

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

Atlanta Oversight Division  
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972  
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

**Appellant:** [appellant's name]

**Agency classification:** Administrative Assistant  
GS-341-9

**Organization:** United States Air Force

**OPM decision:** Administrative Assistant  
GS-341-9

**OPM Decision No.:** C-0341-09-01

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Kathy W. Day  
Classification Appeals Officer  
2/26/99

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

Decision sent to:

[appellant name and address]

[appellant's agency name and address]

Director of Civilian Personnel  
HQ USAF/DPCC  
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Washington, DC 20330-1040

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Chief, Classification Branch  
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## **Introduction**

On November 13, 1998, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Administrative Assistant, GS-341-9, [agency's location- city and state]. The appellant is requesting that her position be changed to Administrative Assistant, GS-341-11.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

## **General issues**

The appellant has made several attempts to have her position upgraded. On August 22, 1996, [the agency] evaluated the position and classified it as Administrative Officer, GS-341-9; on May 17, 1997, the [another division] provided a classification advisory sustaining the position as Administrative Officer, GS-341-9; and on March 2, 1998, [agency's] Civilian Personnel Office evaluated the position again with no change.

The appellant and the supervisor both provided rationale in support of an upgrade. The appellant disagrees with Factors 1, 2, and 4 of the classification advisory due to the current version of the position description and the supervisor's grade substantiation. The appellant believes that the latest evaluation fails to address the criteria in the factor-level descriptions.

## **Position information**

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

The appellant serves as the Administrative Officer for the United States Air Force (USAF) Civilian Personnel School. She is responsible for all administrative functions including developing the financial plan and the executing the budget; coordinating the annual training plan; handling procurement, facility and space management, repairs and maintenance; and providing other administrative support services for students, faculty, and guests. The appellant is a member of the Quality Management Team and provides advice and makes recommendations to the team concerning all aspects of her work. She supervises two full time subordinates and one summer aide in the administrative support unit of the school.

The appellant receives direction from the Supervisory Personnel Management Specialist who assigns work projects by defining the scope of the responsibilities. The appellant works independently within the parameters of established policy and regulations for budget, procurement, logistics, and support services. She determines the approach to be followed and resolves most problems which arise in the course of the work. She advises her superiors of potential controversial findings or problems and consults with them on unusual situations she encounters. Completed work is reviewed for conformance, compliance, and effectiveness in achieving objectives.

## **Standard determination**

Administrative Officer Series, GS-341, August 1966.  
Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide, August 1990.  
Budget Analysis Series, GS-560, July 1981.  
Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, June 1989.

## **Series determination**

The appellant does not contest the placement of her position in the Administrative Officer Series, GS-341, which covers positions responsible for providing or obtaining a variety of management services essential to the direction and operation of an organization. The paramount qualifications required are extensive knowledge and understanding of management principles, practices, methods and techniques, and skill in integrating management services with the general management of an organization. We agree that the GS-341 series is the most appropriate series for the appellant's position.

## **Title determination**

The GS-341 standard states that the title *Administrative Officer* is the proper title for all non-trainee positions.

## **Grade determination**

The appellant's position includes a mix of duties including supervisory responsibility. The appellant's supervisory work requires less than 25 percent of her time and is, therefore, not grade-impacting. The remaining duties include analytical, coordinative, and work planning which will be evaluated using the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide; budget preparation and execution which will be evaluated using the Budget Analyst Series, GS-560, standard; and a variety of administrative support responsibilities which will be evaluated using the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work. The position is evaluated as follows:

### **Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide:**

The Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide is used to evaluate the appellant's duties relating to resource management, procurement, and logistics management. This standard is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to non-supervisory General Schedule positions.

A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor 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, 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.

Under FES, positions which significantly exceed the highest factor level or fail to meet the lowest factor level described in a classification standard must be evaluated by reference to the Primary Standard, contained in Appendix 3 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards. The Primary Standard is the "standard-for-standards" for FES.

The appellant disagrees with the agency evaluation of factors 1, 2, and 4. We have reviewed factors 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 and agree with the agency evaluation of those factors. Therefore, only the factors contested by the appellant will be addressed in the appeal decision.

#### Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position:

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

The agency evaluated this factor at Level 1-6.

At Level 1-6, positions require skill in applying analytical and evaluative techniques to the identification, consideration, and resolution of issues or problems of a procedural or factual nature, dealing with readily observable conditions. Included at this level is knowledge of the theory and principles of management and organization, including administrative practices and procedures common to organizations. Assignments typically involve using qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques such as literature search; work measurement; task analysis and job structuring; productivity charting; staff to workload ratios; organization design; space planning; and similar methods. Assignments also require skill in conducting interviews to obtain information.

