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

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Personnel Clerk
GS-203-4

Organization: Recruitment Unit
Customer Service and Support Section
Transactional Processing Branch
[activity name] Site
Directorate of Support Services
[name] Region
Internal Revenue Service
U.S. Department of the Treasury
[location]

OPM decision: Personnel Clerk
GS-203-4

OPM decision number: C-0203-04-02

Robert D. Hendler
Classification Appeals Officer

/s/ 8/16/00

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

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name]
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Introduction

On March 7, 2000, the Philadelphia Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant's name]. Her position is currently classified as Personnel Clerk, GS-203-4. However, the appellant believes the classification should be Personnel Clerk, GS-203-5. She works in the Recruitment Unit, Customer Service and Support Section, Transactional Processing Branch, [name] Host Site, Directorate of Support Services, [name] Region, Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury, [location]. We accepted and decided her appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

When she filed her appeal, the appellant occupied a Personnel Actions Clerk, GS-203-4, position (Standard Position Description (SPD) #91810). She disputed her proposed reassignment to GS-303-4 position (SPD #92108), saying that SPD does not describe the specific duties that she performed. She documented her efforts to have her PD of record reviewed and corrected. The agency audited the appellant's position on June 18, 2000. The position was reclassified as Personnel Clerk, GS-203-4 and the appellant was reassigned to the new SPD (#93076). The appellant agrees that SPD #93076 is essentially accurate. Based on our review, we find that it contains the major duties and responsibilities of the position and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

The appellant maintains that she is frequently called upon to correct, and thereby actually perform, the work of higher graded employees. The appellant also maintains that she is qualified for promotion to GS-203-5 based on her time-in-grade, experience, performance evaluations, and duties performed. While an employee may be qualified for a promotion, by law we must classify positions solely by comparing their duties and responsibilities to OPM (PCS's) and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Other methods or factors of evaluation are not authorized for use in determining the classification of a position, e.g., comparisons to the duties and responsibilities of other positions that may or may not be classified correctly. The performance management and recognition programs cover issues concerning quality of performance. These issues are not covered by or germane to the classification appeal process.

In her May 4, 2000, letter to us, the appellant said that an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) action was filed on her behalf in December 1998, protesting her removal from a night shift tour of duty and placing her on day shift. She also said that management failed to respond appropriately to grievances she had filed. The appellant stated that she was denied a promotion to GS-5 while on night shift because, according to management, testing was a requirement for such a promotion and night shift employees were not given an opportunity to be tested. A classification appeal is limited to determining the proper classification of the work assigned to and performed by the appellant. These grievances and ULP actions are not reviewable through the classification appeal process.

The appellant also said that she has been called upon to explain her duties and responsibilities, and the procedures she uses to perform them, to new higher graded employees unfamiliar with

her organization. In an organization, others not familiar with the work of a unit require orientation. Explaining the work an employee performs has the same grade level worth as performing the work.

We conducted telephone audits with the appellant on July 24 and 26, 2000, and a telephone interview with the appellant's first-level supervisor, [name], on July 25, 2000. In deciding this appeal, we fully considered the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and her agency, including her current PD of record.

Position information

The appellant processes in new employees. She assists them in completing all required appointment documents. She reviews forms for completeness and may contact applicants to correct discrepancies between applicant submissions. She prepares Official Personnel Folders (OPF's) for new hires, requests records from the Federal Records Center or previous employing agency; and forwards OPF's to the appropriate personnel specialist. The appellant prepares forms to initiate background investigations, monitors pending investigations, updates personnel systems data; and maintains control records for correspondence and work assignments, including establishing and following up on suspense dates.

She maintains and merges folders; eliminates redundant information; regularly using the Treasury Integrated Management Information System and the Totally Automated Personnel System. In addition, when current employees require a higher security clearance, the appellant assists employees, managers, and National Background Investigation Center representatives with questions on or concerns with completing all types of investigation forms. She reviews and researches personnel information reports to ensure that the correct risk level and type of investigation are assigned. The appellant fingerprints employees using the Live Scan Fingerprint Machine and/or ink and roll method; and uses automated personnel systems and other computer systems for the input and research of background investigations.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency has placed the appellant's position in the Personnel Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-203, for which there is a published PCS, and titled it Personnel Clerk. The appellant has not disagreed and, based on our review of the record, we concur.

Grade determination

The published Personnel Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-203 PCS is written in Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Positions graded under the FES format are compared to nine factors. Levels are assigned for each factor and the points associated with the assigned levels are totaled and converted to a grade level by application of the Grade Conversion Table contained in the PCS. Under the FES, factor level descriptions mark the lower end, i.e., the floor, of the ranges for the indicated factor level. If a position fails in any significant aspect to meet a

particular level in the standard, the next lower level and its lower point value must be assigned unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect that meets a higher level.

