further analysis and decision. [The appellant's] work requires data gathering of factual information through interviews with other [installation] personnel. [The appellant] maintains budget projections through computerized spreadsheets.

Level 4 and 550 points are credited.

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibilities, and the review of completed work. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the employee, priorities and deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. Responsibility of the employee depends on the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives. The degree of review of completed work depends upon the nature and extent of

the review (e.g., close and detailed review of each phase of the assignment, detailed review of the finished assignment, spot-check of finished work for accuracy, or review only for adherence to policy).

The appellant's supervisor provides general supervision. Work assignments are derived through a recurring workload or specifically assigned by the supervisor in terms of defining objectives, priorities and deadlines. The supervisor is available to assist the appellant with unusual situations that may arise. The supervisor is kept informed of progress and completed work is reviewed from the standpoint of meeting overall objectives.

At Level 2-2, the supervisor provides instructions on what is to be done, procedures and methods to follow, data and information required, quality and quantity of work expected, and deadlines. Specific instructions for new or difficult assignments are provided. The employee independently carries out recurring clerical or technical tasks without specific instructions. The supervisor assures that finished work and methods used are technically accurate and in compliance with established instructions, methods, procedures, and deadlines (e.g., the supervisor checks recurring reports for inclusion of required information, accuracy of data and calculations, and adherence to prescribed formats). Review of work increases with more difficult assignments.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor defines objectives, priorities, and deadlines for assignments. Assistance is provided to the employee when unusual situations or problems arise that do not have clear precedents. The employee plans and carries out the successive steps associated with an analysis project or assignment and handles problems or deviations in accordance with instructions, policies, previous training, or accepted practices. For example, the employee independently determines the types and sources of information required for reports and whether standard data gathering techniques are appropriate for assignments. The supervisor evaluates reports and completed assignments for technical soundness, appropriateness of conclusions or recommendations, consistency, relevance of support materials, and compliance with policies and requirements. Methods used in arriving at the end result are not reviewed in detail.

The appellant's position meets Level 2-2. The appellant works independently in developing reports, statistical summaries, and graphs of budget estimates, staffing levels, and other resource needs. Most of [the appellant's] duties evolve from a recurring workload, including the study of collected data and making recommendations to [the appellant's] supervisor and other management officials based on [the appellant's] analysis of the information. Although the appellant's supervisor does not routinely review the methods used in the analysis or data

collection performed by the appellant, it is not necessary because of the appellant's experience and the recurrence of similar work products. The appellant's position does not meet Level 2-3 as her workload does not require the innovation or independence demonstrated at this level in selecting methods, processes, or procedures to be used in completing a task. The appellant's assignments in any one area of [the appellant's] position tend to be similar in nature to one another (e.g., budget projections and analyses are based on recurring activities surrounding the funding, staffing, and resource levels).

The appellant's position meets Level 2-2 and 175 points are credited.

Factor 3, Guidelines

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

At Level 3-3, guidelines lack specificity due to unique or complicated characteristics of assignments. Standard procedures for tracking project status require frequent modification due to fluctuations in budgets, production goals, workload, or staff levels. The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines to apply to specific situations (i.e., determining the cause of deviations from established production rates or resource use).

Although the appellant uses standard guidelines for procurement and contract compliance (Federal Procurement Regulations), [the appellant] has developed other forms, manuals, training materials, and procedures to use in doing budget projections, renewing contracts, and monitoring resource uses and processes.

Level 3 and 275 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 the 4-3 level, the employee performs assignments involving different and unrelated management or program analysis technical processes and procedures. Assignments or projects may involve various actions or steps that are not completely standardized or prescribed in instructions or guidelines; adaptation or modification of established procedures and methods; various types and sources of information; nonrecurring problems, trends, or issues; or management operations with changing conditions (e.g., work units with periodic changes in workloads,

budgets, staff levels, or work processes). Examples of assignments include the review of various new or existing administrative directives to determine conflicts or possibilities of consolidation; the study of work processes of work units with different functions or objectives to identify areas needing improvement; the study of changes in production rates to determine the nature and extent of deviations; or the review of progress in projects with different schedules and resource allocations to identify missed project milestones or to forecast resource availability.

The employee selects, adapts, and applies the most suitable procedures or methods to collect and analyze various types of information, formulate conclusions, define needs, and/or make recommendations for problem resolution to higher level employees or management.

The appellant's position meets Level 4-3 in that her assignments involve reviewing or studying processes to ensure adequate funding levels, staffing levels, and physical resources. [The appellant] makes recommendations on expenditures for staffing and other resources, based on information gathered from various sources. The appellant reports any trends or developments which may enable management to make decisions on program direction or planning. [The appellant] researches background information that provides [the appellant's] with the ability to maintain efficient workflow and reporting processes. The appellant researches court decisions on deportation and mandatory housing vs. non-mandatory detention.

