

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., Suite 1018
Atlanta, GA 30303-3109

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

Appellant: [Appellant]

Agency classification: Facility Manager
GS-1640-9

Organization: U.S. Geological Survey
Department of the Interior

OPM decision: Facility Manager
GS-1640-9

OPM decision number: C-1640-09-01

Virginia L. Magnuson
Classification Appeals Officer

May 29, 2002

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]

[Human Resources Officer]
U.S. Geological Survey

Ms. Carolyn Cohen
Director of Personnel
U.S. Department of Interior
Mail Stop 5221
1849 C Street, NW.
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Introduction

On January 16, 2002, the Atlanta Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a position classification appeal for the position of Facility Manager, GS-1640-9. The position is located in the [organization], U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Department of the Interior, [geographic location]. We received the complete administrative report on March 1, 2002.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

The agency updated the appellant's position description, position number [#], after the appellant submitted his classification appeal to OPM. The classification of his position did not change. The appellant was reassigned to position number [#]. We determined that the new position description is not substantially different from the old one. We discussed this with the appellant on May 9, 2002, and he expressed his desire to continue his appeal.

The appellant made various statements about his agency and its evaluation of his position. He also requested that we consider past assignments in our decision. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing the appellant's current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements about his agency only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison, and we have not considered past assignments that he no longer currently performs.

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant, his supervisor and the agency, including his official position description. An Atlanta Oversight Division representative conducted telephone interviews with the appellant on April 29, May 7, and May 23, 2002, and with his immediate supervisor and the servicing Human Resources Specialist on May 8, 9 and 23, 2002. This appeal was decided by considering the audit findings and all information of record.

Position information

The appellant is assigned to position description number [#]. The supervisor certified it as accurate. The appellant believes it is somewhat accurate, but does not represent the full range of duties and responsibilities he performed in past years. Our fact finding determined that the position description contains the major duties and responsibilities of the appellant's current position and is adequate for classification purposes.

The appellant serves as facility manager for the [organization]. The [organization] is a biological research organization of the USGS responsible for conducting work throughout [geographic location]. The appellant provides facility support responsibility to the USGS-owned [geographic

location] headquarters and laboratory complex, which consists of three structures and three modular buildings, water control structures, ten acres of experimental ponds, and several laboratories developed for scientific experiments. The main building (26,127 square feet.), approximately 15 years old, contains offices and two wet laboratories at the back. There is a pump house (945 square feet) and another structure (3,628 square feet) that contains offices on one side and a garage on the other side used for the maintenance and repair of the boats and boat motors. The three modular trailer-like buildings are commercially leased office space.

The appellant's predominant duties and responsibilities involve the operation, maintenance and upkeep of the government owned buildings and the grounds and management of contracts related to buildings and grounds. He develops long- and short-range programs for facility maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction and cost estimates for projects. He plans and schedules maintenance and repair of the research facilities and inspects them on a regular basis. Service contractors, rather than a workforce of trades and crafts employees, provide maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment. The appellant serves as the liaison between the contractors and the agency. He schedules projects and makes sure that jobs are done in accordance with specifications. He ensures that all work areas meet health and safety requirements. The appellant estimates and recommends the budget for facilities maintenance, repair, and minor construction, as well as manages a small purchase budget for service contracts and operational needs. He advises on facility related issues, including specific needs relating to research plans. He is a member of the safety, security and space committees. He recommends the development, space allocation and utilization of the plant and facilities. He maintains the proper disposal of hazardous waste matters for the facility.

The appellant receives direction from the Administrative Officer, who provides policy direction and overall project priorities.

The appellant's position description and other material of record furnish much more information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Series, title, and standard determination

The appellant does not contest the agency's title or series determination for his position. The agency placed the appellant's position in the Facilities Management Series, GS-1640, and titled it Facility Manager. We concur.

The GS-1640 position classification standard, dated June 1973, is used for evaluation of the appellant's position.

Grade determination

The GS-1640 standard uses three factors to evaluate positions: (1) Management factors, which include planning, budgeting, scheduling, coordinating, and utilizing staff, money, and material resources; (2) Technical factors, which cover the scope of equipment operation and repair, and nature of equipment and facilities; and, (3) Personal factors, which include the ability required to act in management-client relations, and management representation.

The standard states that in considering the descriptions of levels, the presence or absence of a single feature should not be considered as grade controlling. Some variation will exist because of differences in work situations. Mention of a particular required knowledge or items of equipment at a grade level is not intended to indicate that this is the first level or the only level at which these features occur. Rather, it indicates that at that particular level these features exist on a constantly recurring and significant basis and are illustrative of the breadth of management problems typical of the level.

The application of this standard requires that we consider the appellant's organization which varies substantially from illustrations in the GS-1640 standard. The facility size is considerably small than facilities identified in the illustrations. Rather than managing a variety of trades and crafts personnel typical of all grade levels in the standard, the appellant does not supervise Federal employees. Contractor personnel perform facilities work. The standard recognizes that certain features of the work, such as functional use of buildings and equipment in or used in conjunction with operations, vary in complexity and may have a greater effect than others in increasing the relative complexity of the work. It permits consideration of the impact of these conditions in the grading process.

Management factors:

At the GS-9 level, the size of operations requires the development of an annual and long-range program for maintenance with particular emphasis on preventive maintenance. The manager prepares plans and specifications for some alterations, schedules operations, and projects operating costs based on present operating trends. At this level, the manager is primarily involved with directing day-to-day operations.

