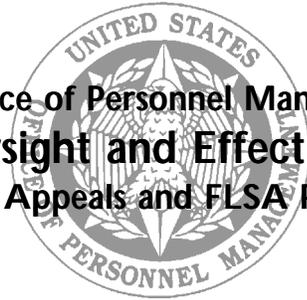


U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



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
(Office Automation)
GS-303-5

Organization: Department of the Army
[organizational location]

OPM decision: GS-303-5
(Title at the discretion of the agency,
with the parenthetical title of Office
Automation)

OPM decision number: C-0303-05-10

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

1/14/00
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:

[appellants address]

[appellant's agency address]

Position Management and
Classification Branch
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Manpower and Reserve Affairs
U.S. Department of the Army
Attn: SAMR-CPP-MP
Hoffman Building II
200 Stovall Street, Suite 5N35
Alexandria, VA 22332-0340

Director, U.S. Army Civilian Personnel
Evaluation Agency
Crystal Mall 4, Suite 918
1941 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202-4508

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

Introduction

On October 8, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted an appeal for the position of Administrative Support Assistant, GS-303-5, U.S. Army Engineer District, Department of the Army, [city/state]. The appellant is requesting that her position be classified as Program Support Assistant, GS-303-7.

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 South Atlantic Division and Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, conducted a classification review of the positions at the [agency]. The position classification review resulted from a review of delegated classification authority to managers. The appellant's position was downgraded based on the joint reviews. The appellant believes that the additional responsibilities associated with making small purchases by use of a Government credit card and the implementation of the automated Corps of Engineers Financial Management System (CEFMS) impact her position and the position should be classified to a higher grade. She also compares her position description to a position description graded at the GS-7 level.

By law, OPM must make classification determinations solely by comparing the current duties and responsibilities of the position to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, 5112). Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others as a basis for deciding her appeal.

Position information

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

The appellant provides administrative, clerical, and budgetary support to the chief and other personnel in the organization. She spends 60 percent of her time on administrative and clerical duties preparing personnel actions and training forms, maintaining records and logs, reviewing procurement orders and requisitions, completing time and attendance reports, maintaining files, receiving visitors and phone calls, routing mail, maintaining the calendar for the supervisor, maintaining inventory of office supplies and equipment, and processing travel vouchers and orders. She spends 30 percent of the time on budget administration where she tracks, monitors, and reconciles expenditures and provides data for inclusion in the annual operating budget.

The appellant works under the supervision of the Office Chief who assigns work by defining the objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The appellant independently plans and carries out the day to day assignments according to accepted practices. The work is reviewed for appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting goals.

Series determination

The agency placed the position in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303.

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 which 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. The position requires a qualified typist and use of office automation equipment and software. Therefore, the parenthetical *Office Automation* should be added to the title.

Standard determination

Miscellaneous Clerical and Assistant Series, GS-303, January 1979.

Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, June 1989.

Job Family Standard for Clerical and Technical Accounting and Budget Work, GS-500, December 1997.

Purchasing Series, GS-1105, March 1993.

Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, November 1990.

Grade determination

The appellant's paramount responsibilities include two distinct functional areas: (1) administrative and clerical work; and (2) budget assistance work. The administrative and clerical duties are covered by the Miscellaneous Clerical and Assistant Series, GS-303, which directs that positions classified to this series be evaluated by the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work. The budget assistance work is evaluated by the Job Family Standard for Clerical and Technical Accounting and Budget Work, GS-500. Since the appellant strongly believes that duties associated with making small purchases with the Government credit card should impact the grade of her position, those duties will be evaluated briefly against the Purchasing Series standard, GS-1105. The office automation duties are evaluated by the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide.

EVALUATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLERICAL WORK:

The Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work 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).

Nature of Assignment

At the GS-5, the work involves 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 processing procedures.

The nature of the appellant's assignments meets the criteria described at the GS-5 level. Her work involves the knowledge and application of administrative procedures, supply and procurement regulations, Army operations and procedures, personnel processes for recruitment and training, Federal travel regulations and procedures, and skills in both verbal and written communication. She operates the CEFMS computer program to perform different modules of work involving correspondence, personnel actions, travel vouchers, training, timekeeping, and supply purchases. These duties require the appellant to make decisions within the parameters of established regulations and policy, select an appropriate course of action, and use a variety of different processes and procedures to complete her assignments.

