

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

Atlanta Field Services Group
75 Spring Street, SW., Suite 1018
Atlanta, GA 30303-3109

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

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Quality Assurance Specialist
GS-1910-11

Organization: [organization]
[name] Squadron
[name] Group
[number] Airlift Wing
Department of the Air Force
[location]

OPM decision: Quality Assurance Specialist
GS-1910-11

OPM decision number: C-1910-11-04

/s/ Marta Brito Pérez _____

Marta Brito Pérez
Associate Director
Human Capital Leadership
and Merit System Accountability

March 3, 2005 _____

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:

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Introduction

On September 23, 2004, the Atlanta Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant]. His position is currently classified as a Quality Assurance Specialist, GS-1910-11. The appellant requests that his position be reclassified as GS-1910-12. He works in [organization], [name] Squadron, [name] Group, [number] Airlift Wing, Department of the Air Force, [location]. We received the complete appeal administrative report on October 19, 2004. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

The appellant makes various statements about his agency's evaluation of his position and the difficulties he has experienced in having his position reevaluated and the position description (PD) updated. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Because our decision sets aside all previous agency actions and decisions on the appellant's position, the appellant's concerns regarding his agency's classification review process are not germane to this decision.

The appellant also raises issues concerning the increase in his workload as the result of changes in his organization's mission and the acquisition of an additional flight simulator and other training devices (TDs). He believes that the increased workload should be considered in the classification of his position. However, volume of work cannot be considered in determining the grade of a position (*The Classifier's Handbook*, chapter 5).

The appellant refers to GS-12 positions at an active duty Air Force installation which he believes are similar to his but do not involve the variety of TDs with which he must deal. Since the comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others, which may or may not be classified correctly, as a basis for deciding the appeal. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. However, the agency also has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant considers his position so similar to others that they all warrant the same classification, he may pursue the matter by writing to his agency's human resources headquarters. In doing so, he should specify the precise organizational location, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the positions in question. If the positions are found to be basically the same as his, the agency must correct their classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain the differences between his position and the others.

The appellant is assigned to PD number [#] and did not certify the accuracy of the PD. He believes that the PD fails to appropriately capture the scope or complexity of the duties of his

position. The appellant's supervisor stated that the appellant's PD was "accurate as far as it goes," but was out of date and needed to be upgraded to meet current operational conditions. According to the supervisor, the current operational conditions include additional duties assumed by the appellant as the result of the [location] Simulator Facility [facility acronym] receiving a second flight simulator and additional contractor personnel to train flight crews; and, the assignment of a formal flight training mission in addition to an existing refresher training mission and management of funding for simulator training of Air National Guard personnel.

A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position by a responsible management official; i.e., a person with authority to assign work to a position. A position is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by an employee. Classification appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a position and decide an appeal on the basis of the duties assigned by management and performed by the employee. We classify a real operating position, and not simply the PD.

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including information obtained from an on-site desk audit of the appellant's position, an interview with his acting supervisor, and the PD of record which we find contains the major duties assigned to and performed by the appellant and which we incorporate by reference into this decision.

Position information

The appellant serves as Quality Assurance Specialist for the base's simulator/TD complex and is responsible for overall surveillance of the work performance of the contractor in providing hardware and software support services, instruction, and equipment maintenance for the flight simulators and TDs used to train flight crew members at the [facility acronym]. The [facility acronym] conducts formal and continuation training for Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard flight crew personnel (pilots, copilots, navigators, flight engineers and loadmasters) whose duties involve operation of C-130 transport aircraft. This training consists of qualification training for individuals assigned to this aircraft following completion of initial flight training, required yearly refresher training for fully qualified C-130 crew members, and transitional training for personnel being transferred to the C-130 from other aircraft.

The appellant is the onsite representative of the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) contract administration office. As such, he has delegated authority to perform duties involving managing and monitoring contractor compliance with the quality assurance provisions of the training and maintenance contract. He serves as the single point of contact and is responsible for coordinating all activities related to contract quality assurance among the systems contractor and the major command (MAJCOM) functional managers from Air Education Training Command, Air Mobility Command, or Air Force Reserve Command, the DCMA Administrative Contract Office (ACO), functional users, and base support organizations.

