

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

Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242-1027

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

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Process Improvement Specialist
GS-1101-12

Organization: [appellant's activity]
Defense Contract Management Command
District West
Defense Contract Management Agency
[city, state]

OPM decision: GS-1101-12
title at agency discretion

OPM decision number: C-1101-12-02

/s/

Bonnie Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

12/20/01

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's name and address]

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Introduction

On August 22, 2001, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [the appellant]. We received his agency's administrative report on September 27, 2001. The appellant's position is currently classified as Process Improvement Specialist, GS-1101-12. The appellant requests that his position be classified as Systems Improvement Specialist, GS-1101-13.

We conducted an on-site audit of the appellant's position on November 19, 2001. The audit included interviews with the appellant and his second-level supervisor. We also conducted a telephone interview with the appellant's former first-line supervisor on December 6, 2001. In deciding this appeal, we fully considered the audit and interview findings and all information of record provided by the appellant and his agency, including his current work assignments and position description of record. The appellant and his supervisor certify that the appellant's position description number [number] is current and accurate.

Position information

The appellant serves as the focal point for data gathering and analysis that supports contract management at the Defense Contract Management (DCM) [geographic location], a component of the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA). The data is used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of contract management processes. The appellant compiles information using software programs (COGNOS, Impromptu, and the DCMA Information Repository and Automated Metrics System [DIRAMS]) for various management reports. The reports track unit costs, workload, and resources and are used to measure how organizations compare to each other from a financial and production standpoint. The appellant analyzes the reports to identify where inefficiencies exist and provides recommendations to the organizations on improving resource utilization. The appellant estimates that approximately 75 percent of his time in the past six months has focused on unit cost data collection and analysis.

The appellant provides COGNOS training and advisory support to DCM staff in a four-state area. The appellant serves as the focal point for the Electronic Data Interchange program involving electronic payments to contractors. He also grants access to DIRAMS and Standard Electronic Processing System users.

Series and title determination

The appellant performs work that is characteristic of the following occupational series: GS-1102 Contracting, GS-2210 Information Technology Management, and GS-343 Management and Program Analysis. DCMA determined the appellant's work was more closely related to the GS-1100 Business and Industry Group which involves work requiring knowledge of business and trade practices; use of equipment; the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information; and the provision of advisory services.

DCMA placed the appellant's position in the GS-1101 General Business and Industry Series because it fits the above descriptive requirements for the GS-1100 group, the appellant's work requires a background in acquisition, and DCMA emphasizes multifunctional capability within

the procurement field. Our audit and interview findings indicate that the primary knowledge requirements of the appellant's work are contract administration and information processing techniques. Discussions with the appellant, his former team leader, and second-level supervisor suggest that the work can be performed by someone with a background in either field. Because the appellant's background is in contract administration, we defer to the agency's decision to place the position in the GS-1101 series because of the multifunctional emphasis it places on positions in its organizational environment. The appellant does not disagree with the series assigned to his position by DCMA.

OPM does not prescribe titles for positions in the GS-1101 series. According to section III.H.2 of the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, the appellant's agency may choose the official title for his position. The agency selected *Process Improvement Specialist*.

Standard determination

There is no published standard for the GS-1101 series to use for grade determination. Section III.I.1 in the *Introduction* instructs that an appropriate classification guide or criteria in another standard for related kinds of work should be used if there are no specific grade-level criteria.

The appellant performs administrative analytical work. The Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide covers nonsupervisory analytical, planning, and evaluative work. Work covered by the Guide requires a high degree of analytical skill and the ability to research problems and issues. The grading criteria in the Guide properly address the appellant's duties and responsibilities.

Grade determination

The Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide 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 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 in the Guide. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the factor levels. For a 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, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned. The total points are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the Guide. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

At Level 1-7 in the Guide, 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. Also included in this level are substantive administrative support functions, i.e., supply, budget,

procurement, or personnel that serve to facilitate line or program operations. In addition to knowledge of pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and precedents, the work at this level requires knowledge of major issues, program goals and objectives, work processes, and administrative operations of the organization.

The knowledge required at Level 1-7 is used to plan, schedule, and conduct 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, management processes, procedures for administering program services, guidelines and procedures, and automating work processes.

Level 1-7 is a precise match to the appellant's duties and responsibilities. The appellant's work requires knowledge of the principles, concepts, and methodologies used in Department of Defense contract administration to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of DCM [geographic location] programs and systems. The appellant's work also requires knowledge of information systems and applications that support contract administration and management processes. The appellant monitors process improvements and resource utilization through data collection and analysis and translates the information into specific recommendations to resolve problem areas. The appellant provides technical guidance in the programs, systems, and procedures and provides advice on the interpretation of performance indicators and the application of automated systems. The appellant adapts the criteria used in data collection to capture accurate unit costs and resource utilization and modifies automated system applications to present data more effectively.