Work at the GS-6 level 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. The issues being examined must be such that a course of action has substantive impact on the outcome of the assignment. 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 and procedural requirements to process unusually difficult and complicated transactions.

The full intent of the GS-6 level is not met. The appellant's assignments are limited to the [appellant's office location]. Although she uses different established procedures for her administrative support work depending on the type of transaction she is processing, her duties do not involve the wide variety of substantive, unusually complicated transactions intended to credit

this level. Her transactions tend to be repetitive in terms of regulations and procedures to be applied and problems handled. For example, the appellant prepares travel documents, prepares requests for personnel actions and training, maintains rosters, tracks schedules and coordinates training, etc.

GS-5 is credited for this factor.

Level of Responsibility

At the GS-5 level, 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.

The GS-5 level is met. The appellant independently carries out the day-to-day administrative and clerical assignments and assists with the other aspects of the [appellant's office location]. She uses judgment to determine the appropriate course of action to take when performing her duties. The work requires her to select from a number of available guidelines and procedures. Contacts are with employees within the installation, agency and department personnel from other divisions for the purpose of receiving and imparting information, coordinating efforts and ensuring cooperation.

At the GS-6 level, 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 when 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 rapidly 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-6 level is not fully met. The appellant performs the full range of administrative duties in support of a single program and generally covered by applicable regulations and procedures. The guidelines and other applicable regulations and procedures 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 supervisor is available for unusual or controversial matters that require the interpretation of guides or alternatives when guidelines or precedents are not applicable, and the supervisor provides additional instruction on special projects. Additionally, the appellant's contacts are primarily for the purpose of gathering or exchanging factual and/or technical information as opposed to identifying and resolving problems or coordinating work when guidelines and precedent cases do not apply or do not exist.

This factor is credited at the GS-5 level.

Since both factors are evaluated at GS-5, the overall evaluation of the clerical and administrative support functions is GS-5.

EVALUATION OF THE BUDGET WORK:

The budget work occupies 30 percent of the appellant's time and is evaluated separately to determine its impact. The Job Family Standard for Clerical and Technical Accounting and Budget Work, GS-500, is published in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, which assesses grade level by evaluation of nine factors.

A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor levels. For a position factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor-level description in the standard, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

Under FES, positions which significantly exceed the highest factor level or fail to meet the lowest factor level described in a classification standard must be evaluated by reference to the Primary Standard, contained in Appendix 3 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards. The Primary Standard is the "standard-for-standards" for FES.

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts which the worker must understand in order to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, principles, concepts) and the nature and extent of skills needed to apply them.

At Level 1-3, the work requires a knowledge of a body of standardized regulations, requirements, procedures, and operations associated with clerical and technical duties related to the assigned accounting, budget, or financial management support function. For example, (1) knowledge of the various steps and procedures required to perform a full range of accounting, budget, or financial management support duties related to recurring or standardized transactions; (2) knowledge of various accounting, budget, or other financial processing procedures to support transactions that involve the use of different forms and the application of different procedures; (3) knowledge of one or more automated data bases associated with a specific accounting, budget or other financial management function sufficient to input a range of standard information or adjustments, understand recurring error reports and take corrective action, and generate a variety of standard reports; (4) knowledge of the structure and content of accounting, budget, or other financial management related documents (e.g., invoices, reports, travel orders, payroll forms, etc.), to investigate and resolve routine or recurring discrepancies, check documents for adequacy, or perform comparable actions that are covered by established procedures; and/or knowledge of frequently used and clearly stated regulations and rules to determine if a transaction is permitted or to respond to recurring questions from agency personnel, clients, and others.

