

**U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

Appellant: [Appellant's name]

Agency classification: Secretary (OA)
GS-318-7

Organization: [Appellant's organization/location]
United States Coast Guard
Department of Homeland Security
[Organization location]

OPM decision: Secretary (OA parenthetical including
Bilingual at the option of the agency)
GS-318-7

OPM decision number: C-0318-07-08

[Signature]

Robert D. Hendler
Classification and Pay Claims
Program Manager
Merit System Audit and Compliance

May 9, 2011

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 the 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's name]
Department of Homeland Security
[Address and location of organization]

Director, Human Capital Policy & Program Innovations
Chief Human Capital Officer
Department of Homeland Security
1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Attn.: 13th floor
Washington, DC 20536

[Address of Appellant's
Regional Human Resources Office]

Introduction

On November 15, 2010, Philadelphia Oversight of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted a position classification appeal from [Appellant's name], whose position is currently classified as Secretary (OA), GS-318-7. The position is located in the [Name of Branch], U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) [Name and Location of Serviced Unit], USCG, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in [Location of Serviced Unit]. [He/she] requests that the position title be changed to include the parenthetical title of "Bilingual" because [he/she] occupies a position where [he/she] is required to speak, write, and translate both English and Spanish fluently. We received the complete agency administrative report on January 31, 2011. We accepted and decided this appeal under the provisions of section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.)

General issues

The appellant points to DHS' "paying those enforcing border crossing rules up to 5% salary differential for using their bilingual skills" as justification for [his/her] requested position title change. Subchapter III of chapter 45 of title 5 U.S.C. permits an employing agency to award law enforcement officers for foreign language capability. Incentive awards granted under chapter 45 are not germane to and are not subject to review under the position classification appeal process. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their duties and responsibilities to OPM position classification standards (PCS) and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Thus, we will not address this issue further in our decision.

Position information

The appellant serves as the principal office assistant to the Commander, Deputy Commander, and Command cadre of the USCG [Name of Serviced Unit]. The ability to communicate orally and in writing in English and Spanish is required for [his/her] position, as [Name of State/Territory] is a predominately Spanish speaking U.S. territory. Telephone calls, letters, e-mails, and faxes from [Name of State/Territory] agencies, including the Governor's Office, as well as businesses the Command interacts with are often in Spanish and must be translated into English for the Command by the appellant. [His/her] duties include maintaining the Commander's and Deputy Commander's calendars, maintaining subject-matter files and records related to work of [Name of Serviced Unit], responding to requests for information from these files, composing replies to memoranda and letters, compiling invitation lists and preparing invitations, editing award recommendations and citations, printing and assembling award presentation packages, maintaining a tracking log for Officer Evaluation Reports, receiving and routing visitors and telephone calls, arranging meeting space for meetings and events, coordinating travel arrangements for the Commander and Deputy Commander, determining the need for and purchasing office supplies and equipment, and using a wide range of office automation software and hardware.

USCG [Name of Serviced Unit] has approximately 550 active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel divided into subordinate segments (departments, divisions, and subordinate units). Subordinate departments include the [Name of Serviced Units]. There are formal internal

procedures and administrative controls and coordination among subordinate staff and coordination among subordinate units is sufficiently complex to require the appellant's continuous attention.

We decided this appeal by considering all information of record furnished by the appellant and [his/her] agency, including [his/her] official position description (PD) and other material received in the agency administrative report on January 31, 2011, and information obtained from telephonic interviews with the appellant and [his/her] supervisor, the Deputy Commander USCG [Name of Serviced Unit]. We find the appellant's official PD (#[Number]) contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into our decision.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency has classified the appellant's position to the Secretary Series, GS-318, which covers positions that serve as the principal clerical and administrative support position in the office to which assigned. The appellant agrees and, after careful review of the record, we concur.

The GS-318 PCS prescribes titling practices for positions in this series. The title applicable to all nonsupervisory positions is Secretary. The GS-318 PCS permits the use of a single parenthetical title for covered positions. The PCS specifically provides for the use of the parenthetical title of "Typing" or "Stenography" when the position includes a requirement for typing or stenography skills at or above the level of proficiency required under the competitive standard for entry level clerk-typist or clerk-stenographer positions.

The GS-318 PCS, however, must be read in conjunction with the more recently published Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-326 PCS which states that the parenthetical title *Office Automation* is added to the title of positions excluded from this series when such positions require significant knowledge of office automation systems and a fully qualified typist to perform word processing duties. The abbreviation, *OA*, may be used to prevent titles from becoming unnecessarily cumbersome. The GS-326 PCS states that when the *OA* parenthetical title is used, the *Typing* designation will not be used. When appropriate, however, other parenthetical titles are combined with the *OA* title, e.g., Secretary (Stenography/OA). Whenever a parenthetical title is used, the position description must reflect the duties which require use of that title. Given the need to communicate orally and in writing in Spanish and English as stated in the PD and confirmed by our fact-finding, the parenthetical (Bilingual/OA) is permissible. Therefore the position title is Secretary (OA) with the addition of Bilingual to the parenthetical title at the option of the agency.

Grade determination

The appellant did not appeal the grade level of [his/her] position or contest the factor levels assigned by the agency: Levels 1-4, 2-3, 3-3, 4-3, 5-3, 6-2, 7-2, 8-1, and 9-1. Under the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, the grade level is established by evaluating the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications required of the position against the nine factors common to non-supervisory positions covered by the General Schedule. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the factor levels. For a 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, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect that meets a higher level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level. The total points are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the PCS. After careful review of the record, we concur with the levels assigned by the agency and have credited the position as follows:

Evaluation using the GS-318 PCS

Summary

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Points</u>
Factor 1, Knowledge	1-4	550
Factor 2, Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
Factor 3, Guidelines	3-3	275
Factor 4, Complexity	4-3	150
Factor 5, Scope/Effect	5-3	150
Factor 6, Personal Contacts	6-2	25
Factor 7, Purpose of Contacts	7-2	50
Factor 8, Physical Demands	8-1	5
Factor 9, Work Environment	9-1	5
<u>Total</u>		<u>1485</u>

The total of 1485 points falls within the GS-7 point range (1355-1600 points) on the grade conversion table provided in the standard. Therefore, the appellant's position is properly graded at the GS-7 level.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Secretary (OA parenthetical including Bilingual at the option of the agency), GS-318-7