



## 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:** [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) (April 1993)  
**Factor:** Factor 4, Personal Contacts, Subfactor 4B, Purpose of Contacts  
**Issue:** Distinguishing between Levels 4B-2 and 4B-3

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

This issue arose in the Office of Personnel Management's adjudication of a position classification appeal. The agency credited Level 4B-2, but the appellant claimed that Level 4B-3 should be credited to his position. The appellant argued that his duties as a branch chief in a personnel office required him to represent the organization in gaining compliance with personnel management policies, rules, and regulations. The Classification Appeals Office sought advice from the Office of Classification on distinguishing between Levels 4B-2 and 4B-3.

### **Resolution**

According to the General Schedule Supervisory Guide, the purpose of contacts at Level 4B-2 is:

- to ensure that information provided to outsiders is accurate and consistent;
- to plan and coordinate the work with outsiders; *and/or*
- to resolve differences of opinion (both inside and outside the immediate organization).

The purpose of contacts at Level 4B-3 is to justify, defend, or negotiate in:

- representing the project, program segment(s), or organizational unit(s) directed;
- obtaining or committing resources; *and*
- gaining compliance with established policies.

The Office of Classification advised that while any one of the three elements at Level 4B-2 would merit credit for this level, the criteria for Level 4B-3 are more stringent. This level requires justifying, defending, or negotiating on behalf of the organization with the necessary level of authority to commit resources and gain compliance with established policies of the organization. In order to represent the organization in program defense or negotiations, a supervisor must necessarily have the requisite control over resources and the authority necessary to gain support and compliance on policy matters. In short, all three of the conditions listed under Level 4B-3 must be present in a position to award credit for this level.

The appellant did not have the responsibility and authority to obtain or commit resources for his organizational segment. The Classification Appeals Office found that this responsibility resided in positions at higher managerial levels, and therefore concluded that the appellant's position did not meet the full intent of Level 4B-3. Consequently, Level 4B-2, the highest level fully met, was assigned.