

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership & Merit System Accountability
Classification Appeals Program

Philadelphia Field Services Group
600 Arch Street, Room 3400
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1596

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

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Budget Analyst
GS-560-11

Organization: [organization] Department
[organization] Budget Division
Comptroller Directorate
Naval Inventory Control Point,
[location] Site
Department of the Navy
[location]

OPM decision: Budget Analyst
GS-560-11

OPM decision number: C-0560-11-03

/s/

Robert D. Hendler
Classification and Pay Claims
Program Manager

December 12, 2005

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 address]

[name]

Human Resources Office, [location]

[location]

[address]

Mr. Ted P. Canelakes
Director, Labor and Employee Relations Division
Department of the Navy
Office of Civilian Human Resources (DON OCHR)
614 Sicard Street, SE, Suite 100
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5072

Ms. Ann Garrett
Department of Navy Principal Classifier
Human Resources Service Center – Northwest
3230 NW Randall Way
Silverdale, WA 98383

Chief Classification Appeals
Adjudication Section
Department of Defense
Civilian Personnel Management
Service
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

Introduction

On September 6, 2005, the Philadelphia Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant]. His position is currently classified as Budget Analyst, GS-560-11. The appellant believes that the position should be upgraded to GS-12. We received the agency appeal administrative report on September 28, 2005. The position is located in the [organization] Budget Department, [organization] Budget Division, Comptroller Directorate, Naval Inventory Control Point [location], Department of the Navy in [location]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C).

Background

The appellant states that in August 1996 he took over the work of a GS-12 Budget Analyst co-worker who retired, and that he continues to perform these duties. He further states that other work assignments have been shifted to him from the GS-12 Budget Analysts in order to reduce their workloads.

His servicing Human Resources Office (HRO) conducted a position audit with the appellant on August 25, 2005, to determine the proper grade level of his assigned duties and responsibilities in response to his concerns over this matter. Based on their audit findings, the local HRO found his position to be properly classified.

Subsequent to the HRO's decision, the appellant filed an appeal with the Department of Defense, Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS) requesting that his position be reclassified at the GS-12 grade level. After conducting telephone interviews with the appellant and his immediate supervisor and reviewing all information provided by both the agency and appellant, including his position description (PD) of record , [number], CPMS concluded that the position was properly classified as Budget Analyst, GS-560-11.

We conducted on-site interviews with the appellant and his supervisor on November 23, 2005. In deciding this appeal, we have carefully considered the interview findings and all information provided by both the appellant and his agency. We find that the appellant's PD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the appellant, and we incorporate it by reference into our decision.

General issues

The appellant agrees that his PD of record describes his assigned duties and responsibilities, but, he believes they are portrayed in a way that diminishes his level of independence in performing the work, and instead, gives the impression that he serves to assist the supervisor. His supervisor certifies that PD [number] is current and accurate as written.

A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position or job by an official with the authority to assign work. A position is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by the employee. Classification appeal regulations permit OPM to

investigate or audit a position and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities currently assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision classifies a real operating position, and not simply the PD. This decision is based on the work currently assigned to and performed by the appellant.

The appellant makes various statements about the classification review processes conducted by his agency. He also compares his work to higher graded positions within his office. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM position classification standards (PCSs) and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of the appellant's position. Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare his position to others, which may or may not be classified properly, as a basis for deciding his appeal. Because our decision sets aside any previous agency decision, the classification practices used by the appellant's agency in classifying his position are not germane to the OPM classification appeal process.

Position information

The office in which the appellant works is staffed with the following positions: one Supervisory Budget Analyst, GS-560-13; six Budget Analysts, GS-560-12; five Program Analysts, GS-343-12; and the appellant's position. Each of the GS-12 Budget Analysts is assigned continuing responsibility to accomplish budgetary work necessary to support and maintain particular types and models of Navy and Marine aircraft.

The appellant gathers information necessary for the preparation of various required reports by issuing data calls for specified data from the other Budget Analysts within the office. He compiles, analyzes, maintains, and reports on consolidated budgetary data for the office. This information is used for budget formulation, presentation and justification of budget proposals/recommendations, and to track, adjust and manage budget execution. The appellant spends 40 percent of his time on duties relating to budget formulation and presentation, and 30 percent of his time on tasks associated with budget execution such as monitoring and reporting weekly on fund activities, comparisons of projected versus actual expenditures, tracking obligations and sales to ensure that actions do not exceed established limits, etc.

