

**CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION  
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
CHICAGO OVERSIGHT DIVISION**

INCUMBENT: **[Appellant]**

REPRESENTATIVE: [Representative]

POSITION NUMBER: 14444

AGENCY CLASSIFICATION: Personnel Staffing and Classification  
Specialist, GS-201-11

POSITION LOCATION: Department of the Army  
[Installation]  
[Activity]  
[City, State]

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL  
MANAGEMENT DECISION: **Personnel Staffing and Classification  
Specialist, GS-201-11**

**OPM decision number:** C-0201-11-01

This appellate decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on administrative, certifying, payroll, and accounting offices of the Government. It is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position, not subject to further appeal. It is subject to discretionary review only under the conditions and time limits specified in Part 511, Subpart F, of Title 5, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.

/s/

---

FREDERICK J. BOLAND  
CLASSIFICATION APPEALS OFFICER

12/30/96

---

DATE

## **Information Considered**

- ▶ Appellant's letter of appeal, dated October 8, 1996, and earlier correspondence.
- ▶ Copy of the official description of the appellant's position.
- ▶ Copy of the official description of the appellant's supervisor's position.
- ▶ Copy of the appellant's performance standards.
- ▶ Copy of the organization chart and statement of functions for the [activity].
- ▶ Audit of the appellant's position by telephone discussion of duties with her on October 9, 1996, and with her supervisor on December 30, 1996.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

- ▶ OPM position classification standards for Personnel Management, GS-201, Series dated June 1966.
- ▶ OPM position classification standards for Personnel Staffing, GS-212, Series dated June 1971.
- ▶ OPM position classification standards for Position Classification, GS-221, Series dated June 1966.

## **Introduction**

The appellant contests her agency's decision classifying her position, number 14444, as Personnel Staffing and Classification Specialist, GS-201-11. The position is located in the [Activity], [Installation], [City, State]. She feels providing management advice (Factor 2 of the GS-201 standard) to an organization as complex as the [large Medical Command] that she supports warrants assignment of a higher grade level.

## **Job Information**

The appellant supports certain civilian personnel needs of the [large Medical Command] at [Installation]. The [large Medical Command] provides comprehensive health services to the [Installation] community and employs about 700 civilian and 445 military personnel. The appellant, among other things, evaluates and grades a variety of [large Medical Command] positions, including professional, scientific, administrative, clerical, technical, and trades and crafts positions, to determine their specializations and pay categories. She conducts position management and classification studies and surveys following established procedures for scheduling, reporting, clearing, and presenting

results and recommendations. She administers in-service and out-placement programs, identifies sources for filling civilian positions, determines qualifications of and ranks applicants, and provides lists of qualified candidates to supervisors when filling positions. She develops with [large Medical Command] managers and supervisors short and long range plans for filling civilian vacancies. She also advises [large Medical Command] managers and supervisors on the identification and resolution of personnel problems.

The appellant, along with about four other GS-11 Specialists and one GS-12 senior Specialist, reports to a GS-12 Supervisory Personnel Staffing and Classification Specialist, who heads the [activity].

## **Analysis and Findings**

### **Series and Title Determination**

The appellant's duties involve two personnel specializations. Her recruitment and examining of job candidates, in-service and out-placement work is covered by the Personnel Staffing, GS-212, series. Her evaluation and grading of positions according to the kind of work, level of difficulty, degree of responsibility, and qualification requirements is covered by the Position Classification, GS-221, series. Work that involves two or more specialized personnel functions, like staffing and classification, is classified in the Personnel Management, GS-201, series.

Positions in the GS-201 series that perform work in only two specialized areas, like the appellant's, are titled to reflect the work of both specializations. The prescribed title for the appellant's position, then, is *Personnel Staffing and Classification Specialist*.

### **Grade Determination**

The GS-201 Personnel Management classification standard is presented in two parts. Part I covers Personnel Officer positions and deals with personnel management in terms of broad, overall program responsibilities. Part II covers nonsupervisory specialized personnel work, like the appellant's.