He is responsible for monitoring, detecting, and recognizing contract performance problems, and determining any changes required in the contract. The appellant develops and updates the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan to ensure that the contractor has implemented an effective

quality control system and established processes that meets contract requirements. He coordinates any required contract changes, including conditions not specifically identified or required by the contract, with the ACO, functional users and command managers. The appellant receives, reviews, and validates the contractor's certificate of service and reviews inspection and discrepancy reports to resolve conflicts between Air Force and contractor personnel. He advises MAJCOM managers and the ACO of contract-related issues which he has been unable to resolve, evaluates contractor inspection records, procedures, task verification decisions and other materials for conformance with contract provisions, and exercises acceptance/rejection authority for these items. The appellant discusses required changes to the contractor's quality control program with contractor representatives, prepares recommendations and monthly evaluations of contractor performance for MAJCOM managers and the ACO.

The appellant requests and coordinates provision of required government-furnished services to the contractor by base support activities (Civil Engineering, Safety, Security Police, Supply, etc.). He manages assigned Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expenditures; develops and coordinates additional funding requirements; reviews, validates and authorizes stock levels and repair of government furnished supplies and equipment; and responds to higher headquarters inspection deficiency reports, staff assistance visits, inquiries and investigations. The appellant periodically coordinates with TD users, e.g. Air Force Wings assigned at other bases to determine monthly training requirements and to facilitate the development of monthly training schedules. He plans, schedules, coordinates, supports and controls the onsite activities of outside agencies, e.g., Simulator Certification (SIMCERT) Teams, involved in test, evaluation, inspection, and certification of assigned simulators/TDs. The appellant briefs local and higher level management officials on operational status of the equipment. He conducts, participates in, and serves as technical representative in meetings to resolve discrepancies, discuss procedural deviations, or to review quality deficiency reports.

The appellant works under the administrative supervision of the Chief of Training who assigns areas of responsibility, priorities, and objectives and provides guidance on training policy and administrative matters. The appellant acts as the local final authority on matters considered to have a mission impact in determining contractor compliance with simulator availability rates. He has delegated responsibility for the contract quality assurance function and is authorized to act as the representative of ACO on matters related to contractor conformance with contractual requirements. The ACO provides direction and guidance on matters related to contract administration and quality assurance and the appellant accomplishes contract quality assurance management and monitoring activities. The appellant discusses matters involving his findings and observations that may involve non-conformance with the contractor, the ACO and functional managers at higher command levels. He discusses his observations of contractor training activities with qualified instructors and technicians (pilots, navigators, flight engineers, loadmasters, etc.) assigned to the organization to determine the acceptability of the procedures and processes being used.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency classified the position in the Quality Assurance Specialist Series, GS-1910, titling it Quality Assurance Specialist. The appellant does not contest either the series or title

determination, and we concur. The directly applicable Quality Assurance Series, 1910, position classification standard must be used for grade level analysis.

Grade determination

The GS-1910 standard is written in Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Positions graded under the FES format are compared to nine factors. Levels are assigned for each factor and the points associated with the assigned levels are totaled and converted to a grade level by application of the Grade Conversion Table contained in the position classification standard. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

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

At Level 1-7, the work requires comprehensive and thorough knowledge of the full range of principles, concepts, and methodology related to one or more quality assurance functional programs and considerable skill in applying this knowledge to the planning and accomplishment of a variety of difficult and complex work assignments. The quality assurance specialist has broad knowledge of a range of complex products and of the practices, policies, and procedures of related activities such as contract administration, engineering, production, and procurement and skill in coordinating quality assurance plans and programs with these activities. For example, the specialist at this level might design, plan, and implement an effective and economical quality assurance program; have knowledge of methods, processes and materials associated with manufacturing an avionics system or subsystem; use a wide range of methods, principles, and practices to evaluate the contractor's conformance to quality requirements and to assure that procedures adequately control the quality of the product. The specialist may also use various methods of statistical analysis, control, sampling and evaluation to determine compliance with the many associated aspects of quality control.

Level 1-7 is met. Comparable to the Level 1-7 knowledge of complex products, the incumbent is required to have a broad knowledge of the functions and capabilities of two flight simulators, the C-130H2 and C-130H3, a fuselage trainer (FUT), and a night vision goggle (NVG) training course and facility. He analyzes contract specifications and methods and procedures developed by the contractor for contract conformance. The position requires a sound knowledge of quality assurance practices, procedures, and methodologies in order for the appellant to develop a plan for quality review. He is required to have a thorough knowledge of the agency's policy guidelines along with knowledge of the methods and procedures of external organizations such as civil engineering, safety, security police and supply, and skill to review and interpret program

directives and technical documentation. As at Level 1-7, he applies this knowledge in establishing coordination and a quality system interface and between government and contractor requirements, developing necessary changes to existing quality programs, preparing procedural guides and instructions, coordinating implementation efforts, and reviewing the contractor prepared problem/deficiency list on a daily basis. He is required to know acquisition processes in order to evaluate the contractor's inspection records, procedures and task verification decisions for conformance to the contract provisions and to determine what constitutes a mission impact regarding contractor compliance with simulator availability rates. He monitors contractor provided training and is required to know the curriculum/syllabus of the training being provided, in order to measure the quality of the training delivered.

