



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: ~~Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide, Part II~~
Factor: ~~Factor I - Base Level of Work Supervised~~
Issue: Inclusion of a professional position in the Base Level of Work Supervised by a non-professional

Although the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide was superseded by the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#), the discussion in this article is still valid under the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in an Office of Personnel Management region's consideration of an appeal from a Supervisory Engineering Technician. The appellant supervised a staff of GS-11 and GS-12 Engineering Technicians and one professional GS-12 Physicist. The agency did not include the Physicist position in the Base Level of Work Supervised by the appellant, asserting that an employee in a nonprofessional position cannot technically review the work of an employee in a professional position which has a positive educational requirement. The appellant contended that the supervision exercised over the professional position was no less than that exercised over the GS-12 Engineering Technician positions in the unit.

Resolution

The Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide prescribes that work identified as the Base Level must require of the immediate supervisor substantial and recurring use of technical skills of the kind typically needed for directing work at that level. In this particular case, the Office of Personnel Management's review of applicable position descriptions, evaluation statements, and governing

classification standards disclosed that there was similar supervisory involvement in work initiation and planning, interim oversight activity, and review of work over all the GS-12 subordinate positions in the unit.

For example, the Physicist was considered the specialist in his particular field and worked under "very general" technical supervision, with the supervisor outlining basic program objectives, discussing problems and approaches, and reviewing work to determine progress towards objectives. The Physicist received no technical supervision from any other position, and the grade of the position was not based on less-than-normal supervision.

Similarly, the Engineering Technicians utilized a high degree of judgment, originality, and resourcefulness to resolve the most complex problems in their specialty areas. The grade levels of the Engineering Technicians were based on comparisons with professional engineering standards, as their work required superior technical qualifications. The positions worked under general technical supervision, receiving basic objectives from the supervisor and developing independent approaches to accomplish the work. The work was reviewed for compliance with broad agency policy.

Notwithstanding the educational requirement differences, the Office of Personnel Management concluded the appellant did in fact exercise technical supervision over the GS-12 Physicist of the kind typically needed to direct work at that level. The Physicist position was, therefore, appropriate for inclusion with the positions used to determine the Base Level of Work Supervised. It should be noted that only in rare cases will technical positions be credited with supervision of professional subordinates.