

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



Atlanta Oversight Division  
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972  
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

**Appellant:** [Appellant]

**Agency classification:** Administrative Support Assistant  
GS-303-5

**Organization:** Information Management Office  
Department of the Air Force

**OPM decision:** GS-303-5

**OPM decision number:** C-0303-05-05

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathy W. Day  
Classification Appeals Officer

4/9/99  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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]

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## **Introduction**

On January 14, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U. S. Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Administrative Support Assistant, GS-303-5, [organizational location], Department of the Air Force,[geographical location]. The appellant is requesting that her position be classified as Support Services Supervisor, GS-342-7.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

## **General issues**

The appellant contends that the duties she performs are inconsistent with the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, and are more appropriately classified in the Support Services Administration Series, as GS-342-7. She further contends that, since she functions in a supervisory capacity for two enlisted military personnel within her organization, her position warrants the title Support Services Supervisor.

## **Position information**

The appellant is assigned to position description number [#]. The appellant, supervisor and agency have certified to the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant serves as the chief of the [organizational location]. Her major responsibilities include planning, scheduling, and supervising the administrative work performed in the [organizational location]. This office has overall responsibility for distributing, coordinating, monitoring, and tracking the flow of information regarding administrative activities and functions between higher echelons of command, the squadron, and other organizations at [geographical location]. This office is also responsible for ensuring that squadron organizations are aware of and are in compliance with a variety of regulatory requirements as they pertain to administrative functions.

The appellant monitors and tracks due dates for recurring and non-recurring reports and ensures that the automated tracking system is maintained; maintains suspense files and monitors suspense items to ensure timely responses to requests and other correspondence; monitors the installation suggestion program within the squadron and forwards suggestions to the installation suggestion office; and monitors, reviews, and processes time and attendance reports for the squadron's civilian employees and forwards them to the installation's civilian pay section. She is responsible for the receipt and distribution of documents, reports and other correspondence between various organizational levels. The appellant also ensures appropriate stock levels for publications and forms are on hand; maintains a current file of regulations, manuals, and publications and periodically reviews their currency; ensures that official records are screened and determines which should be retained, retired, or

destroyed. She manages the security of classified documents and materials as required by security regulations. This includes ensuring that these materials are properly maintained; conducting periodic screening to remove outdated material for destruction; ensuring they are released to and signed for by personnel with the appropriate degree of access; ensuring the issuance of access badges to employees; and monitoring the personnel security roster to determine that those seeking classified documents have been granted the proper clearance. She manages the communications program by issuing personal identification numbers (PINs) to personnel authorized to make long distance calls at government expense; tracking long distance calls made by organizational personnel; initiating telephone service requests for installation, relocation, and removal; and monitoring the inventory and control of portable communications devices (e.g., cellular phones, pagers, two-way radios, etc.). The appellant periodically conducts internal surveillance reviews to determine if subordinate organizations are in compliance with requirements.

The appellant supervises two enlisted personnel who are assigned to and assist in performing the work in the Information Management Office. She is responsible for training; discussing and documenting feedback regarding performance standards; and evaluating performance at the end of each rating cycle for these individuals. She also approves leave; resolves minor disputes; recommends minor disciplinary actions; and recommends candidates for subordinate positions.

The appellant works under the supervision of the [Commander] who establishes overall objectives and defines responsibilities. Completed routine work, other than correspondence, is not normally subjected to a detailed review, but is reviewed occasionally. All correspondence requiring the squadron commander's signature is closely reviewed by the supervisor for content, grammar, punctuation, etc. Additional guidance and support on administrative issues or problems are available from organizations at the group, wing, and headquarters at [geographical location] who conduct staff assistance visits and inspections of the activities of subordinate units.

### **Series determination**

The agency placed the position in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303. The appellant believes that her position should be classified in the Support Services Administration Series, GS-342.

The Support Services Administration Series, GS-342, includes all positions the primary duties of which involve supervising, directing, or planning and coordinating a variety of service functions that are *principally work-supporting*, i.e., those functions without which the operations of an organization or services to the public would be impaired, curtailed, or stopped. Such service functions include (but are not limited to) communications, procurement of administrative supplies and equipment, printing, reproduction, property management, space management, records management, mail service, facilities maintenance, and transportation.

The mission statement of the [organization] identifies its mission as providing supply information, storage, and distribution to expedite the movement of all fuels, supplies, and equipment in supporting the wartime and peacetime requirements as directed by the [Command].

The appellant's responsibilities include a limited number of the areas defined as typical support services functions in the GS-342 standard. The areas and the appellant's responsibilities are as follows:

Communications - Functions as Telephone Control Officer in coordinating various telephone services (e.g., initiating the installation, relocation, and removal of telephones, etc.); issuing PIN numbers authorizing personnel to make long distance telephone calls and monitoring such calls; controlling inventory and issuing mobile communications devices (radios, pagers, cellular telephones).

