



United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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No. 17-04

Standard: N/A
Factor: N/A
Issue: Distinction between agency restrictions on assignment of duties and the classification of those duties

Identification of the Classification Issue

The issue arose in connection with an appellant's request for reconsideration of an Office of Personnel Management appeal decision that downgraded his position from Security Assistant, GS-0086-6 to Security Clerk, GS-0086-4. The appellant submitted a copy of a directive from his agency that restricted the assignment of certain of his duties to the top secret control assistant, who was to be "an employee GS-5 or above." Included in the restricted duties were such assignments as signing courier receipts and transfer of custody receipts for top secret materials, certifying the transfer of material into the security courier service, transmitting top secret material, and conducting page checks of top secret material. The appellant argued that, because he was assigned these duties, his position should be graded at least at the GS-5 level.

Resolution

Section 7106 of title 5, United States Code, vests agency management with the authority to assign work to positions. Therefore, an agency may limit the assignment of certain duties and responsibilities to specific positions, e.g., to positions at or above a particular grade level. Such a designation or assignment of duties, however, does not warrant classification of the position to the stipulated grade without regard to the actual grade value of the duties. The position as a whole must still be evaluated against the appropriate published standards to determine the grade value of the duties performed (5 U.S.C. 5107).

The Office of Personnel Management found that the security program duties performed by the appellant were correctly classified at the GS-4 level. At least three options were available to the agency: (1) rescind the requirement restricting the appellant's duties to an employee at the GS-5 level, (2) assign the restricted duties to another employee, or (3) strengthen the appellant's job with other duties so that it would support classification at the GS-5 level.