The appellant meets Level 1-3. She maintains accountability by assisting with budget needs analysis and reconciliations for the [appellant's office location]. The appellant's position requires knowledge of the rules and regulations governing the budgetary processes and procedures used to track and monitor expenditures, to make adjustments as changes occur, to do mathematical computations and data entry, to generate reports, and to prepare the budget for the Chief's approval. She must be knowledgeable of numerous budget related documents in order to verify their accuracy, resolve discrepancies, and perform required actions. She must be knowledgeable of the CEFMS automated computer system to prepare and process the annual operating budget.

At Level 1-4, the work requires in-depth or broad knowledge of a body of accounting, budget, or other financial management regulations, practices, procedures, and policies related to the specific financial management functions. This includes: (1) knowledge of a wide variety of interrelated steps, conditions, and procedures or processes required to assemble, review, and maintain complex accounting, budget, or other fiscal transactions; (2) knowledge of various accounting, budget, or other financial regulations, laws, and requirements to ensure compliance and recommend action; (3) knowledge of a variety of accounting and budget functional areas and their relationships to other functions to research or investigate problems or errors that require reconciling and reconstructing incomplete information, conducting extensive and exhaustive searches for required information, or performing actions of similar complexity; (4) knowledge of automated accounting and budget systems to reconcile errors that require an understanding of nonstandard procedures or to provide assistance in the development of automated procedures for clerical operations; and/or (5) knowledge of extensive and diverse accounting, budget or other

financial regulations, operations, and procedures governing a wide variety of types of related transactions to resolve nonstandard transactions, complaints, or discrepancies, provide advice, or perform other work that requires authoritative procedural knowledge.

Level 1-4 is not met. The appellant uses established processes and procedures to maintain budget accounts and to adjust accounts to reflect obligations and expenditures. There is no evidence in the appeal record that the appellant is required to have an in-depth or broad knowledge of a body of accounting, budget, or other financial management regulations, practices, procedures, and policies of the complexity or diversity described at this level. She compiles the budget estimates for one program. She monitors and tracks the expenditures and reports any potential problems. The sources of budget data and other documents are easily verified.

Level 1-3 is credited for 350 points.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

At Level 2-3, the highest level described in the standard, the supervisor or other designated employee assigns work with standing instructions on objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance for unusually involved situations. The supervisor may assign work according to a standardized control system such as batched work, caseload level, or other defined structure and provide standard general instructions about timeliness, objectives and relative priorities for doing the work. The employee independently processes the most difficult procedural and technical tasks or actions and handles problems and deviations in accordance with instructions, policies, previous training, or accepted practices. The supervisor or designated employee evaluates completed work for overall technical soundness and conformance to agency policies, legal, or system requirements. Completed work is reviewed by sampling in a quality review system and/or spot checked by the supervisor or a senior worker for results and conformity to established requirements and deadlines. The methods used to complete the assignment are seldom reviewed in detail.

The appellant's latitude in accomplishing the work is comparable to Level 2-3. She works independently on budget and administrative projects unless she encounters problems clearly not covered by existing guidelines or precedents. She makes adjustments to the appropriated fund accounts without supervisory intervention, only informing the supervisor of the status of the budget and accounts. She identifies problems and makes recommendations for potential solutions in resolving budgetary transactions. The supervisor depends on the appellant to complete the budgetary processes and maintain the different control points.

At Level 2-4, as described in the Primary Standard, the supervisor sets the overall objectives and the resources available. The employee and supervisor, in consultation, develop the deadlines, projects, and work to be accomplished. The employee, having developed expertise in the line of work, is responsible for planning and carrying out the assignment, resolving the majority of

conflicts that arise, coordinating the work with others where necessary, and interpreting policy on own initiative in terms of established objectives. In some assignments, the employee also determines the approach to be taken and the methodology to be used. The supervisor is kept informed of progress and potentially controversial matters. Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, and effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results.

