

**OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**  
**MERIT SYSTEMS OVERSIGHT AND EFFECTIVENESS**  
**DALLAS OVERSIGHT DIVISION**  
**CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION**

Under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code

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**Appellant:** [appellant's name]

**Position:** Instructor (Mathematics), GS-1710-09  
Position Number: A13.9146F

**Organization:** [appellant's activity]  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior

**Decision:** GS-1701-09, title at agency discretion

**OPM Decision Number:** C-1701-09-01

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**Approved by:**

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon  
Bonnie J. Brandon  
Classification Appeals Officer

4/9/97  
Date

**Copy of decision sent to:**

[name and address of appellant's representative]

[name and address of appellant's servicing personnel officer]

Director of Personnel  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20240

## **INTRODUCTION**

The appellant's position is currently classified as Instructor (Mathematics), GS-1710-9. The appellant believes his position should be classified as Instructor (Mathematics), GS-1701-11. Consequently, he filed an appeal with this office under the provisions of chapter 51 of title 5, United States Code.

The appellant's position description shows that the agency classified the duties and responsibilities on July 3, 1990, by using the GS-1710 standard and the Grade Evaluation Guide for Instructor and Specialist Positions Involving Education and Training Work (TS-12, dated March 1973). This guide was reprinted in February 1980 without substantive change; in March 1989, the guide was superseded by the Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work. In October 1991, new series coverage standards were issued to replace the standards for GS-1701, GS-1702, GS-1710, GS-1720, GS-1730, and GS-1740. There was no evidence in the appeal file to indicate that the agency had applied the new series coverage standards or the March 1989 guide to the appellant's position. After discussing this matter with the personnel officer at the appellant's servicing personnel office, we granted that office a reasonable period of time in which to apply the current standards to the appellant's duties. We were unsuccessful in obtaining a report of the results from the personnel office. Therefore, we adjudicated this appeal based on the appeal record and information provided by the appellant and his supervisor.

This is the final administrative decision of the Government, subject to discretionary review only under the conditions and time limits specified in sections 511.605 and 511.613 of the Code of Federal Regulations and in appendix 4 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards.

## **POSITION INFORMATION**

The [appellant's division] consists of [four departments]. The appellant's position is in the Department of General Studies which includes several professional instructors/teachers in various disciplines, as well as support staff. The appellant is responsible for post-secondary instruction in mathematics, ranging from remedial through advanced algebra, geometry, calculus, and trigonometry.

The appellant applies academic knowledge in the field of mathematics, practical knowledge of the theories, principles and techniques of instruction and training to carry out the instructional assignment; knowledge of, and skill in, a variety of

instructional techniques and strategies; and some knowledge of curriculum development. Duties performed by the appellant include:

- serving as a resource person in mathematics by staying alert for new developments in the field and sharing such information with staff members so that curricula and course content may be modified and kept current;
- assisting in the revision and updating of courses that cannot be effectively taught in standardized form, require frequent changes to reflect new developments in the subject area, and meet the special learning needs of the Indian students;
- preparing a list of equipment, materials, and supplies needed for assigned instructional activities;
- preparing instructional plans outlining the topics, objectives, methodology, training aids, time schedules, and evaluation criteria;
- making provisions for supplemental training materials and aids as needed;
- conducting classes and related instructional activities using appropriate materials and techniques, adjusting the daily work plan as needed;
- coordinating instruction and activities with other instructors to correspond with overall training objectives, time schedules, and training progress of students;
- evaluating student academic and skill progress in mathematics, advising and assisting students in improving their work performance, insuring that prescribed testing procedures and evaluation instruments are reliable and valid for the courses offered and that data gathered is pertinent for the overall evaluation of student progress;
- maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of student progress and attendance and insuring that data contained in the records have functional value for counseling, job placement, and compilation of statistical reports;
- assisting with job development and job placement activities for graduates by providing pertinent data and assistance on student qualifications and job readiness;

- serving as an academic advisor to a number of students providing them with counseling and advice on matters pertaining to training plans, academic difficulties, progress, and low attendance;
- attending, as assigned, sectional industrial advisory committee meetings, assisting with the evaluation of data and recommendations received from the committee, and participating on school committees on a voluntary or assigned basis; and
- providing for care and accountability of assigned equipment and supplies in accordance with supervisory instructions and written guidelines.

### **SERIES AND TITLE DETERMINATION**

The series and grade level are at issue in this appeal. The GS-1710 series includes positions that require applying full professional knowledge of the theories, principles, and techniques of education and training to instructional and educational administration work in education programs operated by Federal agencies. This series covers positions that involve direct delivery of instruction or training services of a professional nature and includes classroom teachers, supervisors, and managers in Government-operated schools at the elementary and secondary levels.

The GS-1701 General Education and Training Series covers positions that primarily involve professional work in the field of education and training when the work is not more appropriately covered by another professional series in this or any other group. Included are positions where (1) the work has characteristics that may be identified with more than one professional education series with none predominant, (2) the combination of professional knowledge required by the work is not specifically covered by another series, or (3) the work is in a specialized professional field not readily identifiable with other existing series in this or any other group. Such positions include instructors in college or equivalent level programs, when the area of expertise is in a subject matter field not classifiable to an established series, and when no other series is more appropriate.

The subject position of this appeal meets the definition of the GS-1701 series. The appellant's position includes a variety of classroom instructional duties at the college-equivalent level in a post-secondary educational institutional, i.e., a National Indian Community College that confers an associate's degree upon completion of the required course work.