As at the GS-9 level, the appellant plans for and directs the maintenance of the buildings and structures, their grounds and associated equipment and systems. He develops a maintenance program plan, including a five-year deferred maintenance and capital improvement plan, provides cost estimates and assigns priorities to projects. He reviews requests for maintenance and identifies requirements. Contract personnel perform all facilities' work. The appellant develops statements of work, oversees the contractor's work and evaluates accomplishments in terms of meeting specifications and standards. He serves as the contracting officer's technical representative.

At the GS-11 level, the increased size and scope of the operation is such that the manager does not have the time to devote to routine daily operations. The manager typically gives instructions to craftsmen through intermediate subordinates as his time is directed more towards resolving complex technical problems, rather than attending to daily operations typical of the GS-9 level. The size of the operation and the demands made upon available space require the manager to use knowledge of space utilization to match space to functional requirements. The expanded size and scope of the operation increase the number of technical problems to resolve and require greater attention to office management functions such as inventory management, budget estimation for new operations, and project and equipment justification.

The appellant's assignment does not meet the GS-11 level. It does not have the size or scope characteristic of this level, and it does not require comparable attention to office management.

While the appellant is expected to know the stock levels for his operations, the breadth of the inventory management procedures resides with the [organization] Administrative Officer and the Property Manager. The appellant's supervisor, in concert and consultation with the management team, is responsible for decisions on office and laboratory space, as well as equipment, such as telephone and duplicating machines. The appellant discusses large or complex research related requests with the Administrative Officer before taking any action. The appellant's purchasing budget supports on-going operations, rather than the new operations, methods and equipment described at the GS-11 level.

This factor is credited at GS-9.

Technical factors

At the GS-9 level, the facility manager gives instructions to craftsmen, checks drawings, and interprets them as a guide to the craftsmen. The employee is concerned with the smooth functioning of the plumbing, electrical, refrigeration, and air conditioning systems. The employee must have knowledge of the functions and capabilities of various trades, the materials and equipment used by the trades, and the ability to determine if the work complies with specifications or standards. Boiler plant operations are typically the largest and most complex feature of the operation at this level. Other operations given close attention include the electrical power supply, cleaning work, grounds construction and maintenance, and telecommunications operations. The facility manager inspects buildings and grounds to identify and recommend needed repairs and may make engineering decisions in emergencies, although new construction is not usually a concern. As a general guide, space assigned to the facility manager is around 150,000 to 250,000 square feet.

The appellant's assignment meets the GS-9 level. He has control over approximately 30,000 square feet. In addition, the facility has water control structures and ten acres of experimental ponds. Although the building space is less than typically managed at the GS-9 level, the facility complexity counterbalances this weakness in size. The [organization] headquarters complex is a specialized facility that serves as the base and site for a great variety of scientific investigations. Each investigation is unique in its goals and methods and in its use of facilities. The facilities themselves are complex, involving various suites of mechanical devices to deliver water to experimental areas, control temperature and light, and to provide adequate ventilation for experiments and people performing them. The appellant ensures that needed facilities and equipment are in excellent working condition needed for complex scientific work. For example, scientific experiments often require precise control of temperatures, regulated flows of water, or specialized equipment capable of reliably maintaining desired conditions. The appellant provides high-level research support services and participates in planning and identification of future needs. The facility does not have a staff of specialized workers. The appellant relies on contractors to provide needed repair and maintenance services. He oversees and approves the contractors' work related to grounds maintenance, janitorial services, electrical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and telecommunications. He identifies problems or needed improvements. While the appellant is not engaged in boiler operations, he still ensures the smooth functioning of the plumbing, electrical, water, heating/cooling systems, and pumps. He exercises knowledge of various trades in identifying and reviewing the work of the contractors

and evaluating their services in terms of accomplishment of work and meeting specifications. These duties are comparable to the GS-9 level.

At the GS-11 level, the size and volume of traffic usually make elevator maintenance a significant responsibility. The nature and size of operations at this level require increased attention to: fire fighting and alarm and sprinkler systems; the primary and secondary electrical distribution systems; and the technical requirements in buildings maintenance to insure continued structural integrity. In addition to GS-9 level operating problems and work, GS-11 level operations frequently have added emphasis on roof construction and repair, partition construction, acoustical treatment, upholstery repair, floor equipment maintenance and repair, sheet metal maintenance, and maintenance of refrigeration systems. Operations also include responsibility for checking the food service operations or other concessions for compliance with contract requirements. The employee serves not only as building operations expert, but as sources of information on regulations relating to such areas as the Federal supply and communications systems; short-order material, or labor and material procurement procedures; standard forms; and police and guard regulations and law.

The appellant's assignment does not include the significant emphasis on special features such as identified at the GS-11 level.

This factor is credited at GS-9.

Personal factors:

At the GS-9 level, employees are required to have a facility for expression, in order to explain technical problems to nontechnical people. The appellant's position meets this level.

The appellant's primary contacts are with the Center's management and scientific staff to meet their needs regarding research project construction and maintenance. He acts as the liaison between the facility and General Services Administration, contractors, and other public agencies that issue permits or deal with compliance issues.

At the GS-11 level, the work requires the ability to explain the billing system on reimbursable work and to persuade users of service to accept compromise offers. The employee makes decisions in complex situations that would require a background of the objectives, history, and development of the program of his agency. The nature of the appellant's work does not require the persuasive skills to reach compromises or the decision-making comparable to those identified at the GS-11 level.

This factor is credited at GS-9.

All three factors compare to the GS-9 level in the standard.

Decision

The position is properly classified as Facility Manager, GS-1640-9.