



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 1, Program Scope and Effect
Issue: Definition of “program” or “program segment”

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in an Office of Personnel Management oversight division’s adjudication of a classification appeal and the subsequent reconsideration of the decision. The appellant functioned as the Chief of the Training Support Center (Center) at a large military installation with 17,000 military personnel. Troop training was one of the installation’s primary missions, i.e., conducting combat exercises, mobilization training, and classroom training for the combat units. Maintaining combat readiness and advancing combat capabilities was of primary importance. The Center played an important role in advancing the combat effectiveness of supported units by maintaining a large and varied inventory of training aids, simulators, and visual information equipment used by combat units. The Center also provided visual information services. The work directed by the appellant was evaluated by the oversight division as a support element. In his reconsideration request, the appellant claimed the training support and visual information functions he supervised were “programs” constituting complex services essential to the conduct of training operations at the agency, thus meeting the definition of “programs” as defined in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.

Resolution

Both the oversight division and the Office of Merit Systems Oversight found the functions supervised by the appellant did not meet the definition of “program” or “program segment.” The General Schedule Supervisory Guide defines “program segment” as any subdivision of a program or major military function. “Program” is defined as the “mission, functions, projects, activities, laws, rules, and regulations which an agency is authorized and funded by statute to administer and

enforce,” the conduct of which “constitutes the essential purpose for the establishment and continuing existence of an agency.” The guide also states that although most programs have an impact or effect which is external to the administering agency, comparable *agencywide* line or staff programs essential to the operation of an agency are considered programs.

The Office of Personnel Management determined the functions under the supervision of the appellant were support functions rather than programs or program segments. Although training represented an essential function of standing military forces, the appellant’s organizational unit was not responsible for planning and conducting training. Rather, the unit provided certain support services, in the form of various training aids and accessories, that facilitated the conduct of training at the installation. These *support functions* did not constitute the essential purpose for the continuing existence of this military installation. Although the General Schedule Supervisory Guide provides for considering certain essential staff functions as “programs” whose impact does not extend beyond the agency, this is restricted to the agencywide administration of these functions. In contrast, the functions supervised by the appellant had impact limited to the installation and surrounding region.