At Level 1-7, in addition to knowledge described at the previous level, assignments require knowledge and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to issues or studies concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations carried out by administrative or professional personnel, or substantive administrative support functions. This level includes knowledge of pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and precedents which affect the use of program and related support resources. Projects and studies typically require knowledge of the major issues, program goals and objectives, work processes, and administrative operations of the organization. This knowledge is used to plan, schedule, and conduct projects and studies to evaluate and recommend ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or support setting. The assignments require knowledge and skill in adapting analytical techniques and evaluation criteria to the measurement and improvement of program effectiveness or organizational productivity. Knowledge is applied in developing new or modified work methods, organizational structures, records and files, management processes, staffing patterns, procedures for administering program services, guidelines and procedures, and automating work processes.

Similar to Level 1-6, the appellant applies a knowledge of conventional and well-documented analytical techniques in performing her work. She must be knowledgeable of procedures, practices, rules, and regulations for a variety of administrative duties such as procurement, facility management

and course scheduling to ensure that the needs of the organization are met. She serves as a coordinator and focal point for identifying the services required and resolving procedural issues.

The appellant's work approaches Level 1-7, however, the full intent is not met. The appellant does not develop or modify work methods, organizational structures, records and files, management processes, or perform similar tasks affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations. The focus of her work is on gathering information from others, facilitating the flow of information between parties, and preparing cost projections; and providing service to the faculty and students in dealing with the administrative issues of the school policies and procedures. For example, the appellant's function is to ensure that the services desired by faculty and staff are services the school is authorized to provide, as well as within established budgetary guidelines.

Level 1-6 is credited for 950 points.

#### Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls:

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility for carrying out assignments, and how completed work is reviewed. The agency credited Level 2-3 for this factor.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor assigns specific projects in terms of issues, organizations, functions, or work processes to be studied and sets deadlines for completing the work. The supervisor or higher-graded analyst provides assistance on controversial issues or on the application of qualitative or quantitative methods to the study of subjects for which precedent studies are not available. The employee plans, coordinates, and carries out the successive steps in fact-finding and analysis of issues necessary to complete each phase of assigned projects. Work problems are normally resolved by the employee without reference to the supervisor, in accordance with accepted office policies, applicable precedents, organizational concepts, management theory, and occupational training. Work is reviewed for conformance with overall requirements as well as contribution to the objectives of the study. Completed work products are also reviewed for consistency, choice of analytical methods, and practicality of recommendations.

At Level 2-4, the employee and supervisor develop a mutually acceptable project plan identifying the work to be done, the scope of the project, and deadlines for completion. The employee plans and organizes the study within the parameters of the approved project plan, estimates costs, coordinates with staff and line management, and conducts all phases of the project. This frequently involves definitive interpretation of regulations and study procedures, and the initial application of new methods. The employee informs the supervisor of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems; and completed work is reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organization's goals and guidelines and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives. Completed work is also critically reviewed outside the employee's immediate office by management officials whose programs and employees would be affected by the recommendations.

Similar to Level 2-3, the appellant's duties and responsibilities are ongoing and continuing. The supervisor rarely assigns special projects. The appellant's work is performed following well established procedures, regulations, and policies, and controversial or policy issues are discussed with

the supervisor prior to final commitments being made. The appellant functions with considerable independence in carrying out the recurring aspects of the work, and she resolves most problems encountered by application of established policies and precedents.

Level 2-4 is not met. The appellant's work assignments do not typically require her to make definitive interpretations of regulations and procedures, apply new work methods, or resolve the more controversial problems. The supervisor makes final decisions on issues which are controversial or for which no precedents exist. The appellant makes decisions on recurring problems. There is no evidence that her work is reviewed outside of her immediate office by other officials.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

#### Factor 4 - Complexity:

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work. The agency credited Level 4-3 for this factor.

At Level 4-3, the work principally involves dealing with problems and relationships of a procedural nature rather than the substance of work operations, issues, or other subjects studied. At this level, the employee analyzes the issues in the assignment and selects and applies accepted analytical techniques. Projects usually take place within organizations with related functions and objectives, although organization and work procedures differ from one assignment to the next. Typically, the employee prepares a narrative report containing a statement of the issue or problem, background, observations, options for change, and recommendations for action. Findings and recommendations are based on analysis of work observations, review of records or other documents, research of precedent studies, and application of standard administrative guidelines.

At Level 4-4, the work involves gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues, and developing recommendations to resolve substantive problems of effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or program support setting, in addition to improving conditions of a procedural nature. This level requires the application of qualitative and quantitative techniques which frequently require modification to fit a wider range of variables than is found at Level 4-3. Subjects and projects assigned at this level usually consist of issues, problems, or concepts which are not always susceptible to direct observation and analysis, and difficulty is encountered in measuring effectiveness and productivity due to variations in the nature of administrative processes studied. Information about the subject is often conflicting or incomplete, cannot be readily obtained by direct means, or is otherwise difficult to document. Characteristic of this level is originality in refining existing work methods and techniques for application to the analysis of specific issues or resolution of problems.

