

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242

Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Library Technician (Office Automation)
GS-1411-06

Organization: [activity]
Department of the Air Force

OPM decision: Library Technician (Office Automation)
GS-1411-05

OPM decision number: C-1411-05-01

Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

12/18/98

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 lowers the grade of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the sixth 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 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.

The personnel office must also determine if the appellant is entitled to grade or pay retention, or both, under 5 U.S.C. 5362 and 5363 and 5 CFR 536. If the appellant is entitled to grade retention, the two-year retention period begins on the date this decision is implemented.

Decision sent to:

[the appellant's address]

Civilian Personnel Officer
[the installation]

Director of Civilian Personnel
HQ USAF/DPCC
1040 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1040

Director, Civilian Personnel Operations
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Chief, Classification Branch
Field Advisory Services Division
Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

Introduction

The appealed position is assigned to the [activity at a medium sized base]. The agency has classified the position as Library Technician (Office Automation), GS-1411-06. The appellant believes her position should be classified as Library Technician (Office Automation), GS-1411-07, and has filed an appeal with this office under the provisions of section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

The appellant certifies to the accuracy of the duties described in her current core personnel document. However, she believes that the agency evaluation of her position does not adequately reflect the scope of her responsibilities, her level of independence from supervisory controls in planning and executing her program responsibilities, her status as a program expert within the Medical Library, the lack of specific program guidelines for her assigned program area, and the level and purpose of contacts she maintains in carrying out her day-to-day responsibilities. The appellant's supervisor certified that the position core document is an accurate reflection of the duties performed by the appellant. We find the core personnel document is adequate for position classification purposes.

In reaching our classification decision, we considered information submitted by the appellant and her agency, including her official position description, number 4QR0196001, dated April 17, 1998. We also considered information obtained by telephone from the appellant and her supervisor and from a site audit of the position conducted November 3, 1998. As required by law, we classified the position based upon its duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements as compared to the criteria specified in the appropriate Office of Personnel Management classification standards and guidelines (sections 5106, 5107, and 5112 of title 5, United States Code).

Position information

The appellant has responsibility for the medical library program at the [activity]. The [activity] has changed its status from an operating hospital to a clinic. In the past, the majority of the medical library users were the physicians in a speciality area (e.g., surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics). With the downsizing of the hospital, the primary users of the library are the account custodians that maintain loan accounts for items purchased through the appellant, thus reducing her work load substantially. The appellant has responsibility for the following duties.

- The appellant administers the day-to-day operation of the medical library. She organizes, plans, implements, and evaluates the circulation and loan desk policies, procedures, and processes. She operates and controls the manual circulation system and tracks and compiles statistics for recurring reports. A portion of her duties includes training volunteers in the charging and discharging of library materials, processing new books, and photocopying Table of Contents article requests from hospital staff. She resolves problems

in overdue books, circulation, loans, damage, or loss of materials and prepares inventory adjustments, reports, and record updates, including on-line data bases for the inventory.

- The appellant independently performs circulation and registration duties. She charges out library materials and processes return of materials, keeps current record of overdue materials, and

contacts borrowers by telephone or by overdue notices. As the library's cost center manager, she ensures all procurement orders are prepared, verified, and processed in accordance with Air Force Library and Information System procurement guidelines, regulations, general library philosophies, and funds procedures for various fund sources. She orders and processes different types of library materials within budget guidelines. She monitors expenditures versus allocation for fund accounts. She maintains and monitors library supplies.

- The appellant provides ready reference services to library clientele by locating bibliographic information using standard library reference tools such as MEDLINE, Internet, guides, indexes, professional directories, on-line patron card catalog, CD ROM's, and on-line data bases. She uses various search strategies within the library's holdings and the interlibrary loan network (DOCLINE) to locate materials requested by users.
- The appellant uses National Library of Medicine cataloging rules to catalog material and applies knowledge of the automated cataloging system when cataloging in machine-readable format. She catalogs materials to make them accessible to library users. She ensures catalog records are accurate and current by maintaining name and subject authority control records.
- The appellant administers library programs such as listing new books in the library and training hospital staff on using the on-line catalog and Alert service, a medical journal table of contents data base. She provides orientation to new personnel, military and civilian, and maintains the library custodian listing.
- The appellant uses varied functions of word processing software to prepare, format, modify, edit, and print a variety of letters, reports, memos, and other technical documents. She utilizes the Internet to conduct searches using techniques designed for use with the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the Internet Grateful Med, and the PubMed data bases. She checks documents for spelling errors, punctuation, and grammar. She receives and transmits electronic mail.

Series, title, and standard determination

The appellant does not question the series or title of her position. We concur with the agency's determination that the duties performed by the appellant and the knowledge required of her position are covered by the GS-1411, Library Technician Series. This series includes all positions that primarily require a practical knowledge of the methods and techniques of library or related information work in acquiring, organizing, preserving, accessing, and/or disseminating information.

The proper title for the position to which the appellant is assigned, according to the position classification standard for the GS-1411 series, is Library Technician. The parenthetical title Office Automation (OA) is used when a position requires the use and knowledge of office automation systems and technology. The title Library Technician (OA) is appropriate for the position.