Part II provides grading criteria for positions involving mixtures of placement and classification work, like the appellant's. The grade-level portions of the standard describe separately, at each grade, the characteristics of each of three different types of positions: 1) Program Operations, 2) Program Evaluation, and 3) Program Development. The first type describes the direct performance of personnel work in an operating personnel office providing day to day servicing and located at the organizational level of any agency. The second involves review and evaluation of the work of operating personnel offices (excluding self-evaluation conducted by an operating personnel staff). The third involves the preparation of guides to be used by management officials and operating personnel offices in performance of personnel management work. The appellant's assignments are characteristic of the first type, Program Operations.

Part II of the classification standard prescribes five factors for distinguishing among grade levels. The factors are: 1) Complexity and Difficulty of the Technical Personnel Programs, 2) Management Advisory Service Functions, 3) Nature of Supervision Received, 4) Authority, and 5) Personal

Contacts. Grade level determination requires the application of the grade level descriptions found under each factor. In order for a certain grade level to be assigned, the duties must fully meet that grade level in all of the factors. If work is not fully equivalent to the overall intent of a particular level described in the standard, a lower level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect of the work that meets a higher level.

GS-12 Specialists' work is characterized by either: (1) assignments that regularly encompass problems of more than average difficulty, combined with management advisory services functions that are significantly more difficult and responsible than those found at the GS-11 level, or (2) service as a troubleshooter with *independent* responsibility for resolving very difficult problems, such as those that fully experienced GS-11 Specialists have difficulty resolving. Troubleshooting assignments are given to the senior Specialist in the appellant's division. Consequently, only the first of the two GS-12 level roles is examined.

### **Factor 1**

At the GS-11 level, the appellant has already been credited by her agency for handling problems of more than average difficulty. The resolution of such problems requires the application of a high degree of technical skill, knowledge, and judgment. This arises from the nature of the jobs and organizations dealt with and the degree to which the guides available represent difficult interpretation problems. These characteristics are already credited by the agency under Factor 1, Complexity and Difficulty of Technical Personnel Problems, which acknowledges the position meets the GS-11 level based upon the [large Medical Command's] organizational complexity, the diversity and complexity of its occupations, and the need to interpret and adapt guidelines. As the appellant does not dispute this portion of the agency's assessment, and since we concur with it, it is not further addressed in this decision.

We evaluate this factor at the GS-11 level.

### **Factor 2**

The appellant feels the problems she advises [large Medical Command] managers about involve greater difficulty and responsibility than typical of the GS-11 level. In support of her claim, the appellant states:

I have been assigned responsibility for providing management advisory services to [large Medical Command] on both staffing and position management and classification. I have provided significant management advisory services on broad, comprehensive issues . . . that not only require an intensive search for sound solutions, but also persuasiveness, trust and creditability with management. Additionally, I must use persuasiveness, creativity, innovation and insight to educate management (primarily military officers, who generally have very limited experience with civilian personnel management) and accommodate their needs without compromising fundamental personnel law, principles and regulations . . . . Because of the complexity of the organization and the types of positions at [large Medical Command], advisory service is an ongoing requirement of my position, which may occur in regularly scheduled meetings or impromptu, when the Deputy Commander for Administration; Deputy Commander for Nursing; or Chief of Managed Care . . . ask for advice on a particular issue. Because of the inherent, emergent nature of the [large Medical Command] mission, the advisory is often more urgently needed than normal. In order to provide these on-the-spot advisories, I rely upon my broad based personnel knowledge,

technical competence in classification and staffing . . . and knowledge of the complex organizational structure, mission and occupational characteristics gained through my years of work with the [large Medical Command] organization . . . . The demand for advisory services is even greater than ever before at the local [large Medical Command] level. In years past, the [large Medical Command] provided some staffing and classification advisory assistance, but due to reorganizations, downsizing and severe staffing reductions, the [other large Medical Command] has eliminated many services previously provided.

Management advisory service functions are considered difficult and responsible when they require a high level of technical skill in the specialized personnel field, broad personnel management knowledge, and such personal qualities as persuasiveness, imagination, and insight. Performance of these functions is characterized by breadth of approach, i.e., identification of the true nature of a management problem and its consideration from the total personnel management viewpoint, not just from that of the specialized field represented by the personnel worker. It is also characterized by the intensity or depth of the search for sound solutions.

These functions are classifiable at the GS-11 level when they are performed in relation to an organization that has the occupational and organizational characteristics typical of assignments of the GS-9 level, e.g., more routine occupations, such as clerical and trades jobs, or more specialized occupations, but in a stable organization with standardized positions.