Similar to Level 4-3, the appellant's work largely involves using accepted methods and techniques to handle the procedural aspects of logistics and support services for the school. The appellant performs a variety of tasks that require different steps and procedures. For example, she prepares work orders for all service and repairs; takes action to dispose of or replace obsolete or faulty equipment; controls, develops, and plans facility space and reconfiguration; controls student, faculty, and speaker logistics

and protocol; assesses school's needs and devises procurement procedures for the school. Typically, the appellant's responsibility extends to ensuring that the desired services are reimbursed where governing regulations allow for or require reimbursement.

Level 4-4 is not met. The appellant's work involves gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues such as the number of students to enroll, space availability, facility upgrades, course availability and what other administrative services are required. Although the appellant performs a considerable number of duties, her duties do not compare to the substantive problems encountered at Level 4-4. Typical of the problems that the appellant resolves are arranging for repair of heating or air conditioning systems, rearranging classes or adjusting classroom schedules when students do not show up. Such issues may create unexpected circumstances; however, they do not directly and immediately involve substantive program issues that cannot be readily resolved.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 points.

<b>SUMMARY</b>		
<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-6	950
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	3b	110
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	1920

A total of 1920 points falls within the range for GS-9, 1855 to 2100 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide.

### **Budget Analysis Series, GS-560:**

The GS-560 standard is used to evaluate the appellant's budget preparation and execution work. This standard is also written in the FES format. Since this work does not exceed the GS-9 level, an abbreviated evaluation is provided.

### Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position:

Level 1-6 is met, where the work requires a good knowledge of commonly used budgetary methods, practices, procedures, regulations, precedents, policies, and other agency guides. This level of knowledge permits the independent performance of routine, continuing assignments in an organizational component or echelon with no subordinate budget offices. The work also requires a good practical knowledge of the mission, functions, goals, objectives, work processes, and sources of funding of assigned budget activities to relate needs and accomplishments to anticipated and actual funding, using readily available historical data. The appellant's work involves the application of established budget practices and available historical data in the development of budget estimates and the execution of approved budgets for the school.

Level 1-7 is not met, where the work requires detailed, intensive knowledge of the budgetary policies, precedents, goals, objectives, regulations, and guidelines of the agency; the sources, types, and methods of funding assigned organizations and programs; and the relationships between assigned budgets and budgets and programs of other agency components. This level of knowledge and skill is used to analyze and evaluate the effects of continuing changes in program plans and funding and in analyzing budgetary relationships. In contrast, the appellant's position involves developing and executing the budget for a single program with relatively simple funding and few interrelationships. The intent of Level 1-7 is not met.

Level 1-6 is credited for 950 points.

### Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls:

Level 2-3 is met, where work assignments typically involve continuing responsibility for specific areas of the budget and are accompanied by instructions on budget and program priorities, objectives, and deadlines. At this level, the employee independently plans and carries out assignments involving standard practices and resolves common problems, and work products are reviewed by the supervisor for soundness. Similar to Level 2-3, the appellant performs recurring budget work following standard procedures and policies.

Level 2-4 is not met, where the work involves continual performance of budgetary functions in one or more phases of the budget process for substantive programs or activities, with independent responsibility for planning and carrying out the work within overall policies and budgetary objectives. The employee at Level 2-4 is responsible for resolving ambiguous and conflicting policies and program objectives, selecting work methods to be used, and for informing the supervisor of potentially controversial or far-reaching implications. Unlike Level 2-4, the appellant's work involves budgeting for administrative programs with relatively simple funding and few controversial issues. She does not have responsibility for resolving policy issues but refers such matters to her supervisor for decision.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

### Factor 3 - Guidelines:

Level 3-3 is met, where the guidelines include budget policies, precedents, and regulations which are not always specifically applicable to the specific situation encountered, and the employee must use judgment in interpreting, adapting, and applying the guidelines. Similar to Level 3-3, the appellant applies general guidelines and specific precedents to assignments. She is expected to interpret and apply the general guides to the specific situations encountered and to independently resolve problems in the application of the guidelines.

Level 3-4 is not met, where the guidelines include budget circulars, directives, and regulations issued by the Office of Management and Budget and similar guides which require substantial interpretation and adaptation to fit specific situations. In contrast, the appellant's guidelines are published by her agency and provide specific instructions for application which limit the appellant's discretion. The intent of Level 3-4 is not met, and that level cannot be credited.

