

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

Atlanta Field Services Group  
75 Spring Street SW., Suite 1018  
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

**Appellant:** [name]

**Agency classification:** Procurement Analyst  
GS-1102-7

**Organization:** Business Management Division  
Directorate of Contracting  
U.S. Army Contracting Agency  
Department of the Army  
[location]

**OPM decision:** Computer Assistant  
GS-0335-7

**OPM decision number:** C-335-07-07

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin E. Mahoney  
Deputy Associate Director  
Center for Merit System Accountability

March 30, 2006

\_\_\_\_\_  
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).

Since this decision changes the title and series of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of this decision, as permitted by 5 CFR 511.702. The servicing personnel office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected position description (PD) and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the effective date of the personnel action.

**Decision sent to:**

[appellant's name and address]

Human Resources Director  
Civilian Personnel Advisory Center  
[address]  
[location]

Department of the Army  
Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1  
Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel  
200 Stovall Street  
Alexandria, VA 22332-0300

Director, U.S. Army Civilian Personnel  
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Chief, Position Management and Classification Branch  
Office of Assistant Secretary  
Manpower and Reserve Affairs  
Department of the Army  
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Hoffman Building II  
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Alexandria, VA 22332-0340

Chief, Classification Appeals  
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Civilian Personnel Management Service  
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## **Introduction**

The Atlanta Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [name] on September 21, 2005. His position is currently classified as Procurement Analyst, GS-1102-7. He requests reclassification of his position as Information Technology (IT) Specialist, GS-2210-9. The position is assigned to the Business Management Division, Directorate of Contracting, U.S. Army Contracting Agency, Department of the Army, [location]. We received the agency's administrative report on November 7, 2005. The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

## **General issues**

On June 9, 2003, the appellant was placed in a GS-1102-7, Contract Specialist, position with promotion potential to the GS-1102-9. Subsequently, on May 15, 2005, the agency reassigned him to a GS-1102-7, Procurement Analyst, position, also with promotion potential to the GS-1102-9. The appellant believes the classification of his current position is not accurate because he spends all of his time performing computer-related duties. He states that although he has received formal training in procurement and contracting work, he has not been assigned procurement analyst work or been offered on-the-job training as a procurement analyst. Instead, he performs computer-related work in support of the procurement analysts in his organization. He also believes that a professional knowledge of procurement is not needed to adequately perform the work he is assigned.

The appellant is assigned to position description (PD) number [number]. The appellant's supervisor certified the accuracy of the PD. The appellant did not.

A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position by an official with the authority to assign work. A position is the work made up of the duties and responsibilities performed by an employee. Position classification appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a position and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision grades a real operating position, and not simply the PD. Therefore, this decision is based on the actual work assigned to and performed by the appellants.

In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of the 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 only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including information obtained from telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor and all other information of record.

## **Position information**

The appellant's supervisor, a Supervisory Procurement Analyst, GS-1102-13, is the Division Chief for the Business Management Division. There are eight positions under the supervisor: one Administrative Assistant, GS-303-6, five GS-1102s, ranging from grade 7 to 12, one Procurement System Analyst, GS-1101-11 (providing information technology (IT) support for the Directorate of Contracting), and the appellant's position.

According to the appellant's PD, the position is a developmental entry-level position progressing to the full-performance target grade of Procurement Analyst, GS-1102-9. The position is designed to prepare the incumbent to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the duties outlined on the target PD. The primary purpose of the position is to serve as a procurement systems analyst and assistant systems administrator for the Standard Procurement System (SPS), a microcomputer-based system that maintains a procurement database, tracks contracting actions, creates contractual documents, and produces administrative reports.

Our fact finding revealed that the appellant is not assigned developmental duties involving the GS-1102 work. The work he is assigned and performs does not require the identified level or scope of knowledge. The appellant spends most of his time performing recurring computer-related duties and does not perform procurement analyst work other than attending occasional scheduled procurement analyst training. Under Factor 1, Knowledge Required, the PD is overstated in identifying a requirement for knowledge of contracting principles and procedures, legal and regulatory procurement requirements, and a variety of contract forms, terms, and clauses sufficient to administer the automated system. The appellant's responsibility for assisting in administering the automated system does not require these knowledges. Factor 1 also states that the incumbent must have a knowledge of mission, objectives, terminology, and program goals of the organization to recognize potential for automated application. However, the appellant is not expected or required to recognize potential for automated application, but instead, assists staff that do.

