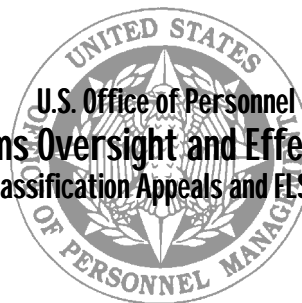


U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and ELSA Programs



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]

Agency classification: Equipment Requirements Coordinator
GS-303-7

Organization: U.S. Army

OPM decision: GS-303-7
(Title to be determined by agency)

OPM decision number: C-0303-07-02

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

Date 2/5/98

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:

Civilian Personnel Director
U.S. Army Headquarters
XVIII Airborne Corps & Fort Bragg
Fort Bragg, NC 28307-5000

Director of Civilian Personnel
U.S. Department of the Army
Room 23681, Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0300

Chief, Position Management and
Classification Branch
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Manpower and Reserve Affairs
U.S. Department of the Army
Attn: SAMR-CPP-MP
Hoffman Building II
200 Stovall Street, Suite 5N35
Alexandria, VA 22332-0340

Director, U.S. Army Civilian Personnel
Evaluation Agency
Crystal Mall 4, Suite 918
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Arlington, VA 22202-4508

Chief, Classification Branch
Field Advisory Services Division
Defense Civilian Personnel Management
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1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
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Introduction

On October 14, 1997, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted an appeal for the position of Equipment Requirements Coordinator, GS-303-7, in the [the activity]. The appellant is requesting that her position be changed to Information Systems Specialist, GS-301-11.

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 compares her position to an Information Systems Specialist, GS-301, position listed on a vacancy announcement and classified at a higher grade level. Classification law (title 5, United States Code, section 5107) requires that positions in the Federal service be classified by comparison to standards published by OPM. Consequently, other means of classification, including comparison to other positions, are not authorized.

The appellant furnished a separate list of what she believes her responsibilities to be. We reviewed and compared the list with the appellant's official position description. However, we find no significant differences in the appellant's version and the position description furnished by the agency. For purposes of this appeal, our decision will be based on the official position description of record.

The appellant also provided us with a copy of her Notice of Rating for the Information Systems Specialist position. She was rated ineligible because she did not meet time-in-grade requirements. This issue is outside of the classification appeal process. Questions concerning qualifications and rating procedures should be addressed to the appellant's personnel office.

Position information

The appellant is assigned to position number 96217. The agency audited the position on October 31, 1997, sustaining the current classification, and made some changes to the description of duties. The supervisor and agency certified to the accuracy of the position description, and the appellant furnished a list of duties, as indicated above, that are substantially identical to the position description.

The appellant serves as the central point of contact to provide authoritative explanations of requirements, regulations, and procedures for the IMA equipment, software, and other items. She prepares annual IMA Modernization (MoD) plans in the area of automation, communications, visual information, records management, and printing/publications for [activity] units. She provides the units with procedures for preparation and submission of requirements, informs them of the compatibility of equipment and the appropriate intended use according to the established standards. She drafts memorandums of information (MOIs) for final signature relating to instructions on procedures for submission of requests, standards, sources, identification and other related information

and distributes to the units. She maintains records and monitors and controls procurement of assets for IMA. She reviews and certifies requests for purchase of office automation/communications equipment and ensures that the dollar amount is in compliance with the command's standards. She identifies policy and procedures that should be changed, makes recommendations according to standards, determines that the request is valid, and advises whether items are available. If requests are not in compliance, she researches and advises the requestors as to changes necessary to meet the requirements.

The appellant works under the general supervision of the Supervisory Information Systems Specialist who assigns work in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The appellant works independently and plans assignments according to accepted practices. She resolves most conflicts and uses judgment in applying guides to specific cases. The work is checked for appropriateness and conformance to policy.

Standards determination

Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, January 1979.

Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, June 1989.

Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series, GS-301, January 1979.

Series determination

The agency placed the position in the GS-303 series. The appellant believes that her position is similar to positions in the Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series, GS-301. The GS-301 series includes positions the duties of which are to perform, supervise, or manage nonprofessional, two-grade interval work for which no other series is appropriate. The work covered by this series requires analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and knowledge of a substantial body of administrative or program principals, concepts, policies, and objectives. The appellant does not perform work of this type. Her work requires a substantial knowledge of the procedures, regulations and policies used to complete a variety of transactions for IMA actions. Since the knowledge required is procedural, the work is best covered by a clerical and technical one-grade interval series as opposed to a two-grade interval series.

The Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, includes positions the duties of which are to perform or supervise clerical, assistant, or technical work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires a knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out the work of an organization and involves application of procedures and practices within the framework of established guidelines. We agree with the agency's decision that the type of assignments performed by the appellant fall within the range of duties described in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303.

Title determination

No titles are specified for positions in this series. Based on the guidance in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, the agency may construct a position title descriptive of the work performed.

Grade determination

The appeal record indicates 30 percent of the appellant's time is spent preparing and updating the IMA 5-year Mod Plan assignments, 65 percent is spent reviewing and certifying purchase requests, and 5 percent is spent on mobilization planning. Since her work involves performing different kinds and levels of work in terms of duties, responsibilities, and qualifications at different grade levels, we must evaluate the duties that occupy 25 percent or more of the time separately.

Since the GS-303 standard does not contain grade level criteria, the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work is used to determine the grade level of this position. The guide describes the general characteristics of each grade level from GS-1 through GS-7 and uses 2 factors for grading purposes: Nature of Assignment (which includes the elements of knowledge required and complexity of the work), and Level of Responsibility (which includes the elements of supervisory controls, guidelines, and contacts). The guide requires the considerations of weaknesses as well as strengths in matching work to the grade level criteria. The appellant's position is evaluated as follows:

IMA 5-year Mod Plan duties performed 30 percent of the time:*Nature of Assignment:*

At the GS-7 level, the highest level described in the guide, the work consists of specialized duties with continuing responsibility for projects, questions, or problems that arise within an area of a program or functional specialty as defined by management. Work assignments involve a wide variety of problems or situations common to the segment of the program or function for which the employee is responsible. Each assignment typically consists of a series of related actions or decisions prior to final completion. Decisions or recommendations are based on the development and evaluation of information that comes from various sources. The work involves identifying and studying factors or conditions and determining their interrelationships as appropriate to the defined area of work. The employee must be concerned about taking or recommending actions that are consistent with the objectives and requirements of the program or functions.

The appellant's assignments are best evaluated at the GS-7 level. The appellant is responsible for researching and preparing the annual IMA 5-year Mod Plan for automation, visual information, records management, library management, and printing/publications for [activity's] units. The work involves a series of actions that include identifying, compiling and consolidating requirements for IMA equipment, software, and related items for the fiscal year. She advises activities on the appropriate procedures for preparation and submission of their annual requirements. She makes

decisions such as whether the submitted request is compatible and suitable for the intended purpose. She also reviews policies and plans for compliance with criteria, updates any changes, makes recommendations based on guidelines, and works with requestor to resolve problems. The appellant states that she has written several plans and policy standards and she provided samples of her work. The samples, however, do not support the fact that she is responsible for writing plans and policies. She makes changes to already established plans and policies according to Department of the Army regulations. She does not determine what the changes are or how to implement them. There is no evidence in the record to support that the appellant's duties exceed this level.

Level of Responsibility

At the GS-7 level, the highest level described in the standard, the supervisor makes assignments in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee independently completes assignments in accordance with accepted practices, resolving most conflicts that arise. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and conformance to policy. Guidelines for the work are more complex than at the next lower grade because the employee encounters a wider variety of problems and situations which require choosing alternative responses. Guides, such as regulations, policy statements, and precedent cases tend to be general and descriptive of intent, but do not specifically cover all aspects of the assignments. Guidelines apply less to specific actions and more to the operational characteristics and procedural requirements of the program or function. Employees must use significant judgment and interpretation to apply the guides to specific cases and adapt or improvise procedures to accommodate unusual or one-of-a-kind situations. The contacts and purpose of contacts are usually the same as at the next lower level. However, to a greater degree, the employee serves as a central point of contact to provide authoritative explanations of requirements, regulations, and procedures, and to resolve operational problems or disagreements affecting assigned areas.

The GS-7 level is met. The appellant independently plans and completes her assignments in accordance with the agency's accepted practices. She resolves most conflicts. Since she is the central point of contact and is familiar with the guidelines, regulations and procedures, she prepares MOIs that relate to instructions and guidance and distributes them for use. Guidelines do not cover all aspects of the assignments, and the appellant must use judgment and interpretation to apply them. Contacts consist of employees from all units of the Corps and Post activities for the purpose of providing authoritative explanations of requirements, regulations, and procedures, and to resolve operational problems relating to the procedural matters. Completed work is checked for appropriateness and conformance to policy. There is no evidence in the record to support that the appellant's duties exceed this level.

Both the Nature of Assignment and Level of Responsibility are evaluated at the GS-7 level.

Technical duties performed 65 percent of the time:

The agency credited the GS-5 level for these duties, however, we believe that the GS-6 level is most comparable to the duties performed by the appellant.