- Correspondence - Prepares or coordinates the preparation of correspondence; maintains and monitors the automated suspense item control and tracking system.
- Directives - Monitors the maintenance and currency of the master library of directives and publications by a subordinate unit through the agency's Internet web site.
- Reports - Monitors due dates and maintains a suspense control system for recurring and nonrecurring reports. Ensures the distribution of reports and suspense information to the appropriate individual or organization.
- Forms - Monitors the on-hand supply level, acquires, and distributes all required forms for the organization.
- Files and Records - Screens and identifies files and records for retention, retirement, or destruction through annual internal inspections.
- Classified Security - Ensures that classified materials are secured, maintained, released and signed out to authorized personnel, in accordance with applicable security regulations. Monitors personnel security roster to ensure that personnel accessing these materials possess an appropriate level of clearance.

In order to be evaluated under the GS-342 standard, a position is required to have delegated authority and responsibility for the supervision of at least three employees performing at least six of the functions described at Level A, Factor 1 (or functions of the same level of responsibility and difficulty); and each employee must perform such functions at least 25 percent of his or her time. The functions include:

1. Screening and assembling specifically identified records and files for storage or disposal in accordance with established records control schedules.
2. Maintaining property and equipment record cards, conducting physical inventories, and adjusting route discrepancies.
3. Providing duplicating services, primarily through the use of automatic quick copy equipment.
4. Processing incoming and outgoing communications involving routing of mail by general subject matter throughout the organization, and checking outgoing materials for completeness and conformity to postal regulations and administrative guidelines for handling communications.
5. Operating small office supply and forms storerooms, reordering supplies to maintain predetermined stockage levels, and issuing materials to authorized personnel.
6. Placing routine service calls to lessors or maintenance contractors to request repair of office machines and equipment.
7. Providing typing and transcribing services where the material transcribed is primarily narrative text and does not involve highly specialized terminology.
8. Providing punched cards, usually on a production basis, for various administrative processes for offices outside the support services organization.
9. Operating a switch board that handles routing of local and long distance calls and providing limited directory service for the organization.
10. Obtaining (or controlling the dispatch of) vehicles, such as sedans, or light trucks that are used to transport persons, mail, or supplies.

The appellant does not supervise three employees nor is she involved in the supervision, direction, or planning and coordination of the variety of work supporting functions as described in the Support Services Series, GS-342.

The basic work processes associated with the appellant's assignments are clerical in nature. The appellant performs a number of support functions requiring a knowledge of information management and administrative procedures, instructions, regulations, and directives as they relate to her employing organization. The Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, includes positions the duties of which are to perform or supervise clerical, assistant, or technician work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires a knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out the work of an organization and involves application of procedures and practices within the frame

work of established guidelines. We find the appellant's position is properly placed in the GS-303 series.

### **Title determination**

The GS-303 series does not specify titles. Therefore, the agency may designate an appropriate title by following the guidance in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards.

### **Standard determination**

Miscellaneous Clerical and Assistant Series, GS-303, January 1979.  
Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, June 1989.

### **Grade determination**

The Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work provides general criteria for use in determining the grade level of nonsupervisory clerical and assistance work. Administrative support of the kind described in the guide is performed in offices, shops, laboratories, hospitals, and numerous other settings in all Federal agencies. The guide describes the general characteristics of each grade level from GS-1 through GS-7 and uses two criteria for grading purposes: *Nature of Assignment* (which includes the knowledge required and complexity of the work) and *Level of Responsibility* (which includes supervisory controls, guidelines, and contacts).

The General Schedule Supervisory Guide states that in order to be covered under the guide, the supervisory work must :

- require accomplishment of work through combined technical and administrative work of others;
- constitute a major duty occupying at least 25 percent of the position's time; and
- meet at least the lowest level of Factor 3 in that guide, based on supervising Federal civilian employees, Federal military or uniformed service employees, volunteers, or other noncontractor personnel.

The appellant's supervisor stated that the position does not spend at least 25 percent of the time on supervision of the two military positions assigned to the Information Management Office. Military personnel are assigned to the organization for varying periods of time, depending on the length of time before reassignment to another installation. These individuals may require a closer degree of supervision during the initial period of orientation. Once this is accomplished, the actual amount of supervision is less than 25 percent of the appellant's time. Therefore, this position is not evaluated for the effect of supervisory responsibilities.

The position is evaluated as follows:

### *Nature of the Assignment*

At GS-5, work consists of performing a full range of standard and nonstandard clerical assignments and resolving a variety of nonrecurring problems. Work includes a variety of assignments involving different and unrelated steps, processes, or methods. The employee must identify and understand the issues involved in each assignment and determine what steps and procedures are necessary and the order of their performance. Completion of each transaction typically involves selecting a course of action from a number of possibilities. The work requires extensive knowledge of an organization's rules, procedures, operations, or business practices to perform the more complex, interrelated, or one-of-a kind clerical processing procedures.

