



United States
Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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Standard: N/A
Factor: N/A
Issue: Use of the [Miscellaneous Clerical and Assistant Series, GS-0303](#)

Identification of the Classification Issue

In adjudicating several position classification appeals and responding to agency requests for clarification or guidance, the Office of Personnel Management issued several decisions and opinions dealing with the use of the GS-0303 series. It appears that several agency classifiers whose work was reviewed by the Office of Personnel Management used the GS-0303 series simply because the position was formerly classified in the GS-0301 series. This item represents the findings of several appellate decisions and advice given to agencies in response to specific questions concerning the use of the GS-0303 series. The GS-0303 series may be appropriate for a given position, but this conclusion can be made only after a careful analysis of all of the significant aspects of the position.

Resolution

Appellate Decision

In the adjudication of a representative classification appeal, an Office of Personnel Management region evaluated a position with the following characteristics:

- Appellant was responsible for purchasing parts and services used to maintain a fleet of government-owned vehicles;

- Appellant performed a variety of accounting duties related to the work of a vehicle repair shop and was responsible for portions of the accounting system and the Working Capital Fund; and
- Appellant performed a variety of miscellaneous clerical duties in support of the shop.

In evaluating these duties, the region found that the purchasing duties were properly classified in the Purchasing Series, GS-1105, and that they represented about 50 percent of the appellant's work time. The accounting duties were found to be classified in the Accounting Technician Series, GS-0525, and they represented about 30 percent of the appellant's time. Both the purchasing and accounting duties were found to be properly graded at the GS-4 level. The clerical duties were found to be lower-graded and a detailed evaluation of time was not provided in the region's decision. Rather than placing the position in the GS-0303 series, the region concluded that either the GS-1105 series or the GS-0525 series would be appropriate. However, the appellate record did not contain sufficient information on either career progression or recruiting considerations for the region to determine the series. The appeal was returned to the agency for a decision as to which of the two series would be assigned.

Advisory Opinion

Responding to an agency request for additional guidance on the use of the GS-0303 series, the Office of Personnel Management Standards Development Center provided specific responses to several questions. The Standards Development Center's response to these questions may be useful to classifiers in deciding if the GS-0303 series is appropriate in a given situation. We have provided the agency's specific questions so that the Standards Development Center's responses can be read in the proper context.

"OPM SEEMS TO FOLLOW THE RULE THAT THE GRADE CONTROLLING DUTIES OF SUCH POSITIONS, i.e., Mixed-grade, Mixed-series, DRIVE THE SERIES."

This is not a "rule" but rather a general principle which must be applied using sound classification judgment and only after considering such factors as the paramount qualifications required, the sources of recruitment and lines of progression, the reasons for the position's existence, and the background knowledge required.

"THE GS-0303 SERIES STATES A 'GENERAL' RULE THAT MIXED SERIES POSITIONS SHOULD BE CLASSIFIED IN THE SERIES APPROPRIATE FOR THE PARAMOUNT QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED, AND IT'S DIFFICULT TO ARGUE THAT THE HIGHER GRADE LEVEL ISN'T PARAMOUNT."

In most cases the series which represents the highest level of work performed will also identify the paramount qualifications required to do the work. However, careful analysis of some positions will show, for example, that the line of promotion for these positions is represented by a series

appropriate for work which is at a lower level. In cases such as this, the position should be classified to the series of the lower level work. The paramount qualifications required by a position are not always represented by the series of the highest level of work performed.

"THE GS-0303 SERIES APPEARS TO BE A SERIES OF LAST RESORT . . ."

The series determination information in the standard for the GS-0303 series is intended to set forth guidance to be used by classifiers in determining the appropriate series for positions being considered for classification in that series. There are many clerical, assistant, and technical positions in the Federal service which are correctly classified to the GS-0303 series. The guidance, however, should serve to caution classifiers against classifying positions to the series (i.e., GS-0303) before making a careful analysis of the various factors which impact on the positions as a whole.

"THE STANDARD CAUTION(S) AGAINST THE USE OF THE WORD
'ADMINISTRATIVE' IN TITLING POSITIONS . . ."

The guidance in the series coverage standard for the GS-0303 series does not preclude the use of the word "administrative" in titles for positions classified to that series. However, it suggests that use of that word might lead to confusion with the Administrative Officer Series, GS-0341. If the use of the word "administrative" results in the most meaningful title, then construct the title of the position accordingly, as long as it does not conflict with titles prescribed for the GS-0341 series.

" 'CLASSIFICATION PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES' GUIDANCE HASN'T BEEN
MODIFIED OR RESCINDED CONCERNING THE STATEMENT THAT 'THE SERIES OF
THE GRADE CONTROLLING DUTIES MAY NOT BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE
SERIES FOR THE POSITION'."

There is no basis for rescinding or modifying this principle since the guidance is valid and useful. Consider, for example, a position classified as Secretary (Stenography), GS-0318-5. The secretarial duties are at the GS-4 level, and the stenography duties are at GS-5. In this case the position is not classified in the series of the grade controlling duties, but in the Secretary Series, which best represents the main purpose of the position and the total knowledges required.