Level 3 and 150 points are credited.

Factor 5, Scope and Effect

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

At Level 5-2, the purpose of the work is to apply specific rules, regulations, or procedures to perform a full range of clerical or technical tasks, duties, and assignments. Assignments typically comprise a complete segment of a broad management or program analysis project, study, or process.

Work affects the accuracy, reliability, quality, and timeliness of management products, recommendations, studies, projects, and processes. Some of the work affects the consistent use and control of publications, forms, records, directives, or other systems in local offices and organizations with similar administrative or information management needs.

At Level 5-3, the purpose of the work is to plan and carry out assignments or projects to improve the efficiency and productivity of organizations or program operations. Employees use established methods, practices, and criteria to identify, study, and recommend solutions for resolving conventional problems or questions.

Work affects the design of organizational structures and workflow; the evaluation and improvement of operating program efficiency and effectiveness; the use and management of staff, funding, equipment, and other resources; and the design or use of similar management or program operations. Some of the work also affects the management of administrative or information systems throughout a wide range of offices or organizations with different administrative or information management needs.

The appellant's position exceeds Level 5-2, but does not fully meet Level 5-3. The appellant's assignments impact the use of staff, funding, equipment, and other resources as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of operations within [the appellant's] immediate organization (including the other offices with which she works in the [installation]). However, to meet Level 5-3, the range of offices and management levels affected would have to be much broader. This might be more appropriate to a position located in a regional or national office. The impact of the appellant's work is more limited.

Level 2 and 75 points are credited.

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

This factor includes face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place. Above the lowest level, points should be credited under this factor only for contacts which are essential for successful performance of the work and which have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the work performed. In General Schedule occupations, the purpose of personal contacts may range from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives.

At Level 6-1, contacts are with employees within the immediate organization, office, project, or work unit, and in related work units. Contacts typically include other support personnel, management analysts, program analysts, administrative officers, or managers. Contacts may also be with members of the general public in very structured situations (e.g., the employee may contact a vendor to determine shipping dates or status of orders).

Contacts at Level 6-2 are with employees in the same agency, but outside the immediate organization. Persons contacted are managers, employees, and other representatives of the programs involved or organizations served. Contacts may also be with members of the general public, as individuals or groups, in moderately structured settings (e.g., the employee may contact contractors to obtain justifications for project delays).

The appellant's contacts are primarily with employees within [the appellant's] immediate organization or in related support units. Typically, [the appellant's] contacts would include other [installation] personnel and managers. [The appellant] has some contact with the detainees in [the appellant's] limited assignments as a ["supervisor" of detainees]. The appellant may also contact vendors and contractors to follow up on orders or contract terms. [The appellant] contacts medical offices, lodging facilities, and other logistical organizations to arrange for treating, housing, or transporting detainees. This meets Level 6-2.

At Level 7-a, contacts are made to obtain, clarify, or provide facts or information. Contacts made at the 7-b level generally are to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts; discuss significant findings; or resolve operating problems by influencing or motivating individuals or groups who are working toward mutual goals.

The appellant's position fully meets Level 7-a. The contacts described at Level 7-b would require a higher level of influence than is expected of the appellant's position. The appellant presents information to management, and the decisions are made at the managerial level based on straightforward facts and recommendations given by the appellant. Little influence or motivation would be exerted by the appellant in these situations.

In this standard, we match the level of regular and recurring contacts with the purpose of those contacts in order to credit an appropriate point value for these factor levels. Levels 6-2 and 7-a are assigned to the appellant's position and 45 points are credited in total for the two factors.

Factor 8, Physical Demands

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

At level 8-1, the work is generally sedentary and requires no special demands, although there may be some nominal walking or standing for short periods of time, or carrying of light loads (i.e., paper, books, reports) that require only moderate physical ability and physical stress. The appellant's position meets Level 8-1.

Level 1 and 5 points are credited.

Factor 9, Work Environment

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

At Level 9-1, the work involves common risks or discomforts, requiring normal safety precautions typical of offices, meeting rooms, libraries, and similar areas.

The appellant's position meets Level 9-1. Although occasionally the appellant is exposed to possible risk in [the appellant's] role as [supervisor of detainees], this assignment is not a routine part of [the appellant's] job. [The appellant] is called upon to serve in this role only when [a specific gender of] agents are unavailable to conduct a search of or to escort a [a specific gender of] detainee. Therefore, no additional points are credited above the 9-1 level.

Level 1 and 5 points are credited.