Level 2-4 is not met. Although the appellant performs her normal assignments with a significant degree of independence, she does not have the flexibility to determine policy on her own initiative nor to determine the approach to be taken or the methodology to be used in regard to her work assignments.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 3. Guidelines

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

At Level 3-2, a number of established procedures and specific guidelines in the form of agency policies and procedures, Federal codes and manuals, specific related regulations, precedent actions, and processing manuals are readily available for doing the work and are clearly applicable to most transactions. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use judgment to identify and select the most appropriate procedures to use, choose from among several established alternatives, or decide which precedent action to follow as a model. The employee is expected to use some judgment and initiative to handle aspects of the work not completely covered. In locating, selecting and applying the most appropriate instructions, references, or procedures, the employee may make minor deviations in guidelines to adapt to specific cases. The employee refers situations in which the existing guidelines cannot be applied or significant deviations must be made to the supervisor or designated employee.

Level 3-2 is met. Budgetary guidelines used by the appellant include agency manuals, policies, and written and oral instructions that are applicable to the work. The appellant uses judgment in selecting appropriate guidelines to accomplish tasks and meet reporting requirements. Considerations include changes in format when entering, consolidating, or reporting budget data; adjusting figures on related forms and schedules to obtain internal agreement and consistency with overall totals and subtotals; or seeking alternative methods involving transfer of charges between accounts.

At Level 3-3, the guidelines are the same but because of the complicating nature of the assignments, they lack the specificity, frequently change, or are not completely applicable to the work requirements, circumstances, or problems. The employee uses judgment to interpret guidelines, adapt procedures, decide approaches, and resolve specific problems. This includes, for example, using judgment to reconstruct incomplete files, devise more efficient methods for procedural processing, gather and organize information for inquiries, or resolve problems referred by others (e.g., those that could not be resolved at lower levels). The employee analyzes the

results of applying guidelines and recommends changes. These changes may include suggesting specific changes to the guidelines themselves, the development of control mechanisms, additional training for employees, or specific guidance related to the procedural handling of documents and information.

Level 3-3 is not met. The appellant does not independently deviate from or adapt procedural instructions to cover new and unusual work situations. She is not responsible for reconstructing files, resolving problems that could not be resolved by others, or changing or analyzing the effectiveness of guidelines.

Level 3-2 is credited for 125 points.

Factor 4. Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, methods, or procedures 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 4-2, the work involves performing related procedural tasks in processing accounting, budget, or other financial management transactions. For example, processing a transaction may involve verifying codes and other information; reconciling balances; using standard formulas to calculate and/or verify calculations; assembling appropriate forms and reports; entering data into automated file systems; distributing documents to appropriate personnel; and answering routine procedural inquiries. The employee makes decisions, such as how to sort incoming documents, locate and assemble information, and correct errors based on a review or knowledge of similar cases or samples, or by selecting from among other clearly recognizable alternatives. The employee considers factors such as the processing requirements, appropriate format, or content for each transaction. Employees take action using established instructions, practices, or precedents for processing of accounting or budget documents. Actions taken are similar and well established.

Level 4-2 is met. The appellant's work involves one program with four disciplines (i.e., facility management, supply management, transportation, and maintenance). Expenditures include personnel services and support (e.g., salary, overtime, training costs, capital equipment costs, project costs, etc.). The appellant extracts, compiles, verifies, and summarizes budgetary information. She prepares related forms and documents in connection with the budget process. Decisions concerning tracking and monitoring expenditures and preparing the annual operating program budget require comparing amounts, making corrections, and selecting alternatives based on past experiences. She makes small purchases with the Government credit card. She also, handles the business transactions with General Service Administration (GSA) for reimbursable work authorization (RWA) for contracts and alterations to the facility. The majority of the appellant's work is tracked by use of the automated tracking system, CEFMS, that the appellant maintains.

At Level 4-3, the work involves performing various accounting, budget, or financial management support related duties or assignments that use different and unrelated processes, procedures, or methods. The use of different procedures may result because transactions are not completely standardized; deadlines are continually changing; functions assigned are relatively broad and varied; or transactions are interrelated with other systems and require extensive coordination with other personnel. The employee decides what needs to be done by identifying the nature of the problem, question, or issue, and determining the need for and obtaining additional information through oral or written contacts or by reviewing regulations and manuals. The employee may have to consider previous actions and understand how these actions differ from or are similar to the issue at hand before deciding on an approach. The employee makes recommendations or takes actions based on a case-by-case review of the pertinent regulations, documents, or issues involved in each assignment or situation.