Management advisory service is more difficult and responsible when done in reference to jobs and organizations that are complex, new, or dynamic in nature. The [large Medical Command] is a complex organization, as already noted in crediting the appellant at the GS-11 level under Complexity and Difficulty of Technical Personnel Problems. However, aside from the appellant's claims that she satisfies the higher level management advisory service criteria, the specific work examples she provides do not demonstrate the necessary intensity or depth of analysis characteristic of GS-12 work. Such work requires a more substantial depth of analysis than fully experienced Specialists typically employ, such as when facing novel or obscure problems or dealing with major areas of uncertainty in approach, methodology, or interpretation. The requisite complexity might be encountered in a complex organization like [large Medical Command] when:

- ▶ planning systematic studies to identify long and short range personnel needs,
- ▶ advising on organizational structure to facilitate career development or to meet other management needs,
- ▶ advising on logical duties relationships, sources and availability of needed skills, full utilization of available skills, etc., during reorganizations, or
- ▶ assisting in the solution of problems of morale, turnover, working conditions, low production, review channels, job dilution or expansion, etc.

For any of the above examples to be considered equivalent to the GS-12 level, substantial analysis must underlie the advice and assistance rendered. This goes beyond adapting guidelines and precedents to treat difficult, but conventional problems, as at the GS-11 level. Rather, it typically involves researching trends and patterns to develop new methods, criteria, or proposed policies and

analyzing a variety of unusual conditions or problems that affect a wide range of agency activities.

The appellant's position description states that she provides full management advisory services such as planning and performing studies to identify long and short range personnel needs, advises management on organization structure to meet needs or facilitate career development, solves problems dealing with morale, turnover, job dilution, or expansion, and presents recommendations to management from a comprehensive management standpoint. She also claims that the advisory services she provides are the kind specified at the GS-12 level. However, some of the specific work examples she cites relate to staffing or classification specific problems, rather than broader management problems. Others involving broader management problems are of lesser scope and demand less extensive analysis than required at GS-12 level.

For example, she points out that she issues advisories on position management options, such as one concerning a GS-11 Supervisory Medical Technician [large Medical Command] sought to upgrade. Her advisory discussed reporting relationships, establishing lower level supervisory positions, and the 'impact of the person on the job' classification concept. The advisory required classification skill, for which she is credited under Factor 1, but did not demand broader management skill, require researching trends, or involve extensive analysis of a variety of unusual conditions. Rather, it demanded conventional job analysis and the application of classification principles and grading criteria to a specific position. An evaluation statement for the GS-11 Chief of Environmental Care position that she also cites required similar specialized skill, rather than the broader skill and extensive analysis characteristic of GS-12 work.

The appellant indicates that she is involved with Pharmacist, Nurse Practitioner, and Physician Assistant pay issues, salary surveys, and retention allowances. She is already credited under Factor 1 with staffing difficult positions using such approaches.

The appellant is involved with studies to identify long and short range personnel needs for [large Medical Command]. This responsibility is also assigned in a broader sense to the senior Specialist in her division, who is tasked with identifying personnel needs. While GS-12 Specialists independently conduct systematic studies of complex organizations, the appellant's involvement in such studies is more limited in scope and analysis than characteristic of the GS-12 level. Her involvement, for example, does not include extensive analysis of a variety of unusual conditions or problems.

We evaluate this factor at the GS-11 level.

### **Factors 3, 4, and 5.**

The few differences between GS-11 and GS-12 Specialists on these three factors (Nature of Supervision Received, Authority, and Personal Contacts) derive from the complexity of problems dealt with and the increase in responsibility associated with resolving such problems. As noted previously, the appellant's management advisory functions are comparable to the GS-11, rather than the GS-12 level, which precludes higher than GS-11 level credit for these factors. These factors are

already credited by the agency at a normal level for experienced Specialists. As the appellant does not dispute this portion of the agency's assessment, and since we concur with it, it is not further addressed in this decision.

We evaluate these factors at the GS-11 level.

**DECISION:**

The appellant's staffing and classification assignments are fully credited at the GS-11 level. Her regular management advisory assignments entail the scope and depth of analysis typical of the GS-11 level. Therefore, her position is properly classified as Personnel Staffing and Classification Specialist, GS-201-11.