The appellant spends 15 percent of his time serving as designated point of contact and coordinator for the office regarding the Flying Hour Program (FHP). In this capacity he receives monthly un-scrubbed (i.e. reports where the data has not yet been completely validated) and yearly scrubbed budget analysis reports from the Naval Operations (OPNAV) FHP coordinator concerning projected and actual costs associated with the operational use of particular types and models of Navy and Marine aircraft. The appellant disseminates information to the GS-12 Budget Analysts responsible for specific types and models of aircraft, and personally analyzes the OPNAV data to compare projected and actual usage, identify and correct faulty entries in un-scrubbed reports, and to identify and report on trends, spikes, etc. The information contained in FHP program reports is provided in standardized spreadsheet format containing data fields which are updated on a monthly basis to reflect actual usage and costs associated with different types and models of aircraft assigned to particular major commands and reserve components.

The appellant spends the remaining 15 percent of his time preparing ad-hoc reports and/or responding to unique requests for information pertaining to specific issues raised by internal and external customers. For example, he may prepare reports for military customers in response to questions concerning how much fuel was used over a period of time for a particular aircraft or type/model of aircraft.

Series, Title & Standard Determination

The agency classified the appellant's position in the Budget Analysis Series, GS-560, and titled it as Budget Analyst. The appellant does not disagree with the agency's title and series determination. We concur. The appellant's budgetary work is properly evaluated using the Job Family Position Classification Standard (JFS) for Professional and Administrative Work in the Accounting and Budget Group, GS-500, which includes the GS-560 series as a covered occupation.

Grade determination

The GS-500 JFS uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES) method of position classification. Grades are determined by comparing a position's duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements with the nine FES factors. A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties and responsibilities with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The points assigned to an individual factor level mark the lower end of the range for that factor level. To warrant a given level, the position must fully equate to the overall intent of the factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to fully satisfy a particular factor-level description, the point value for the next lower level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect that meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade level by use of a grade conversion table in the GS-500 JFS.

The agency applied the GS-500 JFS grading criteria and credited the appellant's position at Levels 1-7, 2-3, 3-3, 4-4, 5-4, 6-2, 7-C, 8-1, and 9-1. The appellant believes his position should be credited with Levels 1-7, 2-4, 3-4, 4-5, 5-4, 6-3, 7-D, 8-1, and 9-1. Based on careful analysis of the entire record, we concur with the crediting of Levels 1-7, 5-4, 8-1 and 9-1. We will address the remaining factors.

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and how the work is reviewed or controlled. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the employee, priorities and deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. Responsibility of the employee depends upon the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives. The degree of review of completed work depends upon the nature and extent of the review.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor outlines or discusses possible problem areas and defines objectives, plans, priorities and deadlines. The employee independently plans and carries out the assignment in conformance with accepted budget or finance practices. The employee adheres to instructions, policies and guidelines in exercising judgment to resolve commonly encountered work problems and deviations, and brings controversial information or findings to the supervisor's attention for direction. The supervisor does not usually review methods used in detail, but reviews and evaluates completed work for technical soundness, adequacy of analysis, validity of conclusions, conformity with applicable policies and regulations, and feasibility of any proposals.

At Level 2-4, the supervisor outlines overall objectives and the resources available. In consultation with the supervisor, the employee discusses timeframes, scope of the assignment including possible stages, and possible approaches. The employee functions as technical authority with responsibility for actions that include directing other functional specialists, resolving most of the conflicts, coordinating the work with others, developing changes to plans and/or methodologies, interpreting policy and regulatory requirements, and keeping the supervisor informed of potentially controversial matters. These include major problems such as the need for supplementary appropriations and/or inability to meet key budget and program guidelines. The supervisor reviews the work for soundness of overall approach, effectiveness in meeting requirements or producing the results expected, and the feasibility of recommendations and adherence to requirements. The supervisor does not usually review methods used.

