



# United States Office of Personnel Management

## Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness

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

December 2002

Article No. 29-04

**Standard:** Secretary, GS-318 (January 1979) [\[PDF\]](#)[\[TXT\]](#)

**Factor:** Factor 6, Personal Contacts

**Issue:** Level of Personal Contacts

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

The appellant's position was classified as Secretary, GS-318. The appellant worked in a field office that was a division of a bureau-equivalent agency. She believed her position met the criteria for classification as Program Analyst, GS-343, and should be classified at a higher grade level.

### **Resolution**

The appellant performed the full range of secretarial duties to support the division chief and associate chiefs in management of a division with over 600 employees. She screened calls and mail, handled and resolved various administrative matters, attended meetings and followed up on actions, and performed a variety of other functions. Contacts included officials such as the U.S. Attorney General, the State governor, foreign ambassadors, members of Congress, congressional staffers, diplomatic staff, journalists from all over the world, and other representatives from Federal, State and local agencies.

OPM found that the appellant performed secretarial duties and not analytical and evaluative duties indicative of work in the GS-343 series. It also found that under Factor 6, Personal Contacts, the position did not meet Level 6-4 which was credited by the agency. In reviewing contacts, OPM noted that, similar to Level 6-3, the appellant's contacts were not made on a routine basis, and the appellant discerned the importance and purpose of the callers or visitors during the course of the contact. The appellant regularly had contacts with high level officials and dignitaries who normally initiated the contacts in order to talk to or meet with the supervisor.

Although, like Level 6-4, she made contacts with high-ranking officials from outside her agency, these were not made in highly unstructured settings, also typical of that level. OPM found that Level 6-3 was a better representation of the position.

**“Back to the Basics”**

When evaluating a position in the Factor Evaluation System, the full intent of a factor level must be met in order to credit the level. Although a secretary may have contacts with high-level officials and dignitaries as identified at Level 6-4, they must take place in the highly unstructured settings that are also described at that level.