Level 3-3 is credited for 275 points.

### Factor 4 - Complexity:

Level 4-3 is met, where assignments involve the application of different and unrelated methods, practices, and techniques of budgeting for organizations which remain relatively stable from year to year. At this level, funding is from readily identifiable sources, and the employee is required to compile, analyze, and summarize budgetary information pertaining to administrative expenses or services. Recommendations are based on factual considerations relating to program activities and available funding. Similar to Level 4-3, the appellant's budgetary activities relate to administrative programs which do not encounter significant fluctuations in program effort or funding from year to year, and her decisions and recommendations are largely based on factual information and historical data.

Level 4-4 is not met, where the work involves a wide variety of budget administration functions for substantive programs funded through many separate sources, characterized by unstable funding and the need for frequent adjustments to budget estimates and budget accounts. Work at this level requires significant analysis using a variety of analytical techniques. In contrast, the appellant's budget work involves appropriated funds in a program with relatively stable funding levels and little need for the use of complex analytical techniques, since budget estimates are largely based on historical data. The intent of Level 4-4 is not met.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 points.

### Factor 5 - Scope and Effect:

Level 5-3 is met, where the work involves the application of a wide range of standardized, widely accepted budgetary regulations, practices, and procedures typical of one or more phases of the annual budget process. Work at this level affects the amount and timely availability of funds. The appellant's work involves the application of established budget formulation and execution practices, and affects the availability of funding to support the school.

Level 5-4 is not met, where the purpose of the work is to formulate and monitor the execution of long-range detailed budget forecasts affecting the availability of funding to support major substantive programs. Recommendations and technical interpretations at this level affect the amount and availability of funds for the conduct of major substantive or administrative programs and services. The appellant's budget work typically involves single-year budgets with long-range projections and does not affect programs of the scope described at Level 5-4.

Level 5-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts:

Level 6-1 is met, where contacts are with co-workers within the employing office and with other employees in functionally related support offices. The appellant's personal contacts relating to budget work are with personnel in the school.

Level 6-2 is not met, where contacts are with persons from outside the immediate organization but within the same Federal agency or major component thereof.

Level 6-1 is credited for 10 points.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts:

Level 7-2 is met, where contacts are made to resolve budgetary issues and problems and to carry out budget transactions to achieve mutually agreed upon financial and program objectives. The appellant's contacts are made to resolve budget-related problems and to provide advice and assistance in budget formulation and execution.

Level 7-3 is not met, where contacts are made to persuade program managers and others with differing goals and interests to follow a recommended course of action. The appellant's personal contacts typically do not involve elements of persuasion.

Level 7-2 is credited for 50 points.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands:

The appellant's work is typically performed while seated and requires minimal physical effort such as carrying books and files. This meets Level 8-1, where the work is sedentary, usually performed while seated, and may require some walking and light carrying. This is the highest level illustrated in the standard.

Level 8-1 is credited for 5 points.

Factor 9 - Work Environment:

The appellant's work is performed in an office environment. This meets Level 9-1, where the work is performed in offices, conference rooms, libraries, and similar settings. This is the highest level illustrated in the standard.

Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

<b>SUMMARY</b>		
<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-6	950
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6. Personal Contacts	6-1	10
7. Purpose of Contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1870</b>

A total of 1870 points falls within the range for GS-9, 1855 to 2100 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-560 standard.

#### **Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work:**

This guide covers the work of processing transactions and performing various office support and miscellaneous clerical and assistance duties within a framework of procedures, precedents, or instructions.

The appellant performs a variety of administrative functions in support of the USAF Civilian Personnel School which do not require the application of significant analytical skills or conceptual knowledge. These functions include:

- Coordinating office equipment, repair, and service;
- Coordinating travel arrangements, billeting, and other non-instructional requests; and
- Allocating space.

These duties generally require knowledge of established regulations, policies, and procedures, rather than the application of analytical concepts. Such work is evaluated against the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work.

Work at the GS-7 level involves problems or situations common to an assigned segment of a program or function which require skill to recognize the dimensions of the problem or situation, collect information, establish facts, and take or recommend actions based on established guidelines. Work at the GS-7 level is performed independently following established and accepted practices. The appellant's responsibilities for the identified functions do not exceed the GS-7 level described in the guide, since they involve the application of established rules and procedures or involve recommending actions based on knowledge of established rules and procedures.

### **Summary**

The appellant performs analytical work evaluated at GS-9, budget work evaluated at GS-9, and administrative assistant work evaluated at not more than GS-7. Therefore, the position is properly classified at GS-9, which is the highest level of work performed for at least 25 percent of the time.

### **Decision**

This position is properly classified as Administrative Officer, GS-341-9.