Summary of Factor Levels

	Factor	Level	Points
1	Knowledge Required of Position	1-4	550
2	Supervisory Controls	2-2	125
3	Guidelines	3-3	275
4	Complexity	4-3	150
5	Scope and Effect	5-2	75
6	Personal Contacts & Purpose of Contacts	6-1	30
7		7-a	
8	Physical Demands	8-1	5
9	Work Environment	9-1	5
TOTAL POINTS			1230

Based on the grade conversion table contained in the GS-344 standard, 1230 points equate to a GS-6.

The following is our evaluation of the position in terms of the criteria of the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide.

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position

In evaluating this factor, the actual demands placed on the employee must be carefully identified. The presence and availability of hardware and software is not enough to determine the knowledge required of a position. We are looking for the actual use of the hardware and software by the employee. Work performed in a structured setting may require memorizing formats, processing instructions, and equipment operations, but require little or no understanding of the software package or operating system. A less structured setting requires a more intimate knowledge of the software (e.g., the software package provides more than one way to accomplish a function thus requiring the employee to recognize a need to look for the most efficient method of accomplishing an assignment). Evaluation of this factor requires looking beyond the processes performed by the employee to what the employee must know to accomplish the processes.

At Level 1-4, knowledge of the capabilities, operating characteristics, and advanced functions of a variety of types of office automation software (e.g., database, spreadsheet, word processing) is required. This level of knowledge is applied to select the most appropriate software type for a specific office need, to integrate different software types into a single document, to devise new methods of automated office support (i.e., a spreadsheet to keep track of office operating expenses), to resolve problems with current automated support methods, or to complete other nonstandard assignments using varied office automation technologies.

Illustrations of knowledge applied at this level include developing a method for automating administrative reports, considering the interrelationship of reports and multiple uses of the data; determining data categories to be established in a database or spreadsheet by identifying the sorting and calculating functions to be performed and the informational reports to be generated; using desktop publishing to prepare presentation materials (e.g., news releases, reports, brochures); or merging graphs, tables, spreadsheets, or graphics with word processing products to more fully illustrate factual information.

The appellant's position meets Level 1-4 in that [the] maintains and develops statistical information on budget estimates, staffing levels, and workflow trends by using spreadsheets to prepare graphs, charts, and reports. The appellant's knowledge of various programs is also illustrated by [the appellant's] ability to train other organization employees on use of various programs and applications, including Lotus and WordPerfect.

Level 4 and 550 points are credited.

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibilities, and the review of completed work. Responsibility of the employee depends on the extent to which the employee is expected to develop work assignments. The degree of review of completed work depends upon the nature and extent of the review (e.g., close and detailed review of each phase of the assignment, detailed review of the finished assignment, spot-check of finished work for accuracy, or review only for adherence to policy).

The appellant's supervisor provides general supervision. Work assignments are derived through a recurring workload or specifically assigned by the supervisor in terms of defining objectives, priorities and deadlines. The supervisor is available to assist the employee with unusual situations that may arise. The supervisor is

kept informed of progress and completed work is reviewed from the standpoint of meeting overall objectives.

At Level 2-3, assignments are given with information on general administrative changes, deadlines, or priorities. The employee works independently to plan and carry out steps for completing assignments in accordance with established office instructions and practices for office automation. The employee uses initiative to resolve nonstandard problems. Completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, usefulness, and conformance with office requirements and needs. The methods used to produce the work are not normally reviewed.

The appellant's position meets Level 2-3. The appellant works independently in developing reports, statistical summaries, and graphs of budget estimates, staffing levels, and other resource needs. Although many of [the appellant's] duties evolve from a recurring workload, the appellant is responsible for gathering, organizing, and sometimes presenting data to management. This usually involves the use of spreadsheets, graphs, charts, and graphics. The appellant's supervisor does not routinely review the methods used in the appellant's office automation activities, but is more concerned with the conclusions reached, recommendations made, and materials presented.

Level 3 and 275 points are credited.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. Users manuals are issued with software packages and many programs also offer on-screen tutorials and "help" functions. Such guidelines are definitive if an employee knows the specific actions needed. On the other hand, if the actions needed are unknown, the employee must search tutorials or manuals for possible approaches.

At Level 3-3, guidelines require adaptation of available guides to meet requirements for new tasks or to solve processing problems. Problems that cannot be resolved in this manner are referred to automation specialists. Illustrations of this level include an employee who plans and develops a systematic method for naming, identifying, and retrieving information to resolve problems in locating and retrieving electronically stored information; creates new macros to simplify formatting of reports; modifies existing procedures to enable the importation of data from a graphics package to word processing documents; selects the most appropriate software for automating office work based on the nature of work and capabilities of available software; or provides instructions for other employees on

the methods and procedures for using a variety of software packages and integrating them with other software or applications.