At GS-6, work typically entails processing a wide variety of transactions for more than one type of assigned activity or functional specialization. Assignments are subject to different sets of rules, regulations, and procedures. Such issues must be examined that a course of action has substantive impact on the outcome of the assignment. Additionally, the work requires comprehensive knowledge of rules, regulations, and other guidelines relating to completing assignments in the program area assigned. This knowledge is usually attained through extensive, increasingly difficult, and practical experience and training in the subject matter field. The work also requires ability to interpret and apply regulatory procedural requirements to process unusually difficult and complicated transactions.

The GS-5 level is met. The appellant's assignments involve planning, scheduling, supervising, reviewing, monitoring, and coordinating a variety of information management and related administrative activities. For example, she answers questions from and provides information to subordinate squadron organizations on issues related to the maintenance and management of publications, records, and forms; the procedures required for accessing and signing out classified materials; correspondence and document control and suspense procedures; maintenance of the master publication library; records screening and disposition criteria; acquisition of telephone services and long distance calling authorizations; acquisition of mobile communications equipment for individuals; and instructions and regulations pertinent to information management procedures. Additionally, the appellant's position requires that she conduct periodic reviews of administrative activities in subordinate organizations to ascertain compliance with instructions, regulations, and requirements.

The GS-6 level is not met. The appellant's assignments are more limited and less complex than intended at this level. Her primary function is to coordinate and monitor administrative activities primarily concerned with information management within the organization and ensure that they are in compliance with established regulatory and procedural requirements. She is not responsible for determining the reasons for noncompliance or requiring corrective action to achieve compliance. The information she gathers is typically forwarded to higher levels for appropriate action.

This factor is properly evaluated at the GS-5 level.



### *Level of Responsibility*

At GS-5, the supervisor assigns work by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance on assignments which do not have clear precedents. The employee works in accordance with accepted practices and completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and effectiveness in meeting goals. Extensive guides in the form of instructions, manuals, regulations, and precedents apply to the work. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines for application and adapting them according to circumstances of the specific case or transaction. A number of procedural problems may arise which also require interpretation and adaptation of established guides. Often, the employee must determine which of several alternative guidelines to use. If existing guidelines cannot be applied, the employee refers the matter to the supervisor. Contacts are with a variety of persons within and outside the agency for the purpose of receiving or providing information relating to the work or for the purpose of resolving problems in connection with recurring responsibilities.

At GS-6, the supervisor reviews completed work for conformance with policy and requirements. The clerical employee is recognized as an authority on processing transactions or completing assignments within a complicated framework of established procedures and guidelines, often where there are no clear precedents. This recognition typically extends beyond the immediate office or work unit to the overall organization or, in some cases, outside the organization. The employee is regarded as an expert source of information on regulatory requirements for the various transactions, and is frequently called upon to provide accurate information on short notice. Guidelines for the work are numerous and varied, making it difficult for the employee to choose the most appropriate instruction and decide how the various transactions are to be completed. Guidelines often do not apply directly, requiring the employee to make adaptations to cover new and unusual work situations. This may involve deviating from established procedures to process transactions which cannot be completed through regular channels or involve actions where guidelines are conflicting or unusable. Contacts are with employees in the agency, in other agencies, or with management or users or providers of agency services. The employee provides information, explains the application of regulations, or resolves problems relating to the assignment.

The GS-5 level is met. The appellant carries out recurring assignments without specific instructions from her supervisor. There are a variety of manuals, regulations, instructions, and precedents that are available and applicable to the work. Higher level organizations at the installation also provide guidance as requested, or through staff visits and required periodic inspections of administrative areas of subordinate organizations. The appellant is required to use judgment in locating and selecting the appropriate guidelines applicable to the situation or transaction encountered. Situations for which the available guidance is not applicable are referred to the supervisor for resolution. She has contacts with a variety of persons within and outside her organization to obtain or provide information regarding administrative issues and to resolve operational problems related to her work. Work is performed in accordance with accepted practices and completed work is reviewed in terms of technical soundness, appropriateness, and effectiveness in meeting goals.

The GS-6 level is not met. The guidelines and other applicable regulations and procedures, etc., available to the appellant are relatively straightforward, and she is not normally required to make adaptations or deviations to resolve new or unusual situations. The appellant is generally involved in reviewing documents, reports, and other correspondence and materials prior to forwarding to the responsible office; maintaining suspense files to ensure timely response to requests; or conducting periodic reviews and screening of files, publications, reports, etc., to determine if they are current, or are required to be retained, retired, or destroyed. Some of the monitoring and review activity conducted by the appellant requires the use of checklists on which she indicates whether or not a function is being performed in accordance with requirements. There is no indication in the record that the appellant's transactions and assignments are of the degree of difficulty described at Level GS-6.

This factor is properly evaluated at the GS-5 level.

Since both factors are evaluated at GS-5, the overall evaluation of the position is GS-5.

### **Decision**

This position is properly classified as GS-303-5, with the title at the discretion of the agency.