Factor 4, Complexity, indicates assignments of progressively more difficult assignments designed to provide diversified experience as a foundation for full-performance-level responsibility. Examples of work listed include maintaining a procurement database, tracking contracting actions, creating contractual documents, and producing administrative reports. Although the appellant does perform this variety of systems support tasks, the assignments are of a recurring nature, and are designed to provide practical assistance in the operation of standardized systems rather than progression toward more difficult assignments. When problems are beyond the appellant's experience or knowledge, he requests assistance from a higher-graded employee.

The record shows that the appellant has three primary duties. The first requires the appellant to assist the Procurement System Analyst, GS-11, the systems administrator, in performing a variety of tasks in administering the SPS and other automated systems for the contracting directorate. He utilizes knowledge of the procurement process and micro-processing in order to maintain the automated procurement system. He performs a variety of tasks involved in the installation, configuration, and operation of the SPS, including installing software, establishing user files, ensuring system security, starting up and shutting down of the system, and monitoring

the operation of the local area network. He installs systems updates, creates system administrative utilities, maintains production records, performs daily and weekly data back-ups, and provides assistance to end users on problems associated with daily operations.

The second duty requires the appellant to assist with installing various software to maintain network operations, computers, scanners, printers, and other peripheral devices. He ensures all provisions and security measures are met to protect the integrity of the system, network, and data. He assists in the resolution of end-user problems regarding routine automation, communications, hardware, software, network problems, and general calls for assistance. He maintains a liaison with the information management staff to report and identify problems with applications, the operating system, or hardware that are difficult to pinpoint and resolve. He sets up e-mail accounts, posts documents on a shared-drive Web site, is responsible for tracking accounting errors in the Computerized Accounts Payable System (CAPS), and maintains trouble-call reports.

The third duty requires the appellant to assist in interpreting the Defense Finance and Accounting System (DFAS) automated reports, and directing corrective action to responsible agents, including consolidating procurement actions, and preparing monthly procurement summary reports for credit card transactions. He assists with preparing monthly management reports for evaluation of mission effectiveness by checking evolutionary defense acquisition logs and failures, by running statistics script, by monitoring server performance, and by monitoring Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) transmissions. He also ensures proper acquisition clauses are correctly loaded in system software, and provides timely updates as necessary.

According to both the supervisor and the appellant, the appellant receives work direction from the Procurement System Analyst, GS-11, and spends most of his time performing computer processing duties. The appellant completes work without technical review by the supervisor.

When technical assistance is required, or unusual situations arise, the appellant requests support from the Procurement System Analyst, GS-11. The supervisor is kept informed of progress, and completed work is reviewed for conformity to deadlines and accepted practices. The appellant's work methods are not normally reviewed unless a recurring, common pattern of problems develop.

### **Series, title, and standard determination**

The agency placed the appellant's position in the Procurement Analyst Series, GS-1102, and titled it Procurement Analyst. The GS-1102 series covers professional work that manages, supervises, performs, or develops policies and procedures involving the procurement of supplies, services, construction, or research and development using formal advertising or negotiation procedures; the evaluation of contract price proposals; and the administration or termination and close out of contracts. The work requires knowledge of the legislation, regulations, and methods used in contracting; and knowledge of business and industry practices, sources of supply, cost factors, and requirements characteristics.

The appellant's position is not covered by the GS-1102 series. The appellant's duties require him to assist the systems administrator operate a microcomputer-based system that maintains a

procurement database, tracks contracting actions, creates contractual documents, and produces administrative reports. These duties do not consist of professional GS-1102 work managing, supervising, performing, or developing policies and procedures involving the procurement of supplies, services, construction, or research and development using formal advertising or negotiation procedures; the evaluation of contract price proposals; and the administration or termination and close out of contracts. The work does not require knowledge of the legislation, regulations, and methods used in contracting; or the knowledge of business and industry practices, sources of supply, cost factors, and requirements characteristics in order to perform the duties of the position.

Duties associated with the appellant's position include: monitoring the micro-computer-based SPS; issuing computer and server access, including user mail accounts; assigning of passwords; installing software and hardware; maintaining the operation and recording of system backups and the storage of backup records; troubleshooting software and hardware problems; and responding to general requests for assistance from end users on issues not handled by the Procurement System Analyst, GS-11. This work requires a practical knowledge of the operating systems of the software and hardware associated with the procurement work of the organization.