Nature of Assignments

At the GS-5 level, the work consists of performing a full range of standard and nonstandard clerical assignments and resolving a variety of nonrecurring problems. Work includes a variety of assignments involving different and unrelated steps, processes, or methods. The employee must identify and understand the issues involved in each assignment and determine what steps and procedures are necessary and the order of their performance. Completion of each transaction typically involves selecting a course of action from a number of possibilities. The work requires extensive knowledge of an organizations rules, procedures, operations, or business practices to perform the more complex, interrelated, or one-of-a-kind clerical processing procedures.

The appellant's responsibilities exceed this level. Although the duties are procedural in nature, they do not compare to the standard clerical procedures described at the GS-5 level. The appellant's work involves more evaluative judgment in identifying issues and problems and seeking alternative solutions in an administrative function.

At the GS-6 level, the work requires considerable evaluative judgment within well-defined, commonly occurring aspects of an administrative program or function. The work may involve providing direct assistance to specialists or analysts by performing a segment of their work, or it may involve responsibility for a stream of products or continuing processes based on direct application of established policies, practices, and criteria. Assignments involve a relatively narrow range of case situations that occur in a broad administrative program or function. This work typically involves identifying issues, problems, or conditions and seeking alternative solutions based on evaluation of the intent of applicable rules, regulations, and procedures. Assignments requiring evaluative judgment are narrowly focused, address a single product or action, and are relatively clear cut. The employee usually deals with problems or situations that remain stable and resemble past problems or situations. Assignments often involve problems or situations where there is not one absolutely correct solution, only a best or most appropriate one. Work requires practical knowledge of guidelines and precedent case actions relating to a particular program area equal to that acquired through considerable work experience or specialized training. The work also requires skill to recognize the dimensions of a problem and express ideas in writing.

The GS-6 level is met. The appellant has continuing responsibility for processing and certifying the submission of requests for equipment to ensure compliance with the command standards. She handles a variety of procedural problems that include researching information that is not in compliance with regulations, seeking solutions, and interpreting guides to accommodate unusual situations. The appellant reviews all purchase requests for compliance with the agency's criteria, for compatibility with existing systems, and for intended use. She reviews requests and certifies them for compliance or identifies equipment that is not valid, justifiable, appropriate, or consistent with the program. She develops ways of streamlining the processing procedures for the organization and makes suggestions that are beneficial to the needs of the units.

Level of Responsibility

At the GS-5 level, the supervisor assigns work by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance on assignments which do not have clear precedents. The employee works in accordance with accepted practices and completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and effectiveness in meeting goals. Extensive guides in the form of instructions, manuals, regulations, and precedents apply to the work. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines for application and adapting them according to circumstances of the specific case or transaction. A number of procedural problems may arise which also require interpretation and adaptation of established guides. Often, the employee must determine which of several alternative guidelines to use. If existing guidelines cannot be applied, the employee refers the matter to the supervisor. Contacts are with a variety of persons within and outside the agency for the purpose of receiving or providing information relating to the work or for the purpose of resolving operating problems in connection with recurring responsibilities.

The appellant exceeds the GS-5 level since she works more independently when completing assignments than described.

At the GS-6 level, the supervisor assists with precedent assignments by providing an interpretation of policy or the concepts and theories of the occupation. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting goals. Guidelines such as regulations, instructions, evaluation criteria, and prior case or action files are available, but they are often not completely applicable to the assignment or have gaps in specificity. The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines for application to specific cases or problems. The employee bases decisions and recommendations on facts and conventional interpretations of guidelines rather than on theory or opinion. The employee contacts others, as described above under clerical work, to provide, receive, or develop information in order to identify problems, needs or issues, and/or to coordinate work efforts or resolve problems.

Level GS-6 is met. The supervisor is available to assist with assignments that may need policy interpretation, and completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and conformance to policy. Guidelines, instructions, and prior cases are available for use, however, if there are gaps in specificity, the appellant uses her own judgment to interpret and apply or improvise procedures to accommodate the problems. Contacts consist of employees in the agency, officers, and other installation employees for the purpose of providing and receiving information and resolving issues with requestors relating to the purchase of equipment.

Both the Nature of Assignment and Level of Responsibility are evaluated at the GS-6 level.

Summary

The appellant's position combines work evaluated at the GS-6 and GS-7 levels. The GS-7 level duties represent 30 percent of the appellant's work, as well as the paramount requirements of the position, and are, therefore, grade controlling.

Decision

This position is properly classified as GS-303-7, with the title to be determined by the agency.