



United States  
Office of Personnel Management

**Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness**  
*Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions*  
1981  
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**Standard:** N/A  
**Factor:** N/A  
**Issue:** Variety as a classification factor in a mixed-grade position

**Identification of the Classification Issue**

An Office of Personnel Management region reviewed and certified an Administrative Officer position to a lower grade (i.e., GS-13 to GS-11). The agency requested that the Office of Personnel Management central office review and overturn the region's decision based on the application of the classification principle of "variety." The position consisted of five sets of duties; they were:

Supervision . . . . . GS-8  
Personnel . . . . . GS-8  
Property Management . . . . . GS-9  
Budget Administration . . . . . GS-11  
Financial Management . . . . . GS-11

The agency argued that the final grade should be GS-12 based on application of the "variety principle."

**Resolution**

The Office of Personnel Management reviewed the agency's argument and found it unacceptable. The additional grade for variety must be considered as a "premium" which is added to the *proper tentative grade of the position*. Before the "premium" for variety can be credited in a mixed-grade position, a tentative grade level must be determined using sound classification approaches.

In deciding this case, the Office of Personnel Management first considered guidelines on the classification of mixed-grade positions. The Office of Personnel Management found that the position's time, according to the agency's own evaluation, was divided into four major occupational areas. Two sets of duties were at the GS-11 level; with two other duties at the GS-9 and GS-8 levels respectively. In addition, the position had supervisory functions which were not considered by the agency. (These duties were GS-8 by application of criteria in Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide, Part I.)

While not specifically stated in the agency's evaluation, the Office of Personnel Management found that the GS-11 level duties occupied a majority of the employee's time, and were the most appropriate value for the whole position. Therefore, the Office of Personnel Management established the tentative grade at GS-11.

Having established the tentative grade at GS-11, OPM then considered the issue of variety. Duties below the tentative grade were not considered since their relative value to the position as a whole would not raise the total worth of the position above the tentative grade. The two sets of duties at the GS-11 level were not considered to be so different that the premium grade should be added.

As a general rule, OPM found that variety may be considered as a classification factor in a mixed-grade position only after the application of mixed-grade guidelines.