Evaluation of the computer-related duties of this position requires us to determine whether the work is one- or two-grade interval in nature. Two-grade interval IT Management, GS-2210 and the one-grade interval Computer Clerk and Assistance, GS-335 work have some common tasks. However, the GS-2210 series covers positions that manage, supervise, lead, administer, develop, deliver, and support IT systems and services. This series includes only those positions for which the paramount requirement is knowledge of IT principles, concepts, and methods.

Positions responsible for functions such as the appellant's are excluded from the GS-2210 series because these functions do not require the regular and recurring application of knowledge of IT principles, concepts, and methods. Work that requires a practical knowledge of IT systems, workflow, and controls, rather than the broad and in-depth knowledge of IT principles, concepts, and methods characteristic of positions covered by this standard, is included in the Computer Clerk and Assistance Series, GS-335.

The GS-335 series covers positions involving performance or supervision of data processing support and services functions for users of digital computer systems. This work requires knowledge of external data processing sequences, controls, procedures, or user and programming languages, rather than in-depth knowledge of computer requirements or techniques associated with development and design of data processing systems. One of the functional areas identified by the standard is direct support to computer (now IT) specialists. In this capacity, some computer assistants at full-performance levels perform duties similar to those assigned to entry and trainee-level IT specialist positions.

Based on the appellant's computer assistance duties, the appellant's position is properly assigned to the GS-335 series, and must be evaluated by applying the grading criteria in the published position classification standard (PCS) for that series. The PCS specifies that non-supervisory positions in grade GS-5 and above are titled Computer Assistant.

## **Grade determination**

The GS-335 PCS is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Positions evaluated under the FES format are compared to nine factors. Levels are assigned for each factor and the points associated with the assigned levels are totaled and converted to a grade level by application of the Grade Conversion Table contained in the PCS. Under the FES, factor-level descriptions mark the floor threshold for the indicated factor-level. If a position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular level in the PCS, the next lower level and its lower point value must be assigned, unless an equally important aspect that meets a higher level balances the deficiency. Our evaluation with respect to the nine factors follows.

### *Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position*

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that employees must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply that knowledge.

At Level 1-4, the employee performs a wide range of preparing, advising, assisting, coding, and procedure-related problem-solving duties using knowledge of computer procedures and processing methods. Work at this level involves knowledge used to assist programmers or other users, or in scheduling, controlling, and problem-solving work.

The appellant's position meets Level 1-4. Similar to that level, he uses knowledge of the procurement process and micro-processing in order to maintain the automated procurement process, such as installing, configuring, and operating the SPS, assisting with interpreting the DFAS automated reports, and assisting with preparing monthly management reports for evaluation of mission effectiveness. Like that level, he assists the system administrator by monitoring the operation of the local area network, setting up e-mail accounts, posting documents on a shared-drive Web site, tracking accounting errors in the CAPS, providing assistance to end users on problems associated with daily operations, and maintaining trouble-call reports. He maintains a liaison with the information management staff to report and identify problems with applications, the operating system, or hardware that are difficult to pinpoint and resolve.

At Level 1-5, the employee carries out limited specialized projects and assignments using knowledge of fundamental data processing methods, practices, and techniques in work involving development, test, implementation, and modification of computer programs and operating procedures. The employee prepares programs or writes new program documentation and operating procedures.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 1-5. The appellants work does not involve developing, testing, implementing, modifying computer programs or operating procedures, or preparing and writing new program documentation and operating procedures. He uses working knowledge of procurement computer systems to assist with monitoring, administering, and training users on the SPS, the CAPS, the DFAS, the FPDS, and other various software and hardware which does not require or permit the use of Level 1-5 knowledge and skill. He



resolves operating problems to assist end users, but reports more difficult problems requiring the use of knowledge equivalent Level 1-5 and above to the Procurement System Analyst, GS-11 in the office.

This factor is credited at Level 1-4 for 550 points.