The work of this position is evaluated by comparison to the position classification standard for the GS-1411 Library Technician Series.

Grade determination

The grade level of the office automation duties was evaluated in accordance with the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide. Since these duties were not found to be grade controlling, they will not be discussed further.

The GS-1411 standard is written in Factor Evaluation System (FES) format and uses nine factors for determining grade level. Within each factor, there are factor level descriptions that represent the minimum or threshold for that factor. If the position exceeds one factor level but fails to meet fully the intent of the next higher factor level, the lower point value must be credited. The total of the point values assigned to the nine factors is converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table on in the standard.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information which the library technician must understand to do acceptable work.

The appellant's position requires knowledge of standardized library procedures related to such functions as circulation, interlibrary loan procedure, charging and discharging of library materials, and collection maintenance and preservation. The appellant uses this knowledge to evaluate circulation and loan desk policies, procedures, and processes and to ensure that procurement orders are prepared, verified, and processed in accordance with the guidelines, regulations, and funds procedures. She uses various search strategies with the library's holdings and the interlibrary loan network to locate materials and assists users by locating bibliographic information using standard library reference tools such as MEDLINE, Internet, professional directories, and on-line data bases. The appellant resolves problems and variations such as assisting users who request special services and researching error messages received from the automated data system. The knowledge required by the appellant's position meets Level 1-3. This level requires knowledge of a body of standardized library rules, procedures, and operations related to one or more library functions such as those used to maintain the collection, locate information, process library materials, or assist clientele with routine inquiries.

While the appellant's knowledge and skills may be held in high esteem throughout the [activity], the full range of duties of the position she occupies does not require the knowledge typical of Level 1-4. At this level, the work requires in-depth or broad knowledge of a body of library regulations, procedures, and policies related to one or more library functions or specializations. This includes, for example, knowledge of large bibliographic data bases and local modifications of standard classification and bibliographic categories to access cataloging records; knowledge of the public access catalog, periodical index, and other finding aids to assist clientele in finding information in the

library's collection; knowledge of a wide variety of interrelated steps and procedures required to order and process different types of library materials; knowledge of publication formats in foreign languages; and knowledge of several data bases and manual files used by a large library with several specialized collections to locate material.

The appellant's duties do not require her to utilize broad or in-depth knowledge of library regulations, procedures, and policies, since she relies on her knowledge of standardized procedures and operations to carry out the work. The medical library is relatively small, consisting of about 75 medical books, numerous journals, a desk top computer, and a TV and VCR. Due to the size of the library, the limited collection, and the limited range of clientele using the library, the appellant's work does not require a knowledge of complex and changing bibliographic elements; data bases and manual files associated with large, specialized collections; sources used for conducting complex searches for hard-to-find documents and reports; or procedures for ordering and processing a wide variety of library materials. The appellant's position does not require knowledge equivalent to Level 1-4.

The agency credited Level 1-4, but the appellant believes that her position warrants Level 1-5. Knowledge at Level 1-5 is typically used in managing large library systems, handling complex and changing bibliographic elements governing serials in a wide variety of scientific and technical subject areas, or using a range of reference tools to search for, identify, and obtain hard-to-find documents and reports.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1-3 (350 points).

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the responsibility of the employee, and the degree to which work is reviewed by the supervisor.

The appellant is supervised by the Flight Commander, who has authority and responsibility for management of the overall Medical Information Systems Program. The appellant is provided overall guidance on the objectives, deadlines, and priority of assignments but acts on her own initiative and uses independent judgment in making decisions concerning daily operating procedures using this guidance. She determines the approach to problems encountered and resolves them independently. The appellant's supervisor reviews completed work for appropriateness, technical soundness, and conformity to policy and requirements.

This position functions as described at Level 2-3, the highest level mentioned in the standard. At this level, the supervisor outlines objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance on dealing with unusually involved or one-of-a-kind situations. Work is typically assigned as an area for which the employee has ongoing responsibility. The employee independently plans and carries out the successive steps to complete library support duties and uses established library techniques and methods to resolve problems and deviations. Completed work is reviewed for appropriateness, technical soundness, and conformity to policy and requirements.

This factor is evaluated at Level 2-3 (275 points).

Factor 3, Guidelines

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

Guidelines available to the appellant for carrying out her duties and responsibilities include library procedures, computer instructions and manuals, machine readable cataloging format manuals, cataloging rules, Books in Print, vendor and price lists, and processing instructions. Because of the number and similarity of guidelines and work situations, the appellant must use judgment to identify and select the most appropriate procedure to use, choose from among several established alternatives, or decide which precedent actions to follow as a model. Since some of these guidelines and directives lack specificity, the appellant makes modifications and adaptations based on guidance from larger facilities or the MAJCOM Health Sciences Library Consultant.

The appellant's position meets Level 3-2. At this level, a number of procedures and guidelines are available, and judgment is used in selecting the appropriate guide and in handling situations not specifically covered by the guides.