At Level 1-8, employees must possess a mastery of quality assurance concepts, operating principles and methodologies applicable to a major agency program or mission area (e.g., the quality assurance program providing support to agency maintenance activities.) This includes expert knowledge of organizational missions, objectives, and procedures; the relationship with the other program areas (e.g. acquisition or logistics); and the framework in which the program operates. The employee exercises a high degree of skill in applying these knowledges to the analysis and resolution of very complex or sensitive problems related to quality assurance, and in applying new developments and methodologies to assigned program areas. Additionally, at this level, the employee utilizes technical expertise and broad experience in assigned program area in dealing with extremely broad and complex quality problems which are further complicated by such factors as the wide dispersion of organizations and activities involved and the multiplicity of authorities, policies and controls. The results of problem research/study are incorporated into program directives covering new and innovative conceptual approaches, technologies, and methods for enhancing the assessment of quality performance, and identifying areas for improvement.

The standard provides illustrations at Level 1-8 which help to clarify the intent of the factor level description. Typical of this level is an employee at the agency headquarters level who develops agency plans, policies, and procedures to be used by others in the field; who is responsible for studying unprecedented quality assurance problems and developing new techniques and procedures and changing agency policy; or who evaluates field performance, provides technical advice to headquarters staff, and serves on interagency committees.

Level 1-8 is not met. Technical expertise alone is not sufficient to meet the intent of Level 1-8; there must also be significant program or policy responsibility inherent in the position. The appellant's work relates to the quality of contractor maintenance of specific equipment and training at a single site rather to an overall maintenance program as intended at Level 1-8. The appellant's assignment does not involve extremely broad and complex quality problems comparable to Level 1-8 and does not routinely present the opportunity to or require the development of new and innovative conceptual approaches, technologies, and methods to deal with those broad and complex quality problems.

Level 1-7 is credited for 1250 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 2-4, the supervisor provides assignments in terms of overall objectives and any limitations on the scope of the work. The specialist consults with and advises the supervisor on such aspects as priorities, staffing, or funding requirements, and project milestones. The specialist plans and carries out assignments independently, determines the scope and level of quality activities based on the requirements, establishes priorities, interprets and applies general agency quality assurance policies and procedures, and effects coordination/consultation with other activities as required. The specialist has developed considerable expertise in quality assurance and is responsible for resolving problems involving deviations from established procedures, unfamiliar situations, or unusual requirements on his or her own initiative, adjusting and varying the approach based on analysis of conditions/ problems encountered, making authoritative determinations on conformance with requirements, and coordinating corrective action or adjustments with the responsible activities. The specialist periodically briefs the supervisor on progress of the assignments and potentially controversial issues.

Work assignments are assessed from the standpoint of overall effectiveness of quality assurance efforts through periodic status reporting, briefings, or reviews of program documentation and accomplishments. Completed work products such as technical reports, reports of investigations, are accepted as technically sound. Controversial decisions or findings are reviewed primarily so that the supervisor can become familiar with the circumstances and determine if there is a basis for modification of operating instructions or procedures.

Level 2-4 is met. As at Level 2-4, the incumbent acts independently to accomplish his work. He determines the scope and level of his activities based on the requirements of the tasks. He possesses considerable expertise in quality assurance and resolves problems involving deviations from established procedures, unfamiliar situations and/or unusual requirements on his own initiative. He has responsibility for independently planning and implementing the quality assurance program in conformance with overall objectives prescribed in agency directives. Questionable situations regarding the contractor are addressed to the ACO. He meets daily with the contractor's quality control management to resolve and/or anticipate problems that do or may require corrective action. At the installation level he is the final authority on what constitutes a mission impact in determining contractor compliance. His primary efforts are directed towards the contractor's conformance with specifications and reporting his findings to the MAJCOM and the ACO. His completed work is reviewed in terms of satisfactory compliance with overall policy, contract and program requirements.