Titles have not been established for the GS-1701 series. The agency may construct an appropriate title by using the instructions contained in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards. A parenthetical title may be used to more specifically identify special knowledge and skills that may be required.

## **GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION**

The Position Classification Standard for General Education and Training Series, GS-1701, states that positions in this series are to be evaluated by the criteria in guides for work most closely related to that of the position being classified. Because the purpose of the appealed position is primarily to provide teaching and instructing at a post-secondary institution, the Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work is used for evaluating this positions.

This guide has grade level criteria divided into two parts: Part I for instructor work and Part II for instructional specialist work.

Part I covers instructor work involving the following types of activities:

- preparing daily work plans based on general course outlines and established learning objectives (plans cover instructional methods and techniques, training materials and aids, time schedules, etc.),
- training in traditional classroom situations or in self-paced learning programs where the instructor guides students in the use of special learning techniques; and
- evaluating the progress of students and advising and assisting them to improve their performance.

Part II covers instructional specialist work such as:

- ascertaining needs for training and education, usually through surveys or job analysis;
- determining the objectives and scope of courses, the subjects to be covered, and the criteria for evaluation;
- developing, revising, or adapting courses and instructional materials and guides; and

- evaluating education and training programs and recommending needed changes and improvements.

The appealed position is predominately a classroom instructor at the post-secondary level, with responsibility for preparing daily lesson plans, classroom teaching of various mathematics courses, and evaluating student progress by various methods. The specialized work of instructional specialists as described in Part II is not appropriate for classroom instruction and related activities. Thus, Part I of the grade-level criteria in the classification standard is used to classify the appealed position. The criteria are developed around two broad classification factors:

- (1) Nature of Assignment which encompasses such aspects as the knowledge, skill, and ability required to perform the work and the complexity and difficulty of the duties and responsibilities assigned.
- (2) Level of Responsibility which includes such things as independence, the extent to which guidelines for the work are available or must be developed, and the kinds of contacts required to perform the work.

The following is our evaluation of the position in terms of the criteria.

### **Factor 1 - Nature of Assignment**

The work currently described in the position description, as verified by the telephone audit and confirmed by the head of the Department of General Studies, meets the GS-9 level. The appealed position requires the appellant to teach a wide variety of topics in the field of mathematics at the secondary through basic undergraduate levels, typical of the GS-9 grade level description of the standard. The appellant uses a variety of teaching methods and motivational efforts in order to impart his very specific knowledge of mathematics to a specific segment of the population, i.e., Native Americans. The telephone audit of this position revealed that the appellant meets the GS-9 grade level by keeping abreast of the teaching techniques required in his field and making recommendations for changes to courses as required by industry and other comparable institutions.

At the GS-11 level, courses taught are at the upper-division undergraduate level and, typically, are not in standardized or prestructured form. Courses at this grade level require instructors to have overall maintenance of their assigned courses and to determine the need for change and update of course material. While some

courses may be identical or very similar to the GS-9 level instructor duties, at the GS-11 level instructors are required to adapt or revise their courses because of changes to the subject-matter. For example, GS-11 instructors may have to change the approach of instruction and rewrite course material when dynamic technical changes or subject-matter evolutionary changes in the field impact the daily classroom instruction.

The appellant states in his appeal that he participated in a 12-week internship during the summer of 1995 to gain the proper background and obtain necessary material to develop and implement a statistics course for the Institute's academic year. This is the only specific example provided by the appellant to illustrate his activities in developing new course material, and neither he nor his supervisor provided other examples. There is no other indication that such activities are a part of his position's responsibilities, or that he is expected to perform those duties. During the telephone audit the supervisor indicated that course development is not required of his position and that he is not expected to perform those duties.

The appellant's position does not meet the GS-11 criteria which require that the courses taught be of the upper-division undergraduate level. Although the appellant may adapt course material, such adaptation does not involve technological changes or frequent updating of course content or knowledge as envisioned in the GS-11 level. For example, mathematics courses taught at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute pose problems to instructors of Native American students requiring some adaptation of course material and presentation. These problems are due to diverse ages, tribal background, and levels of interest in the course material. Any course adaptations or revisions due to student problems are typical of, and do not exceed, a normal classroom setting as described at the GS-9 level.

## **Factor 2, Level of Responsibility**

The appellant functions independently in planning and carrying out the class instruction. He is expected to carry out the duties of classroom instruction with only general supervision and little or no direct day-to-day guidance. Routine student problems are solved by the appellant. In very rare cases, a guidance counselor is consulted. While the appellant receives general supervision, the supervisor is available for assistance upon request. The supervisor may also provide assistance as needed at any time, if an instructional situation requires it. Outside contacts for the purpose of obtaining information are limited to similar



institutions and corporations and with family members or tribal representatives concerning student issues or individual progress. The appellant participates in committees within and outside of the Institute for the purpose of updating curricula and for assuring that the instructional mission is compatible with like institutions. These responsibilities meet the GS-9 level as described in the guide.

The appellant's position does not meet the criteria at the GS-11 level where instructors participate substantially in course development and/or major modifications. At this level, instructors are typically required to participate in original course content development and in subsequent modifications. Although the the appellant recommends changes or modifications to courses being taught, he does not have the authority to make significant adaptations and is not required to develop new courses. GS-11 instructors have the freedom to adapt new training material which is reviewed for technical accuracy, consistency with course objectives, educational effectiveness and program policy. The appellant does not perform these professional duties due to the Institute's course requirements and level of instruction.

## **DECISION**

The appealed position is properly classified as GS-1701-09, with the title at the discretion of the agency.