### *Factor 2, Supervisory controls*

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct and indirect controls exercised by the supervisor. Employee responsibilities, as well as the review of completed work, are included. Employee responsibility 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 highest level identified in the standard, the supervisor provides overall direction on objectives and priorities. The employee independently plans and carries out work. Employees commonly adapt or develop new work procedures and instructions for application by themselves and others. Completed work is reviewed for conformity to deadlines and accepted practices based on written documents and responses from users regarding quality and accuracy of work products.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 2-3. The appellant's supervisor sets overall objectives and priorities, and the appellant is responsible for planning and carrying out projects and resolving technical problems. However, most of the work by the appellant is directed and overseen by a Procurement System Analyst, GS-11. Work assignments are derived through the normal course of planning and carrying out the work to be done and through day-to-day problems as they arise. The appellant identifies the work to be done, and plans and carries out the steps required to accomplish the work. Comparable to Level 2-3, the appellant independently deviates from routine assignments and work methods to provide for changing situations and priorities.

The appellant completes work without technical review by the supervisor. When technical assistance is required, or unusual situations arise, the appellant requests support from a Procurement System Analyst, GS-11. The supervisor is kept informed of progress, and completed work is reviewed for conformity to deadlines and accepted practices. The appellant's work methods are not normally reviewed unless a recurring, common pattern of problems develop.

This factor is credited at Level 2-3 for 275 points.

### *Factor 3, Guidelines*

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them.

At Level 3-3, the highest level identified in the standard, the employee works with new requirements or new applications for which only general guidelines are available. The employee uses judgment in adjusting the most appropriate guidelines to fit new processing requirements or develops new methods for accomplishing the work. Guidelines may require modification to provide for adding new forms of input, allowing for flexible, as opposed to fixed scheduling, adjusting to new or conflicting requirements, or adapting to a new hardware or software capability.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 3-3. The appellant's guidelines are in the form of user manuals, training books, and procedural materials provided by hardware vendors, and software vendors such as CACI, the contractor that provides software guides, database maintenance manuals, and troubleshooting manuals for the SPS. The appellant also uses Microsoft software manuals. Most guidance is general in nature, and the appellant must use judgment to interpret, adapt, and apply this guidance to various interrelated hardware and software systems. For instance, although there are general hardware guides and manuals describing how to disassemble a server, the appellant must use his judgment and experience to determine the most appropriate manner of resolving a problem related to the server.

Although CACI guides and manuals give basic guidance on how the SPS operates, the appellant must interpret and apply the guidance to troubleshoot and monitor the system, often working with CACI contractors over the phone before independently resolving the problems. Comparable to Level 3-3, the appellant adapts the general guidance available to work on the CAPS. No formal guidance is issued by the information management staff, so the appellant uses his previous knowledge, training, and experience to respond to end-user requests for operational assistance in the various software systems they work on, including assisting end users as newer versions of Microsoft software replace older versions.

This factor is credited at Level 3-3 for 275 points.

#### *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 4-3, the employee performs a variety of tasks involving discrete methods and procedures, or a variety of related tasks that require a sequence of actions involving differing methods and procedures. The decision regarding what is to be done results from studying each assignment or problem.

The appellant's position meets Level 4-3. Typical of that level, the appellant performs a variety of systems support tasks. He serves as a point-of-contact for directorate of contracting staff experiencing operational problems with procurement-related software systems, and is a liaison with the information management staff. He reports and identifies problems with applications, the operating system, or hardware that are difficult to pinpoint and resolve. As at that level, he independently determines actions necessary to identify and resolve end-user problems based on

his experience, training, and operational knowledge. After identifying problems, he determines if he can solve them with routine or standard corrective procedures, then selects the ones most appropriate for the situations. When problems are beyond the appellant's experience or knowledge, he requests assistance from the Procurement System Analyst, GS-11.

At Level 4-4, the employee monitors a more varied and complex operating system with more problems to resolve than at Level 4-3. The nature of the independent decisions made by the employee is also more complex. The employee typically monitors operations of several major computer systems and performs problem-solving duties involving a wide range of problem or error conditions in equipment, program data, and processing methods and procedures. This diagnosis and resolution of error and problem conditions involves equipment and configurations having different operating characteristics, a wide variety of data and programs, and many different processes and methods to arrive at solutions or develop new procedures. Decisions regarding what needs to be done include assessing unusual circumstances or conditions, developing variations in approach to fit the specific problems, or dealing with incomplete or conflicting data.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 4-4. The work does not require the appellant to monitor several major computer systems, or solve a wide range of problems related to such complex systems. He assists with administering the SPS, the CAPS, the DFAS, the FPDS, various other software, and hardware. However, unlike Level 4-4, he is not independently in charge of monitoring them. Although the appellant is responsible for resolving a variety of error conditions related to the systems he monitors, the problems he encounters are not of the unusual nature, magnitude, or complexity as those found in multiple, major computer systems found at Level 4-4.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 points.

