

**U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership and Merit System Accountability
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs**

**Merit System Compliance Group
1900 E Street, NW., Room 7675
Washington, DC 20415-6000**

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

Appellant: [Appellant]

Agency classification: Information Technology Specialist
(Systems Analysis/Applications Software)
GS-2210-13

Organization: Process Improvement and Software
Quality Section
Human Resources Systems Branch
Internal Management Systems Division
Business Systems Development
Modernization, Information Technology,
And Security Services
[bureau]
[department]
[city and State]

OPM decision: Information Technology Specialist
(Systems Analysis/Applications Software)
GS-2210

OPM decision number: C-2210-00-01

/s/ Linda Kazinetz
Linda J. Kazinetz
Classification Appeals Officer

May 27, 2003
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a classification 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 the conditions and time limits specified in title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 511.605, 511.613, and 511.614, as cited in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[appellant]

[bureau]

[department]

Introduction

On February 6, 2003, the Merit System Compliance Group (formerly the Washington Oversight Division) of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a position classification appeal from [appellant], who is employed as an Information Technology Specialist (Systems Analysis/Applications Software), GS-2210-13, in the Process Improvement and Software Quality Section of the Human Resources Systems Branch, Internal Management Systems Division, Business Systems Development, within the Modernization, Information Technology, and Security Services, [bureau], in [city and State]. The appellant requested only that the parenthetical title of his position be changed to "Policy and Planning." This appeal was accepted and decided under the provisions of section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

Telephone interviews were conducted by a Merit System Compliance Group representative with the appellant and his supervisor, [name]. This appeal was decided by considering the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his agency, including his official position description, [number], and other material submitted in the agency administrative report which we received on March 6, 2003.

Position Information

The appellant's primary responsibility is to coordinate the development and revision of software standards that constitute [bureau] Manual 2.5, Systems Development. These standards establish the procedures and controls to be followed by [bureau] software developers within the Business Systems Development divisions. The appellant also audits the software projects to ensure compliance with these procedures and controls.

Series Determination

The appellant's position is properly assigned to the Information Technology Management Series, GS-2210. Neither the appellant nor the agency disagrees.

Title Determination

The authorized basic title for nonsupervisory positions in this series is Information Technology Specialist. Neither the appellant nor the agency disagrees.

The "Policy and Planning" specialty applies to positions that involve "a *wide range* of IT management activities that typically extend and apply to an *entire organization or major components of an organization.*" This includes strategic planning, capital planning and investment control, workforce planning, policy and standards development, resource management, knowledge management, architecture and infrastructure planning and management, auditing, and information security management.

The "Systems Analysis" specialty covers positions that involve applying analytical processes to the planning, design, and implementation of new and improved information systems to meet the business requirements of customer organizations.

The “Applications Software” specialty covers positions that involve the design, documentation, development, modification, testing, installation, implementation, and support of new or existing applications software.

Although standards development and auditing are individual functional components of the overall “policy and planning” specialty, taken in isolation they do not meet the full intent of this specialty. This specialty covers positions involved in a *wide range* of IT *management* activities. As an example, an illustration provided in the standard of Level 1-8 policy and planning work describes an assignment where the employee:

- leads development of an enterprise IT modernization plan;
- works with other departments to establish priorities for IT investments;
- builds business cases;
- demonstrates total cost of investments; and
- establishes metrics and associated performance measurement tools.

Standards development is directly linked with policy development under the “policy and planning” specialty. The appellant does not participate in the development of overall IT policy for the [bureau], nor does he perform agency-level IT planning, such as strategic planning, capital planning, and workforce planning. Standards development and auditing may be derivative of these processes, and in many agencies may be subdivisions of the broader IT policy arm of the organization. However, in and of themselves they do not constitute the types of broad policy and planning activities intended under this specialty. Specifically in this case, the appellant writes standards to establish controls for the development and documentation of software products and performs audits to ensure compliance. This work is performed within the context of the broader IT management decisions made at higher organizational levels that determine the overall scope, resources, and priorities of the agency’s IT program. It establishes the operational parameters for carrying out system development projects, but it is not an aspect of the agency’s overall IT strategic and capital planning process. Additionally, the appellant’s role in standards development is to *coordinate* proposed additions or deletions to the standards. Authority to decide the final content of the standards does not reside within his branch. These technical determinations are made by IT working groups, and all proposals must subsequently be approved by the System Quality Committee. These groups are comprised of IT management personnel. The appellant may attend working group meetings to provide input and coordination, but he has no independent authority to either accept or reject any proposed system development controls.

Further, the appellant’s work does not require the same type and breadth of IT knowledges as IT resource planning and policy analysis. For example, at Level 1-7 in the GS-2210 standard, the “policy and planning” specialty requires knowledge of and skill in applying: the organization’s policy and planning formulation process; capital investment principles and methods; the organization’s enterprise IT goals and objectives; and IT metrics methods and concepts. At Level 1-8, in addition to the lower-level knowledges, the “policy and planning” specialty requires knowledge of and skill in applying: the business value of information; methods and approaches for sharing information through the use of IT assets; capital planning regulations and

policies; performance measurement tools; and methods for identifying and resolving IT workforce issues. The appellant does not require these types of knowledges to perform the more limited function of developing software standards. Rather, his work requires the knowledges associated with the “systems analysis” and “applications software” specialties, which represent the actual processes for which the standards are being developed. Similarly, the appellant audits IT projects for the relatively narrow purpose of determining their compliance with the software standards, rather than from the broader perspective of the “policy and planning” specialty (i.e., to examine overall project management, cost, and performance factors).

Decision

The appealed position is properly classified as Information Technology Specialist (Systems Analysis/Applications Software), GS-2210.