



## 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:** [Offset Press Operator, WG-4417](#) (October 1981)  
**Factor:** Knowledge and Responsibility  
**Issue:** Crediting of Level III

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

The appellant had appealed for a higher grade, believing that Factor 1, Knowledge and Responsibility, should be credited at Level III instead of Level II. He emphasized that the work required hairline to critical tolerances and the maintenance of precise color values, and supplied a sample of work orders in support of his appeal. Several of the work orders had notations such as "Top Quality," "Request full color with critical registration," "Please assure critical registration," or "Do not change the dimensions of the outer circle--this is very critical."

As defined in the Job Grading Standard, Level II requires "close to hairline" registration. While Level II may be multi-color work, it does not require the maintenance of critical color values. Level III requires registration ranging from "hairline to critical." In addition, Level III requires the maintenance of precise, critical color values through the use of a densitometer or some other exact measuring instrument.

### **Resolution**

Review of the appeal record and a sample of work orders did not establish a requirement for hairline to critical tolerances or for critical color values. Notations on work orders such as "critical registration" or "precise color values" do not satisfy the requirements of those terms as used in the standard. The standard specifically defines hairline registration as  $\pm 0.003$  inch, and critical as  $\pm 0.001$  inch or less. Such precision is required in some kinds of work, e.g., multi-color halftone work to insure clear and accurate simulation of colors. There was no evidence of such precision work on a regular and recurring basis. The notations on the work orders, "top quality"

or "critical registration," apparently meant only that the particular work order required more than usual attention for that shop.

Precise color values are defined in the standard as "precise color values established and maintained through the use of an exact measuring instrument such as a reflective densitometer." An urgent deadline or administrative priority does not necessarily signify "precise color values" as defined in the standard. The work orders did not provide evidence of such critical color values. Level III may be appropriate when precise color values are critical to the product, for example in medical illustrations where exact color gradations show slight differences between diseased and healthy tissue. While the subject position involved some multi-color work, it was not equivalent to Level III. For example, assignments included a multi-color diagram of a complex piping system coded to show the arrangement of different subsystems. Color balance was important, but the subject matter illustrated did not require the exactness required by Level III criteria. Also, there was no indication that the appellant used a densitometer or other precise measuring instrument to control precise color values, as required at Level III. Accordingly, the position was credited at Level II.