



# United States Office of Personnel Management

## **Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness**

### ***Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions***

December 2002

Article No. 29-02

**Standards:** Psychology Aide and Technician Series, GS-0181 [\[PDF\]](#) [\[TXT\]](#)  
Rehabilitation Therapy Assistant, GS-636 (June 1969) [\[PDF\]](#) [\[TXT\]](#)

**Factor:** N/A

**Issue:** Selecting an appropriate standard when the assigned series has no published grade level criteria

### **Identification of the Classification Issue**

The appellants' position was classified in the GS-181 series, which does not have published grade level criteria. Therefore, a published standard for related kinds of work had to be used to determine the grade level of the appellants' position.

### **Resolution**

The three appellants were members of a multidisciplinary team that administered treatment to veterans enrolled in the chemical dependency outpatient program. The appellants provided technical work in support of the psychologists, social workers, and other professional health care providers. Major responsibilities involved screening and assessing patients to determine whether they met the criteria for admission to the chemical addiction program. The appellants interviewed the patients, collected information from them concerning their substance abuse and personal histories, and participated in the development of treatment plans for the patients. To perform their duties, the appellants had to possess a basic understanding of chemical dependency, behavior assessment, and counseling. They were not required to possess an academic knowledge of clinical psychology or a scientific understanding of addictive human behavior.

OPM found that the criteria in the standard for the Rehabilitation Therapy Assistant Series, GS-636, provided the best fit for determining the grade level of the appellants' position. Work in the GS-636 series involves treating, instructing, or working with patients in carrying out

therapeutic activities prescribed for their physical or mental rehabilitation. Similar to work in the GS-181 series, work in the GS-636 series requires the ability to apply a practical knowledge of therapeutic methods and techniques, rather than full professional knowledge of the concepts, principles, and practices of the specialized field of therapy.

### **“Back to the Basics”**

When no directly applicable grade level criteria have been published, other standards must be selected for cross series comparison. The selected standard should cover work as similar as possible to the work being evaluated in terms of the kind of work process, function, or subject matter involved; the qualifications (knowledge, skills, and abilities) required; the level of difficulty and responsibility; and the combination of classification factors that have the greatest influence on the grade level. Using a standard in such instances requires a careful analytical comparison of the relationship of the position being evaluated with the intent of the criteria being used and sound classification judgment.

**Link to C-0181-05-01** [\[PDF\]](#) [\[TXT\]](#)