At Level 2-5, the supervisor provides only administrative guidance in making work assignments such as, identifying broad areas of agency management concern, e.g. the optimum balance between product quality and the cost of achieving the necessary control of quality. Assignments are discussed in terms of broadly define agency missions, giving the employee wide latitude for identifying specific problems for investigation, projects to be initiated, and goals to be met. The specialist independently designs, organizes, and carries out large scale projects or special studies related to overall program administration, or quality compliance issues in a technical program

area. When reviewed, work products are reviewed in terms of agency mission and goals and fulfillment of program objectives.

Level 2-5 is not met. The appellant's level of responsibility does not have the agency wide breadth expected at this level. His responsibility primarily involves contractor performance involving specific simulators and equipment and conformance with contract specifications rather than the large scale projects or special studies typical at Level 2-5. The appellant's work receives more review than that described at Level 2-5 where significant work product, such as proposals for major policy or program changes, receive minimal review. Although the appellant receives only administrative supervision from his immediate supervisor, he does receive direction and technical guidance from the ACO and does not have the independence or lack of guidance anticipated at Level 2-5. He reports his findings to the MAJCOM level and the ACO and does not independently monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of an agency's programs, nor does he develop new procedures or recommendations for policy changes to augment program effectiveness.

Level 2-4 is credited for 450 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

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

At Level 3-3, a number of specific guidelines exist for use in the work. However, specialists have the additional responsibility of adapting and extending agency procedural guides and regulations to situations encountered in planning and accomplishing the work. While agency procedural guidelines are available, they may not be completely applicable to a particular assignment or provide specific guidance. The specialist exercises judgment in interpreting general agency guides, regulations, or precedent cases and in adapting this guidance to individual situations and problems arising in the work.

Level 3-3 is met. As at this level, the guides available to the appellant consist of Federal regulations, agency policies and manuals, contractor statements of work, and technical specifications. They cover general aspects of the work and procedures that should be implemented. However, due to the varied nature of the of his work he encounters; i.e., the FUT, NVG and two different types of simulators, the guides often have only general applicability to the work. The appellant is required to interpret and/or adapt these guides as necessary to ensure tasks are accomplished timely and correctly. He develops detailed quality assurance plans to encompass the specifics related to his assigned program, and uses judgment in analyzing and interpreting the contractual material to identify required actions to ensure mission continuity.

At Level 3-4 the principal guidelines regularly used in the work include agency quality assurance statements and program directives, government procurement regulations, and general administrative instructions. Guidelines are presented in general terms and frequently outline the major areas of program planning along with suggested approaches. The guides may delineate major areas of concern (such as, quality assurance surveys and audits, control of quality costs, technical reviews) and assign broadly-stated responsibilities for these activities during the

development of quality assurance program plans. The specialist uses initiative, extensive experience, and a broad knowledge of quality assurance principles and practices to develop new methods and recommend policy changes. Through review of study reports, industry specifications/standards, and textbooks, keeps abreast of new development having potential application to assigned programs.

The standard provides an illustration of guidelines at Level 3-4 that helps clarify its intent. Typical of this level, planning guidelines consist of general agency and command level directives concerning the overall scope and objectives of quality assurance activities involved in the development and acquisition of major systems and equipment. The guides cover major functions areas, but are of limited use in developing detailed program plans. Because of the wide variations in program requirements, the specialist employs ingenuity and originality in developing new or improved techniques for obtaining effective results and overcoming unusual problems where guides and precedents are lacking.

Level 3-4 is not met. Guides used by the appellant cover general aspects of the work and procedures to implement and are more extensive than the general agency directives covering overall scope and objectives that are available at Level 3-4. Unlike Level 3-4, the appellant does not encounter the wide variations in program requirements or have to develop new or improved techniques.

Level 3-3 is credited 275 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-4, specialists perform varied duties aimed at ensuring the acceptability of products. The work involves application of a complete range of quality assurance principles, techniques, and, methodologies to plan and accomplish products have complex characteristics to perform assignments of equivalent complexity. Broad functions concerned with planning and completing the work include developing the overall plans and approaches based on technical requirements, monitoring the application and effectiveness of controls and methods, and adjusting quality assurance activities as indicated by quality trends or conditions.