The appellant's position meets Level 3-3 in that [the appellant's] work requires the ability to research and adapt guidelines in order to compile documents or prepare presentations using a variety of software programs and applications. The appellant also provides training to other staff members on software applications.

Level 3 and 275 points are credited.

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the variety of textual documents processed in terms of the intricacy of the formats involved and the extent to which the employee must make modifications. Applying the varying software types together in interrelated ways adds to the difficulty of the work (e.g., converting a spreadsheet into a graph and importing it into a word processing document is more difficult than printing out the spreadsheet and attaching it as a separate page to the word processing document).

At the 4-2 level, the documents, formats, and specific processing functions involved require a varying number and sequence of steps and use of different functions from one assignment to another. Assignments at this level might involve using two or more types of software (e.g., word processing and spreadsheets) to process different types of documents that can be combined in a number of ways. The employee must recognize differences in existing procedures and applications to make choices from established alternatives in deciding how to proceed. For example, the employee would choose the specific software package(s) to use, the format required for the document or different sections of a document, or the font(s) to use for the best presentation.

Procedures required to complete assignments are varied and differ in terms of software used, document produced, and format required. Examples include an employee who assembles varied documents for procurement or contracting actions by combining handwritten materials and electronic drafts with standard clauses or exhibits, performs word processing for a group of engineers which usually involves complicated or technical material, maintains administrative records for the unit using a database and selection of information from a variety of sources (i.e., travel vouchers, personnel forms, time and leave cards, training records, or budget records), or assembles information for standard and nonstandard reports or documents selecting from among established procedures for locating, retrieving, and manipulating the data to meet the requirements of the documents.

The appellant's position meets Level 4-2 in that [the appellant's] assignments typically involve the use of a variety of software programs to assemble procurement and contract actions or to maintain statistical data for generating reports on budget levels, staffing levels, funding projections, expenditures, and resource levels. The appellant uses judgment in determining formats, fonts, and software programs and applications to use.

Level 2 and 75 points are credited.

Factor 5, Scope and Effect

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

At Level 5-2, the purpose of the work is to collect, select, organize, and provide information in oral or written form. This may involve telephone conversations, electronic mail, reports, or on-line databases. Work is performed in accordance with established rules, regulations, procedures, and office automation practices. The work affects the way in which other employees document, store, receive, or transmit information, and it increases the availability and usefulness of the information involved.

The appellant's position meets Level 5-2. The appellant's assignments involve the collection, selection, organization, and provision of information to other staff members, primarily management. The appellant uses established practices in gathering, organizing, and presenting the data. Her work increases the availability and usefulness to management of information on funding, staffing, and other resources.

Level 2 and 75 points are credited.

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

This factor includes face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place. The purpose of personal contacts may range from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives.

At Level 6-1, contacts are with employees in the immediate work unit or related support units. At Level 6-2, personal contacts are with employees at various levels throughout the agency who are involved in or affected by integrating or changing automated office procedures.

The appellant's position meets Level 6-1. The position does not meet Level 6-2 as the appellant's contacts regarding office automation changes at other levels throughout the agency would be rare.

At Level 7-a, the purpose of contacts is to exchange information about the assignment or methods to be used to complete an assignment (e.g., to clarify terminology or discuss additions or revisions). At Level 7-b, the purpose of contacts is to plan, coordinate, and integrate work processes or work methods for office automation between and among related work units. The appellant's position meets Level 7-a in the area of office automation. Little coordination would be needed to integrate office automation work methods among other offices.

In this guide, we match the level of regular and recurring contacts with the purpose of those contacts in order to credit an appropriate point value for these factor levels. Level 6-1 and 7-a are assigned to the appellant's position and 30 points are credited in total for the two factors.

Factor 8, Physical Demands

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

At level 8-1, the work is generally sedentary and requires no special demands. The appellant's position meets Level 8-1.

Level 1 and 5 points are credited.

Factor 9, Work Environment

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

At Level 9-1, the work involves minimal risks and observance of safety precautions typical of office settings. The appellant's position meets Level 9-1.

Level 1 and 5 points are credited.

Summary of Factor Levels

Factor	Level	Points
1 Knowledge Required of Position	1-4	550
2 Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3 Guidelines	3-3	275
4 Complexity	4-2	75
5 Scope and Effect	5-2	75
6 Personal Contacts & Purpose of Contacts 7	6-1 7-a	30
8 Physical Demands	8-1	5
9 Work Environment	9-1	5
TOTAL POINTS		1290

Based on the grade conversion table contained in the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, 1290 points equate to a GS-6.

DECISION

The controlling duties of the position are in the Management Assistant occupation. The office automation responsibilities are significant enough to incorporate "office automation" in the appellant's title. The factor levels for both the standard and the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide equate to GS-6. Therefore, the appellant's position is properly classified as Management Assistant (OA), GS-344-6.