The appellant does not meet Level 4-3. Her work does not involve the complexity of processing, decisions, and transactions that are present with different and unrelated appropriated or revolving fund accounts. For example, although she works with several expenditure accounts, the accounts are subject to the same rules and regulations since they are all part of the appropriated fund for the [appellant's office location]. The appellant's work does not routinely include the broad and varied types of nonstandard transactions that occur at this level, such as when one budget is interrelated with other systems making transactions difficult to process.

Level 4-2 for 75 points is credited.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work and the effect of the work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-2, the purpose of the work is to apply specific rules, regulations, or procedures to perform a full range of related accounting, budget, or financial management clerical or technical tasks, duties, and assignments that are covered by well-defined and precise program procedures and regulations. The employee completes standard clerical transactions in the functional area by reviewing documents for missing information; searching records and files; verifying and maintaining records of transactions; and answering routine procedural questions. The work affects the adequacy and efficiency of the accounting and budget or financial management function and can affect the reliability of the work of analysts and specialists in related functions. For example, correcting data in automated records enables others to base decisions on accurate information. The work may also affect the accuracy of further processes performed by related personnel in various organizations and the reliability of the organization's financial support services provided to users, customers, etc.

The appellant meets Level 5-2. She is responsible for extracting, verifying, compiling, maintaining and computing a variety of budgetary data and information for expense accounts; reporting on the status of funds; and assisting in the formulation and execution of the budget for the [appellant's office location]. The purpose of the work is to perform the standard recurring

budget/accounting duties for the program and to provide accurate budgetary information for the efficient management of the program. The appellant's work affects the reliability and efficiency of the budget function.

At Level 5-3, the purpose of the work is to apply conventional practices to treat a variety of problems in accounting, budget or financial management transactions. Issues might result, for example, from insufficient information about the transaction, a need for more efficient processing procedures or requests to expedite urgently needed cases. The employee treats these or similar problems in conformance with established procedures. The work affects the quality, quantity, and accuracy of the organization's records, program operations, and service to clients. For example, the effect of the work ensures the integrity of the overall general ledger, its basic design and the adequacy of the overall operation of the accounting system and various operating programs; the amount and timely availability of money to pay for services; the economic well-being of employees being serviced; or compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Level 5-3 is not fully met. The appellant's work does not typically involve the variety of problems or have the broad impact on the organization as intended at this level. Problems rarely occur since CEFMS consists of a menu driven system that covers one appropriated fund with expense accounts confined to one program.

Level 5-2 is credited for 75 points.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts and Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts

Factors 6 and 7 measure face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain and the purpose of these contacts. The purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, and objectives. The personal contacts which serve as the basis for the level selected for Factor 6 must be the contacts which are the basis for the level selected for Factor 7.

Persons Contacted

At Level 2, contacts are with employees in the same agency, but outside the immediate organization. For example, contacts may be with personnel in other functional areas. Contacts at this level may also be with employees in other agencies who are providing requested information or with members of the general public in a moderately structured setting, such as someone explaining why a payment is late or someone trying to expedite a transaction.

Level 2 is met. The appellant's routine and recurring contacts are typically with employees in her organization and administrative and managerial employees in other organizations dealing with budget work. She routinely has contacts with GSA concerning processing and validating financial transactions for the lease of the facility. The appellant also has contacts with private sector vendors.

At Level 3, contacts are with members of the general public. For example, contacts are with persons in their capacities as representatives of others such as attorneys and accountants, contractors, public action groups, or Congressional staff members making inquiries on behalf of constituents. The contacts are not recurring or routine and the purpose, role and authority of each party must be established each time in order for the employee to determine the nature and extent of information that can be discussed and released.

Level 3 is not met. The appellant does not routinely have contact with individuals such as attorneys, Congressional staff, and public action groups as described at this level.

Purpose of Contacts

At Level b, the purpose of the contacts is to plan and coordinate actions to correct or prevent errors, delays, or other complications occurring during the transaction cycle. This may involve obtaining a customer's cooperation in submitting paper work or other information, requesting other personnel to correct errors in documentation or data entry, or assisting others in locating information.