Level 1-8 is the level of the expert analyst who has mastered the application of a wide range of methods used for the assessment and improvement of complex management processes and systems. This level requires comprehensive knowledge of the range of administrative laws, policies, regulations, and precedents that apply to one or more important public programs. Typically, this includes knowledge of agency program goals and objectives, the sequence and timing of key program events and milestones, and methods of evaluating the worth of program accomplishments. The knowledge is used to design and conduct comprehensive studies where the boundaries are extremely broad and difficult to determine in advance. Previous studies and established management techniques are frequently inadequate. Studies and analyses are of such scope that they often require a team effort.

Level 1-8 is not met. This level addresses positions with much broader responsibilities than the appellant's. At this level, programs and decisions significantly change, interpret, or develop important public policies or deal with extremely complex problems. The appellant's analytical duties and responsibilities do not have the far-reaching impact, scope, or complexity envisioned at Level 1-8.

Level 1-7 is credited for this factor for 1,250 points.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

The employee at Level 2-4 works within a framework of priorities, funding, and overall project objectives. The employee and supervisor mutually develop a project plan that includes identifying the work to be done, the scope of the project, and deadlines for completion. The employee at this level is responsible for planning and organizing the study and conducting all phases of the project, including the interpretation of regulations, procedures, and application of new methods. The employee informs the supervisor of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems with widespread impact. Completed assignments are reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives.

Level 2-4 is met. Similar to this level, the appellant receives his assignments in broad terms and independently plans and carries out those assignments without further supervisory assistance. The appellant interprets and applies policy within the bounds of stated objectives. The appellant's completed assignments are reviewed for overall effectiveness.

Level 2-5 is not met. This level reflects administrative supervision only, with full authority delegated to the employee to carry out major projects in terms of broadly defined missions or functions. This level of authority is typically accompanied by responsibility for a significant program or function. Management officials review recommendations developed by the employee only for potential influence on broad agency policy objectives and program goals. While the appellant operates with a great deal of independence, he is given general guidance rather than the broad policy direction depicted at Level 2-5. In addition, the appellant's assignments are carried out within established parameters that directly influence operational efficiencies at DCM [geographic location] and impact the activities in the four-state area in which he conducts training. The appellant's level of responsibility is more limited than the agency policy implications described at Level 2-5.

Level 2-4 is credited for 450 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

Guidelines at Level 3-4 consist of general administrative policies and management theories that require considerable adaptation or interpretation. At this level, administrative policies and precedents provide a basic outline of the results desired, but they do not go into detail as to the methods used to accomplish assignments. Within the context of broad regulatory guidelines, the employee may refine or develop more specific guidelines, such as implementing regulations or methods for the measurement and improvement of effectiveness and productivity in the administration of operating programs.

Level 3-4 is met. The appellant's guidelines consist of agency regulations, policies, and guidance documents in the form of performance goals and instruction manuals. These guidelines are general in nature, and the appellant exercises considerable judgment to interpret or adapt them to complete assigned projects. The appellant modifies processes and automation tools to achieve desired results. The appellant prepares user manuals for the organizations in his training area.

Level 3-5 is not met. Guidelines at this level consist of basic administrative policy statements concerning the issue and may include reference to pertinent legislative history, related court decisions, state and local laws, or policy initiatives of agency management. The employee uses judgment and discretion in determining intent and in revising existing policy and regulatory guidance for use by others. The Guide provides an example of employees who review proposed legislation or regulations that would significantly change the basic character of agency programs. Another example involves employees who develop study formats for use by others on a project team or at subordinate echelons in the organization. The guidelines available to the appellant are more specific than basic policy statements as envisioned at Level 3-5.

Level 3-4 is credited for this factor for 450 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

The work at Level 4-4 involves gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues, and developing recommendations to resolve problems of effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or program support setting. Work at this level requires the application of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques that frequently require modification to fit a wider range of variables. Projects at this level usually consist of issues that are not always susceptible to direct observation and analysis. Difficulty is encountered in measuring effectiveness and productivity due to variations in the nature of processing information. For example, assignments may involve compiling voluminous workload data from a variety of sources with different reporting requirements and formats. Originality in refining existing work methods and techniques is characteristic of Level 4-4.

Level 4-4 is met. The appellant's responsibilities involve identifying and resolving problems of effectiveness and efficiency in a program support setting. The appellant must modify the processes used to compile unit costs and other data because of the existence of a wide variety of variables. The appellant must determine which criteria to use for compiling the data based on unit cost pools and contract types in order to obtain reliable information for comparison with other district organizations. The appellant then uses the data comparisons to identify where inefficiencies exist, to meet with managers to determine what caused the deviations, and to recommend improvements.

Level 4-5 is not met. The work at this level involves analysis of interrelated issues of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of substantive mission-oriented programs. Typical assignments require developing detailed plans, goals, and objectives for the long-range administration of the program. The work is complicated by conflicting program goals and objectives that result from changes in legislative or regulatory guidelines, subjective concepts such as value judgments, and conclusions that are not readily susceptible to verification. The appellant does not encounter such complicating factors as long-range planning, conflicting program goals, or subjective concepts. The appellant's assignments are clearly defined in terms of information needed, complicated only by the numerous variations in data collection processes.