#### *Factor 5, Scope and effect*

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, e.g., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-3, the highest level identified in the standard, the employee solves problems and answers technical questions about control, scheduling, and/or direct support functions. The problems encountered are conventional to data processing, although solutions are not always covered by established or standardized procedures. Results of the work affect the efficiency of processing services, procedures, methods, and the adequacy of products used in subsequent activities.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 5-3. Comparable to this level, the appellant assists users and resolves problems using standardized approaches. The appellant ensures that software is working properly, integrates new hardware and software into existing systems, instructs local users on efficient and effective means of using software packages, and responds to problems or issues. Specifically, the appellant works with various types of

hardware, and procurement-specific software such as the SPS, the CAPS, the DFAS, and the FPDS. He also serves as a liaison with the information management staff. He carries out his duties and responsibilities in accordance with established or standardized rules, regulations, procedures, practices, and precedent solutions. He exercises judgment in the interpretation, application, and adaptation of available guidance to respond to end-user requests for assistance. Like Level 5-3, the appellant's work affects the efficiency of the organization's services and the way the directorate of contracting staff document, store, receive, and transmit information.

Level 5-3 is credited for 150 points.

*Factor 6, Personal contacts*

This factor considers face-to-face and telephone contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain.

At Level 6-2, the highest level identified in the PCS, contacts are with specialists and recipients of services who are employees of the same agency but outside the data processing organization; with employees of other agencies who use the facility; or with contractors' representatives such as vendor repair technicians or customer engineers. The contacts are structured and routine, and the role of each participant is readily determined.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 6-2. The appellant's personal contacts are with end users within the immediate office, CACI contract staff, the directorate of contracting staff, information management staff, and other employees at various levels in the organization. These contacts are relatively structured and routine in nature, and the roles of parties involved are easily determined.

Level 6-2 is credited for 25 points.

*Factor 7, Purpose of contacts*

This factor covers the purpose of personal contacts, which ranges from factual exchanges of information, to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives.

At Level 7-2, the highest level identified in the PCS, the purpose of personal contacts is to plan or coordinate changes in scheduling requirements or priorities as a result of data or equipment-related problems; to participate with users in planning and coordinating new or modified requirements when the work fits generally within system options, schedules, etc.; or to plan user participation, methodology, and deadlines for new projects.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 7-2. As at this level, the appellant's contacts discuss work objectives within the scope of procurement software systems to coordinate the automation of procurement actions. He trains, guides, and assists end users with troubleshooting problems, and ensures the accuracy and reliability of procurement software systems to assist staff in meeting deadlines.

Level 7-2 is credited for 50 points.

*Factor 8, Physical demands*

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. This includes physical characteristics and abilities, and physical exertion involved in the work.

At Level 8-1, the work is generally sedentary, although there may be some nominal walking or standing for short periods, or carrying of light loads of papers, books, and reports.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 8-1. It does not require the extended periods of standing, walking, stretching, bending, stooping, or carrying heavy items (up to 45 pounds) typical of Level 8-2.

Level 8-1 is credited for 5 points.

*Factor 9, Work environment*

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned, and the safety and occupational health regulations required.

At Level 9-1, the work involves common risks or discomforts, requiring normal safety precautions typical of offices, meeting rooms, libraries, etc. When setting up workstations or installing computer equipment, the appellant must observe common electrical safety practices. The employee works in an adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated work area.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed Level 9-1. The work does not require the moderate risks in operating or working around equipment with exposed moving parts that are typical of Level 9-2.

Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

*Summary*

In summary, we have evaluated the position as follows:

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-4	550
2. Supervisory controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. Personal contacts	6-2	25

7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	5
<i>Total</i>		<hr/> 1485

A total of 1485 points falls within the GS-7 grade-level point-range of 1355-1600 points on the Grade Conversion Table.

**Decision**

The position is properly classified as Computer Assistant, GS-335-7.