



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: [Secretary Series, GS-0318](#) (January 1979)
Factor: N/A
Issue: Type of work properly included in the GS-0318 Series

Identification of the Classification Issue

In an appeal to an Office of Personnel Management region, an appellant requested that her position be classified in the Secretary Series rather than the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-0303. The appellant's position was the only clerical position at a lock and dam facility. The only other positions at the facility were ten lock and dam operators, three lock and dam equipment mechanics, a foreman, and a lockmaster. The appellant's major duties included such clerical functions as typing a variety of reports and correspondence, screening incoming correspondence, responding to telephone inquiries, establishing and maintaining files, and requisitioning supplies. In addition, she communicated with and relayed instructions to crews of commercial and private vessels and to lock personnel to facilitate transit through the locks. She maintained logs of lock and dam operations, encoded river traffic data into the installation's computer system, prepared one-time and recurring reports on lock and dam operations, and kept employees informed of changes in such procedural matters as pay and leave.

Resolution

The primary issue was whether the appellant's position was secretarial or not. The appellant contended that the position belonged in the GS-0318 Series, which requires that any position in the series "must be the principal office clerical or administrative support position in the office, operating independently of any other such position in the office. The duties require a knowledge of clerical and administrative procedures and requirements, various office skills, and the ability to apply such skills in a way that increases the effectiveness of others. The duties do not require a technical or professional knowledge of a specialized subject-matter area."

It was clear that the appellant's position was the only office clerical or administrative support position in the office, operating independently of any other such position in the immediate office. However, the appellant's position did not meet the other requirements for inclusion in the GS-0318 Series. Her work did not have as its purpose assisting the work of one or more persons in an organization. Rather, her work was principally to perform the specialized clerical work associated with the operations of the locks and dam.

Furthermore, the staffing of the project office of which the appellant's locks and dam were a part and the functions of the locks and dam provided little opportunity for the performance of secretarial work. The project office had a clerical position that was the focal point for clerical and administrative support activities of all of the locks and dams within the project office. There was no comprehensive range of clerical or administrative support duties to be performed at the appellant's locks and dam. Finally, the work of the locks and dam did not require the type of coordination of clerical and administrative support duties that is typical of positions in the Secretary Series. The focus of the appellant's position was the performance of a wide range of tasks, not the coordination of those tasks that is typical of positions in the Secretary Series. In short, the organization of work in the project office and at the locks and dam precluded the possibility of a secretary position at the locks and dam.

The appellant's position involved support work that is specialized to the operation and maintenance of the locks and dam. On this basis it was analogous to positions for which there are established subject-matter series and which are explicitly excluded from the Secretary Series, GS-0318. Because there was no subject-matter series for the appellant's work nor did one provide an adequate avenue of recruitment for the mixture of duties performed, the appellant's position was found to be properly classified in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-0303. The grade of the position was determined by the application of the General Grade Evaluation Guide for Nonsupervisory Clerical Positions.