



United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
April 2002
Article No. 28-06

Standard: [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) (June 1998)

Factor: Factors 2 and 3

Issue: Reporting to deputy positions
Crediting for subordinate supervisors

Identification of the Classification Issue

The appellant's position was classified as Support Services Supervisor, GS-342-12. He was responsible for providing materiel and related support services to line construction, maintenance, and repair missions controlled by other organizations. He reported to a Deputy Commander, who in turn reported to the District Commander, the latter position having been determined equivalent to an SES position. The Deputy Commander directly supervised the district's administrative support components. However, another Deputy Commander acted for the District Commander and provided program guidance and direction to district line mission managers. The appellant believed that his position should be credited at Level 2-3, under its provision that a position reporting to a deputy position be credited as reporting to the chief. He also believed that his position should be credited at Level 3-3b using the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (Guide).

Resolution

The Guide states that an assistant chief position that does not fully share in the authorities and responsibilities of the chief constitutes a separate, intervening reporting level. A supervisory position reporting to such a position is treated as if reporting to a position one level below the chief. Since the appellant's supervisor was not a full deputy within the meaning of the Guide because he did not act for the District Commander, OPM sustained the agency's crediting of Level 2-2 because the appellant reported to a position properly identified as one reporting level below the first SES or equivalent position in the direct supervisory chain.

The same general principle applies to the grading of deputy positions. In order to be classified one grade lower than the grade of the chief position to which it reports, a deputy position must share fully in the duties, responsibilities, and authorities of the chief. This may be either in the capacity of alter ego, where the deputy fully shares in the direction of all phases of the organization's work, or as manager of a major part of the overall program when the total authority and responsibility for the organization is equally divided between the chief and the deputy. By definition, only one full deputy position can exist at a given organizational level. If two (or more) positions are designated as "deputies," they are classified at least two grades lower than the grade of the chief position to which they report under the Guide.

Under Level 3-3b of the Guide, several responsibilities (e.g. 1, 3, 5, 6, 8) are only credited to supervisors who direct two or more subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or comparable personnel. To support these designations, these subordinate personnel must spend 25 percent or more of their time on supervisory, lead, or comparable functions. These responsibilities may only be credited in situations where the subordinate organization is so large and its work so complex that it *requires* managing through these types of subordinate positions.

The appellant supervised a GS-11 specialist who directed five staff years of full-time employee work, one year of contractor laboring work, and one student. Since it was reasonable to conclude that this GS-11 employee spent 25 percent of his time leading work, this position was credited as a subordinate supervisor/leader under the appellant's position. The appellant also supervised a GS-9 specialist, who oversaw the work of two full-time employee positions, a contractor, and a student. The PD's for the two full-time positions showed that the incumbents worked independently in their day-to-day duties. In addition, contractor oversight was limited to accepting or rejecting work. Therefore, this GS-9 position was not credited as a subordinate supervisor/leader under the appellant's position. Since only one subordinate supervisor/leader position was supportable, OPM concluded that the appellant's organization did not have the characteristics that would *require* using multiple team leaders or supervisors who devoted at least 25 percent of their time to leadership responsibilities. Because the position did not exercise a sufficient number of Level 3-3b responsibilities, OPM sustained the agency's crediting of Level 3-2c.

"Back to the Basics"

When evaluating a supervisory position, only the actual requirements of the organization supervised should be credited. Establishing multiple subordinate supervisory or leader positions with minimal corresponding responsibilities serves to dilute rather than magnify the actual management requirements of the organization and should not be treated as an indication of a more complex organization than actually exists. The authority to carry out supervisory functions that rarely if ever occur, such as approving costly training or extensive overtime, cannot be credited if the organization does not require the regular and recurring exercise of that authority. Only the actual demands that the organization places on the supervisor may be examined in assigning a factor level.

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