The appellant states that he serves as a recognized technical authority with responsibility for directing others, resolving most conflicts and developing changes to plans and/or methodologies as described at Level 2-4. He also states that as the designated point of contact and budget coordinator for the FHP at [organization/location], he is totally responsible for planning, organizing and conducting all projects, analysis and evaluations independent of supervision.

We find that the appellant does have a significant degree of independence in the performance of his assigned duties. However, in determining the proper level to credit for this factor, it is not just the degree of independence, but also the degree to which the nature of the work allows the employee to make decisions and commitments and to exercise judgment that is evaluated. The appellant's work is performed in accordance with established guidance and primarily involves the use of standardized formats for compiling, analyzing and reporting budgetary information. Issues which arise in the performance of his duties that may be controversial, require significant deviations from available methods and techniques, or involve the establishment of new practices/methodologies are referred to the supervisor for direction. The appellant does not routinely deal with problems or potentially controversial matters entailing the application of Level 2-4 judgment, nor does his work regularly require the extensive policy and regulatory interpretation or changes in plans and methodology indicative of that Level. Because this factor does not fully meet Level 2-4, Level 2-3 (275 points) must be credited.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. Individual assignments may vary in the specificity, applicability, and availability of guidelines; thus, the level of required judgment similarly varies. The existence of detailed plans and other instructions may make innovation in planning and conducting work unnecessary or undesirable. However, in the absence of guidance provided by prior agency experience with the task at hand or when objectives are broadly stated, the employee may use considerable judgment in developing an approach or planning the work.

Guidelines at Level 3-3 typically provide a preferred approach or describe generally accepted standards rather than specific requirements. Guidelines include handbooks developed at higher echelons, handbook(s) containing specifications for a financial information system, precedent cases, and other legal decisions. At this level, employees use judgment to adapt the guidelines to specific cases or problems and to interpret a large number of varied policies and regulations.

Guidelines and policies at Level 3-4 are typically scarce and very general in nature. The guidelines are stated in terms of goals to be accomplished rather than the approach to be taken. Precedents are either not available or not applicable. Examples of guidelines used at this level include Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars and regulations, Treasury regulations, judicial decisions, Comptroller General decisions, and broad agency program goals and policy statements. The employee routinely develops specific objectives and devises new methods, techniques, and criteria, such as identifying trends and patterns, acquiring information, modifying systems, developing solutions, and presenting findings.

As at Level 3-3, the appellant uses a wide variety of statutes, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines issued by the OMB, Department of Defense (DoD), OPNAV, Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), and Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) which vary from general to specific in nature. Some of the guidelines directly apply to work assignments, and some require interpretation and adaptation to specific situations.

While many of the guidelines available to the appellant provide only general information, they are not as scarce or vague as to impose the high degree of interpretation on a regular basis as intended in order to credit Level 3-4. The appellant's duties primarily involve the preparation of budgetary reports of consolidated data in standardized format. He identifies patterns and trends within data that has been provided following established formats. He also identifies flawed data entries on un-scrubbed standardized reports for correction. The appellant's work does not routinely require or permit devising new work methods and techniques in order to carry out such assignments due to the varied and changing nature of the data, analysis and/or reports involved, as described at Level 3-4. As requested, the appellant prepares unique reports to address specific issues raised by military customer activities, management, or as directed, for other interested parties. Such ad-hoc reports are typically generated by pulling specified entries pertaining to the issue in question from existing data/reports. Issues which may arise in performing his assigned duties, for which precedent and guidance is either unavailable or not readily adaptable, are referred to the supervisor for advice and direction on how to handle the situation. Level 3-3 (275 points) is credited.

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.

At Level 4-4, the work consists of a variety of analytical, technical, and administrative work for substantive programs and support activities. These programs and activities are funded through a number of sources, such as appropriations, allotments, reimbursable accounts, and transfers of funds between organizations. Programs and funding are unstable and subject to change throughout the fiscal year, necessitating frequent adjustments to budget estimates. The employee at this level identifies and analyzes changes in budgetary and financial policies, regulations, and available funds that affect accomplishing program objectives; analyzes data to develop annual and multi-year budget estimates; conducts research and identifies trends in the use of funds; and recommends adjustments in program spending that require the rescheduling of program workloads. The employee assists program managers and staff officials in interpreting the impact of and planning for multiyear budgetary, financial, and program changes. Unpredictable short-term deadlines, available funding, program goals, and workload make it difficult to identify trends in the use of funds, recommend program spending adjustments, and assist program managers in planning for multi-year changes.