Level 3-3 is not fully met. At this level, established library tasks and methods are available, but they are not completely applicable to many aspects of the work. The employee uses judgment to interpret guidelines, adapt procedures, decide approaches, and recommend solutions. The employee analyzes the results of applying guidelines and recommends changes. The guidelines available to the appellant are more specific and applicable to the work. Although the appellant makes various decisions in carrying out her work, such as those regarding vendors and information retrieval services, these are made within a framework of practices and procedures applicable to the work and medical library.

This factor is evaluated at Level 3-2 (125 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 highest level described, the employee performs various duties involving the use of different and unrelated procedures and methods in support of major library functions such as acquisition, cataloging, or reference. The employee identifies the nature of the problem, question, or issue and determines the need for and obtains additional information through contacts and by reviewing operating procedures, library policies, and standard references. The employee makes recommendations or takes action based on a case-by-case review of the issues or problems.

The complexity of the appellant's position meets Level 4-3. The appellant is responsible for all technical aspects of the library procurement/acquisitions process and provides reference services to medical staff using library reference tools such as MEDLINE, Internet, guides, indexes, professional directories, on-line patron card catalog, CD-ROM and on-line data bases. The appellant identifies the nature of the problem, question, or issue, and determines the need for and obtains additional information through oral or written contacts and by reviewing operating procedures, library policies, and standard references. The appellant makes decisions by studying the alternatives, identifying the issues, obtaining/researching information, and taking appropriate action. This level of complexity fully meets Level 4-3.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-3 (150 points).

Factor 5, Scope and effect

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

The work at Level 5-2 involves performing a range of library support tasks that are covered by well defined and precise program procedures and regulations. Work products, in the form of corrected bibliographic information, detailed records of circulation and interlibrary loans, claiming of missing serial issues, adaptation of cataloging records to the individual library's classification system, or client assistance, affect the accuracy and reliability of the work of others and the accurate and timely provision of requested information to clientele. As at Level 5-2, the appellant performs a range of duties in managing the medical library. Her duties and responsibilities are covered by established, applicable procedures. Her duties facilitate the work of medical facility staff who need and use the information obtained and maintained by the appellant and affect the efficient operation of the medical library. This description fully meets Level 5-2.

Level 5-3 is not fully met. The purpose of the work at Level 5-3 is to serve as point of contact for most technical aspects of assigned support function and/or to apply numerous established practices to treat a variety of problems or situations in the organization, or to locate and provide information. The work results in recommendations, solutions, or reports that directly affect the library's ability to meet clientele information needs in the most effective and efficient manner. The appellant's work is not characterized by the need for her to address and resolve a variety of problems. Her work instead involves the performance of a variety of duties in accordance with set procedures and practices. Although the effect of the appellant's work may be similar to Level 5-3, the scope is not. Therefore, Level 5-2 must be credited.

Level 5-2 is assigned (75 points).

Factor 6, Personal contacts, and Factor 7, Purpose of contacts

This factor consists of two parts. One part addresses contacts with individuals not in the supervisory chain, and the other part addresses the purpose of those contacts. Levels described under Factor 6 are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contacts take place. The purpose of contacts, measured by Factor 7, ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues.

At Level 2, contacts are with employees within the same agency, outside the immediate organization, or with members of the general public in a moderately structured setting (e.g., contacts with vendors or publishers). At Level b, the purpose of contacts is to plan and coordinate actions to correct or prevent errors, delays, or other complications involved in organizing and processing library information.

As at Level 2, the appellant's contacts are with professional staff and other employees of the [activity]. The appellant has limited contact with computer service personnel and software vendors. Contacts also are with vendors or publishers who are explaining reasons for wanting to do business with the [activity]. As at Level b, the purpose of the appellant's contacts is to prevent errors, delays, or other complications involved in organizing and processing library information.

Factors 6 and 7 are evaluated at 2b (75 points).

Factor 8, Physical demands

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment.

As at Level 8-1, the appellant's work is not characterized by the need for her to perform any physical exertion. The work is sedentary and includes no special physical demands.

This factor is evaluated at Level 8-1 (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.

As at Level 9-1, the appellant's work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts typically associated with libraries and offices. The work area is well lighted, heated, and ventilated.

The appellant believes her position warrants credit at Level 9-2 because she gets an annual tuberculosis test and takes a course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation every two years. At Level 9-2,

the work involves moderate risks or discomforts that require special safety precautions. At this level, employees may be required to use protective clothing or gear. The appellant's work environment does not present risks or require special safety precautions that place additional demands on her in carrying out the work. The work environment does not meet the intent of Level 9-2.

This factor is evaluated at Level 9-1 (5 points).

Summary

In summary, we have evaluated the appellant's position as follows:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-3	350
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-2	75
6. and 7. Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contacts	2b	75
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
TOTAL POINTS		1060

The appellant's position warrants 1060 total points. In accordance with the grade conversion table provided in the standard, the position is properly graded at GS-5.

Decision

The proper classification of the position is Library Technician (Office Automation), GS-1411-05.