The appellant agrees with her agency's evaluations of Factors 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 and we concur. She disagrees with her agency's evaluation of Factors 1, 4, and 8. Our evaluation of her position, therefore, focuses on Factors 1, 4, and 8.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that the clerk must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, regulations, and principles) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply those knowledges.

As at Level 1-3 (350 points), the appellant's work requires knowledge of a body of standardized personnel rules, procedures, or requirements to perform or explain a range of clerical procedures in support of one or more personnel specialty or program areas and to resolve recurring problems. Specifically, because the position requires processing all appointment documents for new employees, it requires knowledge of the organizational structure and functions of the offices within the consolidated personnel site. The work requires knowledge of the applicable portions of the Internal Revenue Manual, Background Investigation Handbook, Security Entry Tracking System Training Booklet, and local procedures used to identify risk level and investigation type. The work also requires sufficient knowledge of the OPM Guide to Processing Personnel Actions to identify nature of action codes and authority codes. The appellant uses this knowledge to resolve recurring problems in developing information needed to complete the appointment process for positions requiring varying levels of clearance investigations.

In contrast, at Level 1-4 (550 points), in addition to the body of clerical knowledges required at Level 1-3, knowledge is required of locally established program objectives, priorities, and practices to initiate, plan, and coordinate a series of interrelated clerical activities to meet the needs of varying circumstances. Examples of knowledges required at this level are those necessary for processing actions for employees on career-conditional, career, temporary, limited, and a variety of excepted appointments; and processing a full range of official personnel actions for two fully developed personnel systems, such as General Schedule and Federal Wage System, which have different pay structures, appointment procedures, controls, and limitations. The appellant does not deal with such a wide range of appointment types and performs a more restricted range of personnel support functions than required for crediting Level 1-4. Because the appellant's duties and responsibilities do not require applying such an extensive body of knowledge, the position is credited properly at Level 1-3 (350 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.

As at Level 4-2 (75 points), the appellant's work consists of various related steps and processes. She determines the completeness and adequacy of appointment documents and performs a range of varied office clerical tasks in support of the appointment process, including preparing reports from information in the files. The appellant determines completeness and accuracy of employee provided information examining all appointment documents for completeness, and resolves frequent discrepancies by questioning new employees and clarifying any misunderstandings they may have regarding the appointment process. The responses differ in factual ways depending on the types of positions filled and their specific processing needs. She performs other related office support functions duties like screening visitors.

In contrast, work at Level 4-3 (150 points) consists of different and unrelated processes and methods. Decisions on what needs to be done involve many considerations in a variety of different situations that require different processing treatment. For example, the clerk makes decisions as to whether periods of prior service are creditable for determining service computation date; whether the employee is eligible for Federal benefits, whether the position to which the employee is appointed is obligated, whether special security clearances are needed, and similar considerations depending upon the nature of and basis for the action and the appointment status of the employee. The actions require examination of employee data such as previous work history, military service, previous leave without pay, or education; e.g., in determining substantially creditable service for appointment conversion. The work consists of different and unrelated processes and methods such as is normally required for a full range of official personnel actions, including accessions, separations, pay changes, and Federal employee benefits. The appellant is not dealing with that variety of different situations requiring different processing treatments. Although the appellant verifies the accuracy of information in the appointment forms, and both reconciles discrepancies between different forms and obtains necessary information to complete incomplete forms, she is not tasked with the responsibility to make the determinations and draw the conclusions envisioned at Level 4-3. Accordingly, the position is credited properly at Level 4-2 (75 points).

Factor 8, Physical demands

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. This includes specific agility and dexterity requirements and the physical exertion involved in the work. Level 8-2 is met if the work requires long periods of continual standing at a counter, with frequent movement to obtain forms from another location and return to the counter.

The appellant's work situation meets Level 8-2. As at that level, she fingerprints large numbers of new employees, standing at the Live Scan Fingerprint Machine for two to three hours daily. She also escorts new employees, typically spending 25 minutes walking and standing with each new employee. The appellant's position requires her to stand or walk approximately 50 percent of her work time. Accordingly, the position is credited properly at Level 8-2 (20 points).

Summary

In summary, we have evaluated the appellant's position as follows:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-3	350
2. Supervisory controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-2	75
5. Scope and effect	5-2	75
6. Personal contacts	6-2	25
7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
Total points:		850

A total of 850 points falls within the GS-4 grade level point range of 655-850 points on the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-203 PCS.

Decision

The position is classified properly as Personnel Clerk, GS-203-4.