Level 4-4 is met. The incumbent is the Project Officer and Quality Assurance Representative for two C-130 flight simulators, a fuselage trainer and a night vision goggle trainer. He plans, develops and implements a quality assurance plan for each, with differing requirements, and numerous procedural steps. The appellant reviews and analyzes contract and technical work orders to ensure critical quality requirements are identified and adequately covered. He makes decisions regarding the adequacy and completeness of the contractor's technical data. He schedules evaluations of expected outcomes, tailoring the approach to the specific product. The work requires making many decisions on such matters as reviewing and interpreting technical

specifications, planning and selecting evaluation techniques, determining the adequacy of the contractor's quality controls, and resolving disputes.

At Level 4-5, assignments typically include a broad range of duties involving substantial breadth and depth of analysis; considerations of numerous interrelationships and variables to develop new approaches; or to resolve persistent, widespread, or critical quality problems. At this level, specialists frequently serve in a program/project leader capacity to accomplish particularly complex, sensitive, or long-term special studies concerning major agency quality assurance programs, e.g. major studies concerning maintenance quality programs being carried out at diverse locations of the country. Assignments may include such activities as developing criteria and methods for evaluating program accomplishments and trends, and making recommendations on changes in program organization and emphasis.

Level 4-5 is not met. The appellant's work does not require involvement in the development of criteria and methods for evaluating overall program accomplishments or trends. The appellant's responsibility for base level operational simulators does not require or permit his position's involvement in particularly complex, sensitive, or long-term special studies concerning major agency quality assurance programs, developing criteria and methods for evaluating program accomplishments and trends, and making recommendations on changes in program organization and emphasis found at Level 4-5.

Level 4-4 is credited for 225 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.

At Level 5-3, the work involves performance of a variety of assignments directed toward ensuring acceptability of products, or acceptable levels of quality in the operations involved. The results of the work affect the acceptability of the products involved in terms of conformance to technical requirements, meeting the user's needs in a timely fashion, and performing as intended.

Level 5-3 is met. The appellant performs a variety of activities focused on ensuring the acceptability of the performance of the contractor in maintaining and operating the [facility acronym] flight simulators. He conducts surveillance of the contractor's work through personal inspections and user feedback, participates in the development and ensures the currency of the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan, and reviews inspection and discrepancy reports to resolve conflicts between his agency and the contractor. The appellant's responsibilities also include evaluating the contractor's inspection reports, procedures and other documentation to determine conformance with contract provisions; discussing required changes to the contractor's quality control program with contractor personnel; and, performing monthly evaluations of contractor performance for MAJCOM functional managers and the ACO. The results of the work

determine contractor compliance with contractual requirements, effectiveness and quality of operations, and efficiency in meeting user needs.

At Level 5-4, the purpose of the work is to plan, develop, and implement quality assurance projects of considerable breadth and complexity. Some assignments may involve responsibility for planning and implementing program plans for ensuring that quality requirements for major products are achieved throughout the item's life cycle, serving as a technical specialist in a broad product or commodity area, or being concerned with quality implications of highly specialized products, manufacturing processes, and techniques. The results of the work affect a range of agency activities being carried out at a number of locations.

Level 5-4 is not met. Unlike Level 5-4, the appellant has responsibility for base level simulator operational activities that do not present the breadth and complexity of quality assurance activities and issues found at that level. The work performed by the appellant impacts the accomplishment of the mission at the [facility acronym] rather than maintenance and training at a number of agency locations.

Level 5-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factors 6, Personal contacts

Personal contacts include face-to-face contacts and telephone contact with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place. The relationship of Factors 6 and 7 presumes that the same contact will be evaluated for both factors.

At Level 6-3, the specialist has regular contacts with employees and officials of other Federal agencies and/or private industry. The individuals contacted vary according to the situation involved and require that the specialist insure the persons contacted understand their respective roles.

Level 6-3 is met. As at this level, the appellant has regular contacts with contractor representatives, personnel from the ACO, functional managers and headquarters personnel from MAJCOMs (Air Education and Training Command, Air Force Materiel Command, Air Mobility Command, Air Force Reserve Command, etc.), local base officials, system users, and personnel from various base organizations (Civil Engineering, Safety, Security Police, Supply, Finance, etc.). The individuals contacted by the appellant will vary according to the situation involved and require that the specialist insure the persons contacted understand their respective roles.

Level 6-4 is not met. At this level, specialists have regular personal contacts with high level program and quality assurance officials in other Federal agencies, top executives of large private industrial firms, or representatives of foreign governments. The appellant's contacts do not routinely involve contacts with high level quality assurance officials in other Federal agencies outside the Department of the Air Force, high level executives of private sector companies or representatives of foreign governments. Contacts primarily involve individuals of organizations

within his own agency, those of DCMA, or associated with the private sector contractor providing hardware and software support services and flight crew personnel training.

