



United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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Article No. 26-04

Standards: [General Attorney, GS-905 \(October 1959\)](#)

Factor: Level of responsibility

Issue: Crediting of stature

Identification of the Classification Issue

The appellant's position was classified using the GS-905 standard, which evaluates the *Nature of the Case or Legal Problem* and *Level of Responsibility*. She believed that, when evaluating her position under the four elements of the second factor, Levels D, D, E, and D should be credited. When combined with Type II cases for the first factor, this would support GS-13 classification. The appellant asked that the "impact of the person on the job" be considered if applying the GS-905 standard did not result in a higher grade for her position. Her rationale stressed the credentials she brought to the position, as a former State Deputy Attorney General in her specific area of expertise, and how they impacted her work.

Resolution

The *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards* states that "impact of the person on the job" is reflected in the classification when the performance of a particular individual actually makes the job materially different from what it otherwise would be. The fact that an individual in a position possesses higher qualifications or stands out from other individuals in comparable positions is not sufficient reason by itself to classify the position to a higher grade. For this concept to apply, management must recognize and endorse the additional duties and the work environment must allow continuing performance at a different level.

The GS-905 standard contains criteria for applying this classification concept. It states that individuals who have achieved outstanding stature bring an additional element to the performance of their assigned

duties that cannot always be fully evaluated in terms of the criteria in the standard. In such cases, it is appropriate to identify the nature of the peculiar stature and to provide some credit for it in evaluating the position. This extra credit will not normally, in itself, be worth an additional bonus grade. However, when a borderline situation exists for the second factor, the effect of the individual on the position is recognized in evaluating the position to a higher responsibility level. In some cases, this will make a difference of one grade level.

OPM fully considered the extensive environmental law experience that the appellant brought to the position and recognized this in the crediting of three elements of the second factor at Level D. While no formal delegation was in place, the functions that she performed in lieu of the organization's legal staff were a continuing part of her work and were found to meet the GS-13 level. However, because her experience and functions were fully considered in evaluating each element of the factor, they could not be credited again in the separate assessment of *stature*. Since *Level of Responsibility* was not borderline, the concept of *stature* could not be applied in evaluating the position.

“Back to the Basics”

Specific instructions in a classification standard, e.g., evaluating stature in the GS-905 standard, take precedence over more general classification guidance. Therefore, each standard must be individually and carefully read to determine its appropriate application. However, when evaluating a position, the classification process permits crediting duties or responsibilities only once.

Link to [C-0905-13-06](#)