Level b is met. The appellant's contacts are for the purpose of obtaining or providing information related to the status of accounts and supply and funding documents and activities. Contacts may also be made to resolve problems related to unanticipated shortages and discrepancies requiring special handling or the occasional use of nonroutine procedures, (e.g., resolving transactions for RWA).

At Level c, the purpose of the contacts is to persuade individuals who are fearful, skeptical, uncooperative or threatening to provide information, take corrective action, and accept findings in order to gain compliance with established laws and regulations.

Level c is not met. The appellant does not have to persuade threatening or uncooperative individuals as described.

The combination of Level 2 for *Personal Contacts* and Level b for *Purpose of Contacts* equates to 75 points according to the chart in the standard.

Factor 6 and Factor 7 are credited with Level 2b for 75 points.

Factor 8. Physical Demands

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

The appellant's work is mainly sedentary with no special physical demands. This is comparable to Level 8-1 where the work is typically performed while comfortably seated at a desk.

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 regulations required.

The appellant works in an office setting with no unusual risks or discomforts which is comparable to Level 9-1.

Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

SUMMARY		
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	4-2	75
5. Scope and Effect	5-2	75
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	2b	75
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	985

A total of 985 points falls within the range for GS-5, 855 to 1100 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the standard.

EVALUATION OF PURCHASING DUTIES:

The appellant believes that the added duties associated with making purchases using a Government credit card merit a higher grade. She has a threshold limit of \$2500 per purchase, and she makes purchases requiring prior approval from an authorized official. She is responsible for checking computer printouts to ensure limits have not been reached and uses standard catalogs, ordering information, supply lists, etc., to place orders. The process requires a substantial amount of clerical-type work associated with the credit card process such as reconciling monthly transactions and inputting the transactions into the CEFMS.

These duties are evaluated by reference to the Purchasing Series Standard, GS-1105, and equate to grade GS-5. As shown in the summary table which follows, the addition of these duties has no impact on the overall grade of the position. However, those factors which would ultimately affect the grade level are further addressed to help the appellant understand the evaluation.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position

The appellant's position meets Level 1-3, where a knowledge of standardized regulations and procedures are required to make purchases. There is no evidence in the appeal to support the crediting of Level 1-4, which involves purchases with specialized and/or commercial requirements that have unstable price or product characteristics, hard-to-locate sources, or similar complicating factors.

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls

The appellant's position meets Level 2-3, where the employee plans and carries out successive steps necessary to make purchases and independently performs tasks. At Level 2-4, employees are responsible for resolving most conflicts that arise, coordinating their work with others, and interpreting policy on their own initiative to meet established objectives. Level 2-4, where the employee is also delegated considerable latitude in committing the agency to a course of action, is not met by the position.

Factor 3 - Guidelines

The guidelines described at Level 3-2 are used by the appellant. At Level 3-2, there may be minor gaps in guidelines but the employee refers situations that require significant deviations to the supervisor or others for guidance or resolution. Level 3-3, where the employee independently uses judgment to interpret guidelines, adapt procedures, decide approaches, and resolve specific problems, is not evidenced in the position.

SUMMARY		
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	4-2	75
5. Scope and Effect	5-2	75

6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	2a	45
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	955

A total of 955 points falls within the range for GS-5, 855-1100 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-1105 standard.

EVALUATION OF THE OFFICE AUTOMATION WORK:

The office automation work is evaluated against the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, which is also written in the FES format. These duties do not impact the grade of the position, therefore, a summary evaluation follows:

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-3	350
2. Supervisory Controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-2	75
5. Scope and Effect	5-1	25
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	1a	30
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	Total	740

A total of 740 points equates to GS-4, 655 to 850 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the guide.

Summary

The administrative and clerical work equates to GS-5; the budget work equates to GS-5; duties associated with use of the Government credit card equate to GS-5; and the office automation duties equate to GS-4.

Decision

This position is properly classified as GS-303-5, with the title at the discretion of the agency. The parenthetical title *Office Automation* is to be added to the title.