Level 6-3 is credited for 60 points.

Factor 7, Purpose of contacts

The purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives.

At Level 7-3, contacts require considerable skill to influence and motivate individuals to correct deficiencies which would otherwise result in unacceptable products. Such contacts require that the specialist deal with officials who may have a meager understanding of the quality requirements involved, may dispute the nature of the requirements, or have a less than cooperative attitude. The specialist exercises a high degree of technical skill and judgment in discussing and explaining the applicable requirements and the nature and extent of the deficiencies. Considerable tact and persuasion are required to motivate individuals who may be reluctant to effect corrective action because of the potential impact on delivery schedules or cost factors.

Level 7-3 is met. The purpose of the appellant's contacts is to coordinate and administer the overall quality assurance program for the [facility acronym] to ensure that the contractor is fully meeting contractual requirements for the training of personnel from various Air Force components who operate C-130 transport aircraft. As at Level 7-3, the appellant deals with officials who may not fully understand the contract quality requirements, may dispute the nature of the requirements or the findings of nonconformance, or have a less than cooperative attitude. As at this level, the incumbent must coordinate, resolve disagreements, discuss technical specifications, and advise officials at higher level commands and organizations on quality assurance matters related specifically to his program responsibilities. He negotiates differences of opinion regarding nonconformance with contractor managers or quality control personnel. The appellant uses considerable tact and skill in convincing contractors to take actions with which they may not agree to correct deficiencies or to resolve conflicts between military and contractor officials.

At Level 7-4, the purpose of the contacts is to negotiate or settle significant issues or problems which require escalation because established channels and procedures have failed to resolve the problem. The issue or problem may concern significant quality deficiencies impacting major equipment acquisition programs (i.e., the deficiencies affect the timely delivery of acceptable equipment), or persistent noncompliance on the part of a contractor where formal efforts to effect corrective action have been unsuccessful. The contacts may also concern problems of a similar scope which require negotiation with management representatives of other agencies, or representatives of foreign governments or international organizations.

Level 7-4 is not met. The appellant's contacts do not reach this level as issues and problems are dealt with within the framework of established procedures, and do not involve major programs or negotiations with individuals representing organizations described at this level.

Level 7-3 is credited for 120 points.

Factor 8, Physical demands

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

At Level 8-2, the highest level described in the standard, in addition to the work performed at a desk, the duties regularly require extended periods of walking, standing, or bending while observing manufacturing operations, witnessing tests or examining material and processes.

The appellant's work meets Level 8-2. The appellant's duties require that he inspect equipment and observe contractor work operations and training activities in various areas and facilities to ensure conformance with contract requirements. The work regularly requires extended periods of walking, standing, bending or climbing stairs or ladders to carry out these duties. In some instances, inspections and observations must be performed in confined areas in or around simulators and TDs.

Level 8-2 is credited for 20 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

This factor considers the risk and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. Although the use of safety precautions can practically eliminate a certain danger or discomfort, such situations typically place additional demands upon the employee in carrying out safety regulations and techniques.

At Level 9-2, in addition to the work that may be performed in an office setting, the duties involve regular and recurring visits to manufacturing, storage, or test areas. Such visits may require use of appropriate protective clothing or gear such as safety glasses and shoes, ear protection, and hard hat, and observance of appropriate safety precautions.

As at Level 9-2 the incumbent's duties require that he participate in regular and recurring visits to contractor work areas where simulators and TDs are located. The use of appropriate protective gear, such as hard hats, safety glasses, ear protection and observance of safety precautions appropriate to the area may be required.

Level 9-3 is not met. At this level, in addition to those duties which are accomplished in an office setting, the nature of the work requires that the specialist on a regular and recurring basis be exposed to potentially dangerous situations. The work requires knowledge and application of special safety devices and equipment (e.g., toxic chemical protective clothing), and strict adherence to work procedures and safety precautions to avoid hazards. The nature of the work performed by the appellant does not involve regular and recurring exposure to the risks or require the use of specialized safety devices of typical of this level.

Level 9-2 is credited for 20 points.

Summary

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-7	1250
2. Supervisory controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. Personal contacts	6-3	60
7. Purpose of contacts	7-3	120
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-2	20
<i>Total Points</i>		<u>2570</u>

A total of 2570 points falls within the GS-11 range, 2355 to 2750 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-1910 standard.

Decision

The position is properly classified as Quality Assurance Specialist, GS-1910-11.