Level 4-4 is assigned to this factor for 225 points.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

The purpose of work at Level 5-4 is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of program operations or administrative support activities. The work involves establishing criteria to measure organizational goals and objectives. Work at this level may also include developing related guidance for application across organizational lines or in varied geographic locations. The work contributes to the improvement of program operations or administrative support activities at different echelons or geographical locations within the organization. The work affects the plans, goals, and effectiveness of missions and programs at these various echelons or locations.

Level 5-4 is met. The purpose of the appellant's work is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of DCM [geographic location] contract management processes. The appellant's work enhances the attainment of DCM [geographic location] goals and objectives by compiling unit costs and other resource utilization indicators to identify deficient areas. For example, the appellant identified one organization that was using incorrect charging patterns. By getting that organization to change its charging patterns, overall organizational performance indicators improved significantly. The appellant provides training, guidance, and advisory services to other DCMA organizations in a four-state area.

Level 5-5 is not met. The purpose of work at this level is to analyze major administrative aspects of substantive, mission-oriented programs. This involves the development of long-range program plans or evaluating the effectiveness of programs throughout a bureau or service of an independent agency, a regional structure of equivalent scope, or a large complex multimission field activity. An illustration in the Guide of work at this level is the conduct of region-wide studies of national social programs administered by different organizations within the agency. Another illustration is that of a project officer evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of major program operations throughout an agency. At this level, study findings are typically of major significance to top agency management and often serve as the basis for new administrative systems, legislation, regulations, or programs. The scope of the appellant's work is not of the magnitude envisioned at Level 5-5 in that his work is focused on improving efficiencies of contract management at the operating level of his agency.

Level 5-4 is credited for 225 points.

Factors 6 and 7, Personal contacts and purpose of contacts

These two factors are evaluated separately but combined for the purpose of arriving at a total point value.

Persons contacted

Contacts at Level 2 include employees, supervisors, and managers of the same agency, but outside of the immediate office. Also included are employees and representatives of private concerns in a moderately structured setting.

Level 2 is met. The appellant has regular contacts with DCM [geographic location] staff, DCMA district and headquarters personnel, contractor representatives, and software vendors. Most contacts occur in a moderately structured setting in that the reason for the contacts is usually known beforehand.

Level 3 is not met. Contacts at this level typically occur in an unstructured setting and include consultants, contractors, or business executives. This level may also include ad-hoc contacts with the head of the employing agency or program officials several managerial levels removed from the employee.

Purpose of contacts

The purpose of contacts at Level c is to influence officials to accept and implement findings and recommendations on program effectiveness. The employee at this level may encounter resistance due to competing objectives or resource problems.

Level c is met. The purpose of the appellant's contacts is to obtain information, provide technical assistance and training, resolve operational problems, and obtain consensus and support for his findings and recommendations. The appellant may encounter resistance because of the negative connotations of some of his findings.

Level d is not met. Contacts at this level are for the purpose of justifying or settling significant or controversial issues. Recommendations at this level affect major programs dealing with substantial expenditures. The appellant's contacts do not impose this level of conflict or involve significant resources.

Level 2c is credited for a combined total of 145 points.

Factor 8, Physical demands

Level 8-1 involves sedentary work with some slight physical effort. This level matches the appellant's work, which is primarily performed while sitting. Some physical exertion is required to set up training classes or install software at contractor facilities. The work also requires standing, walking, or bending.

Level 8-2 is not met. Work at this level regularly involves long periods of standing, bending, and stooping to observe and study work operations in an industrial, storage, or comparable work area. The appellant's work does not require this level of exertion on a regular basis.

Level 8-1 is credited for 5 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

Level 9-1 involves work typically performed in an adequately lighted and climate controlled office. The work may require occasional travel. This level describes the appellant's work environment. The majority of the appellant's work is performed in a traditional office or classroom setting. The appellant occasionally visits contractor facilities requiring the use of

safety equipment. The appellant travels to other DCMA offices in a four-state area to provide COGNOS training.

Level 9-2 is not met. Work at this level requires regular visits to manufacturing, storage, or other industrial areas. Work at this level involves moderate risks or discomforts and requires the use of protective clothing and gear. The work environment as described at Level 9-2 is not a regular and recurring aspect of the appellant's assignments. While the appellant travels a good deal, the travel does not routinely impose risks or discomforts.

Level 9-1 is assigned for 5 points.

Summary

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-7	1,250
2. Supervisory controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-4	450
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and effect	5-4	225
6. Personal contacts and		
7. Purpose of contacts	2c	145
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
<i>Total</i>		2,755

A total of 2,755 points falls within the range for GS-12 (2,755 to 3,150 points), according to the Grade Conversion Table in the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as GS-1101-12, with the position title at the agency's discretion.