At Level 4-5, the work consists of selecting and using many different and unrelated analytical techniques and methods relative to substantive agency programs with widely varying needs, goals, objectives, work processes, and timetables. Such programs relate to many echelons and components within a large Federal department or agency, to other agencies, to private industry or to the public. At this level, budget execution work involves the most difficult funds control activities which may include efforts to adapt budgetary policies, analytical methods and regulatory procedures for use by subordinate echelons, and their centralized or consolidated equivalent. Work covers such matters as multi-year procurements of major weapon systems, construction projects, law enforcement activities, and delivery of payments and benefits to the public. Budget Analysts at Level 4-5 develop narrative and statistical justifications, and provide strategies for presenting budget recommendations to gain approval of requested funding for important substantive programs. They evaluate the reactions of budget approving officials to proposals in order to respond to their questions/concerns, and make the necessary budgetary adjustments once higher level decisions have been finalized. At this level, employees encounter continually changing program objectives, plans, and funding requirements due to new legislation, revised policies and shifting demand for goods and services; conflicting program and budgetary requirements; and/or technological developments significantly impacting on the costs of substantive agency programs. Such matters make it difficult to formulate, present and defend budget requests, and require the development and application of innovative methods and techniques to evaluate the progress and cost effectiveness of plans, goals and objectives.

Typical of Level 4-4, the appellant tracks and adjusts budgetary information in response to changing operational requirements and generating timely reports and supporting documentation. He compiles and analyzes detailed program and budgetary estimate information, and provides

reports and exhibits to support the presentation of budgetary recommendations/requests to meet annual and multi-year operational program goals for the replenishment and stratification of the Navy Working Capital Fund in support of Navy and Marine aircraft. While he works in an organization responsible for multi-year procurements of major weapon systems, the appellant develops required reports and presentation materials based on information provided by the GS-12 Budget Analysts in the office who directly support those programs. He discusses preliminary reports with his supervisor prior to preparing final versions for use by management in explaining and justifying past operational costs and budget projections to approving officials. Substantive questions arising during the supervisory review process concerning operational issues pertaining to particular models and/or types of aircraft are referred to the responsible GS-12 Budget Analyst for explanation. Primary reporting requirements are accomplished three times a year for Capital Assessment Programming (CAP), mid-year partial reapportionment and reapportionment prior to the next year's CAP.

Unlike Level 4-5, the appellant's work does not involve selecting and using many different and unrelated analytical techniques and methods relative to substantive agency programs with widely varying needs, goals, objectives, work processes, and timetables, nor does it involve the most difficult funds control activities or adapting budgetary policies, analytical methods and regulatory procedures for use by subordinate echelons. The appellant does compile budgetary data and prepare annual and multi-year reports regarding Navy and Marine aircraft. However, his work does not involve the types of work situations described at Level 4-5 which make it difficult to formulate, present and defend budget requests, and require the development and application of innovative methods and techniques to evaluate the progress and cost effectiveness of plans, goals and objectives. These are programmatic responsibilities vested in other positions in his agency. Level 4-4 (225 points) is credited.

Factors 6 and 7, Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contacts

These factors measure the type of personal contacts that occur in the work and the purpose of those contacts. These factors include face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under these factors are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, how well the employee and those contacted recognize their relative roles and authorities, the reason for the communication, and the context or environment in which the communication takes place.

These factors are interdependent. The same contacts selected for crediting Factor 6 must be used to evaluate Factor 7. The appropriate level for personal contacts and the corresponding level for purpose of contacts are determined by applying the point assignment chart for Factors 6 and 7.

Personal Contacts

At Level 2, contacts are with employees in the agency both inside and outside the immediate organization and, as required, taxpayers or their representatives. Work at this level may also involve contacts with those outside the agency at the site of an agency audit. Examples of contacts include management support personnel in budget, accounting and financial, management, human resources and information technology offices; agency personnel from

various levels within the agency such as headquarters, regions, districts or field offices or other operating offices in the immediate installations; and/or non-agency personnel that the agency has scheduled for an audit.

Contacts at Level 3 are with executives, officials, managers, professionals, and employees of other agencies and outside organizations and businesses. Contacts are not routine or recurring. Participants must learn the role and authority of each party during the course of the contact. Examples include representatives of contractors; attorneys and accountants of business firms; representatives of state and local governments; administrators, professors, and staff of universities and hospitals; other Federal agencies; and various levels of agency management at higher levels in the agency.

The appellant's work related contacts meet Level 2 and include a variety of personnel from both within and outside his immediate organization. The individuals he regularly deals with are primarily involved with the execution and/or management of budget programs. The appellant's contacts include the other Budget Analysts within the immediate office, his immediate and second level supervisor, administrative personnel, personnel from customer Navy and Marine installations, officials of OPNAV, Financial Management and Budget Office (FMB), NAVAIR, NAVSUP, and [organization].

Level 3 is not met. The appellant's work does not regularly involve contacts with executives, officials, managers, professionals, and employees of other agencies and/or outside organizations and businesses. The appellant's contacts are typically of a regular and recurring nature involving individuals or organizations (including their respective roles in the budget process) familiar to the appellant and with the nature of his contacts. They do not regularly involve the wide variety of contacts encountered in the daily performance of assigned work as described at Level 3 and do not regularly necessitate discerning the role and authority of each party contacted during the course of the contacts.

Purpose of Contacts

The purpose of contacts at Level C are to influence, motivate, interrogate, or control persons or groups when there is wide disagreement on the merits of a proposed action or when persons are fearful or uncooperative. Work at this level may involve persuading program managers and other officials in positions of decision-making authority with widely differing goals and interests to follow a recommended course of action, or persuading others to accept the employee's point of view regarding the merits of using an accounting method, concept or procedure when they hold different opinions.

At Level D, the purpose of contacts is to present, justify, defend, negotiate or settle matters involving significant or controversial issues. Persons contacted typically have diverse viewpoints, goals or objectives. The employee must work with these individuals to achieve a common understanding of the problem. This often requires negotiating a compromise or developing suitable problem resolution alternatives. The topics under discussion usually involve long range issues or problems. Examples of work at this level involve defending alternative methods of financing substantive program operations or the redistribution of appropriated funds

and programs among components immediately below agency or equivalent level; negotiating and resolving controversial financial and program issues and problems not susceptible to resolution at lower echelons in government; justifying the overall direction to be given for the organization's financial management, budgeting accounting or auditing programs; justifying proposed changes to achieve major economies; and/or justifying proposed revisions to standards and guides for complex programs or activities.

As at Level C, the appellant's contacts are for the purpose of informing, explaining, and advising on and persuading others to accept particular courses of action pertaining to budgetary issues/proposals based on his analysis of provided and compiled budgetary data. His recommendations are developed in compliance with existing statutory, regulatory and policy guidance and consistent with available funding and/or with established practices for funding requests. He prepares the materials, including graphic representations of data, necessary to document and explain past performance and present/justify budget requests for the continued operational support of Navy and Marine aircraft. The appellant's contacts do not involve justifying, defending, negotiating or settling matters involving significant or controversial issues, nor do they require negotiating compromises or developing suitable problem resolution alternatives. The appellant's supervisor is responsible and accountable for dealing with such matters in the presentation of consolidated office budget data and funding requests to higher level approving authorities. The purpose of the appellants contacts meets but does not exceed Level C.

Factors 6 and 7 are evaluated at Levels 2 and C respectively with combined credit for 145 points.

Summary

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. <i>Knowledge Required by the Position</i>	1-7	1250
2. <i>Supervisory Controls</i>	2-3	275
3. <i>Guidelines</i>	3-3	275
4. <i>Complexity</i>	4-4	225
5. <i>Scope and Effect</i>	5-4	225
6. <i>Personal Contacts and</i>	6-2	
7. <i>Purpose of Contacts</i>	7-C	145
8. <i>Physical Demands</i>	8-1	5
9. <i>Work Environment</i>	9-1	<u>5</u>
<i>Total Points</i>		2405

A total of 2405 points falls within the range for GS-11 (2355 to 2750 points), according to the grade conversion table in the GS-500 PCS.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Budget Analyst, GS-560-11.