

**OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
ATLANTA OVERSIGHT DIVISION  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

**CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION**

**Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [Appellant]

**Position:** Computer Assistant  
GS-335-7

**Organization:** [Organizational location]  
Naval Air Station

**Evaluation:** GS-303-3  
(Title at agency discretion to include the parenthetical designation Office Automation)

**OPM decision number:** C-0303-03-01

Kathy W. Day  
Classification Appeals Officer

Date 9/25/97

RD# 0303037A.ATR

## **Background**

On July 2, 1997, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Computer Assistant, GS-335-7, [Organizational location], Naval Air Station. The appellant is requesting that her position be changed to Computer Specialist, GS-334-9, 11 or 12.

## **Sources of Information**

This appeal decision is based on information from the following sources:

1. The appellant's letter dated June 19, 1997, with attachments, appealing the classification of her position.
2. The agency's letter of July 28, 1997, providing position and organizational information.
3. Information submitted by the servicing personnel office on July 30, 1997.
4. A telephone discussion with the servicing classifier on August 12, 1997.
5. A telephone interview with the appellant on August 14, 1997.
6. A telephone interview with the appellant's former rating supervisor on August 22, 1997.
7. A telephone interview with a [General Supply Specialist], on August 26 and 28, 1997.

## **Position Information**

The appellant is assigned to Position Number 2655A and provides clerical support to the [Section].

The appellant inputs data, such as aircraft type and stock/part numbers into various automated supply systems which include: the Aircraft Equipment Configuration Listings (AECL), the Interim Supply Support Program, the Aviation Consolidated Allowance Lists, and the Shore Consolidated Allowance Lists. She accesses the automated systems and retrieves a hard copy of needed data sets. The appellant provides direct clerical support to the General Supply Specialist by answering the telephone, typing memoranda and Naval messages, making copies, and retrieving documents from the facsimile and/or SALTS machines (a type of e-mail equipment).

The appellant serves as the Staff ADP Activity Approval Authority (AAA) and Terminal Area Security Officer (TASO). As such, she reviews Navy Logistics Network Users Registration Form (NLN) for completeness and makes a determination that the requestor has a job related need to access the system(s). After review, the appellant forwards the request form to a higher level security organization for final approval and assignment of a password which allows the requestor access to the automated supply system. The appellant makes recommendations to the security office for termination of password access to the automated supply system in situations of password sharing or misuse.

As requested by the user, the appellant contacts other services, Army or Air Force, to ascertain those services' requirements for [command] supply employees to gain access to non-Navy automated supply systems. She obtains the required request forms, assists employees in completing the forms, and forwards the completed forms to the designated office for approval and assignment of a password.

The appellant assigns user ID's in conformance with instructions and guidelines. She assists users with initial log-on procedures, or in situations where passwords have expired and users cannot access the system.

### **Standards Referenced**

Computer Specialist Series, GS-334, July 1991.  
Computer Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-335, February 1980.  
Supply Clerical and Technician Series, GS-2005, May 1992.  
Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, January 1979.  
Clerk-Typist Series, GS-322, November 1990.  
Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-326, November 1990.  
Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, June 1997.  
Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, June 1989.

### **Series and Title Determination**

The GS-334, Computer Specialist Series, includes positions with responsibility for analyzing, managing, supervising, or performing work necessary to plan, design, develop, acquire, document, test, implement, integrate, maintain, or modify systems for solving problems or accomplishing work processes by using computers. Positions are included in this series when the primary need is knowledge of information processing methodology/technology, computer capabilities, and processing techniques. The TASO and AAA activities performed by the appellant do not require her to perform work associated with this series such as: defining a need for accomplishing a work process by computer; establishing system requirements in terms of objectives and functions to be served; analyzing computer equipment and system software needs and availability; preparing programming specifications, including inputs, outputs, flow diagrams, decision logic tables, and linkages with other application systems, etc. The GS-334 series is not appropriate for the appellant's position.

The GS-335, Computer Clerk and Assistant Series, covers positions involving performance or supervision of data processing support and services functions for users of computer systems including such work as: (1) receiving, maintaining, and issuing data storage media for computer operations; (2) collecting and sequentially staging input media with associated program instructions for processing; (3) scheduling the use of computer time for program processing; (4) collecting, maintaining, and distributing program and systems documentation; and (5) collecting raw information, preparing flow charts, and coding in program languages; or, (6) other support functions. This work

requires knowledge of external data processing sequences, controls, procedures, or user and programming languages.

On the surface, the TASO and AAA duties assigned to the appellant appear to be covered by criteria (6) other support functions. However, the telephone audit with the appellant disclosed that the TASO and AAA duties consist of various clerical activities that do not require the appellant to exercise the kinds of technical knowledge described by the GS-335 series. The GS-335 standard specifically excludes from coverage positions which involve operation of computer connected equipment (terminals) that does not require knowledge of data processing methods, procedures, or languages as paramount qualification requirement. Such positions are classified to an appropriate clerical series.

The GS-2005, Supply Clerical and Technician Series, includes positions involved in supervising or performing clerical or technical supply support work necessary to ensure the effective operation of ongoing supply activities. It requires knowledge of supply operations and program requirements and the ability to apply established supply policies, day-to-day servicing techniques, regulations, or procedures. The appellant does not perform ongoing supply activities, but rather completes ad hoc clerical assignments to assist and support the other two staff members of the [Section] Outfitting Supply Section. These assignments consist of data entry activities and retrieval of printed lists of various information contained in the automated systems. Such tasks do not require the types of technical supply knowledges or skills envisioned by GS-2005 standard. Therefore, this series is not appropriate for the appellant's position.

The GS-303, Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, includes positions the duties of which are to perform or supervise clerical, assistant, or technician work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires a knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out the work of an organization and involves application of procedures and practices within the framework of established guidelines. The appellant's TASO and AAA work assignments occupy approximately 60 percent of her time and are associated with the operation of the Navy's computer security program. The appellant is required to be knowledgeable of the clerical procedures used in processing user request forms to obtain access to the automated supply system, as well as the procedures to be followed in requesting/recommending rescission of a password. The GS-303 series is most appropriate for the appellant's position.

In addition to the tasks associated with the TASO and AAA functions, the appellant provides office automation support for the Section. The position description indicates that a qualified typist is required. The General Supply Specialist confirmed that such skills are necessary to the successful operation of the position. In addition to familiarity with word processing software, the appellant needs to know the procedures to be followed to access various automated supply systems data bases in order to add/correct data, or to retrieve information in printed form. The Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-326, directs that the parenthetical title *Office Automation* is added to the title of positions which require significant knowledge of office automation systems and a fully qualified typist to perform word processing duties.

This position is properly placed in the GS-303 series. The position title is at the agency's discretion with a parenthetical designation of *Office Automation*.

### **Grade Determination**

The clerical work associated with the TASO and AAA activities is evaluated by use of the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work. The office automation duties are evaluated by reference to the criteria contained in the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide.

### **CLERICAL DUTIES**

The Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work covers the work of processing transactions and performing various office support and miscellaneous clerical and assistance duties within a framework of procedures, precedents, or instructions. Clerical work is described by the guide as work such as preparing, receiving, reviewing, and verifying documents; maintaining office records; locating and compiling data or information from files; compiling information from files; compiling information for reports; keeping a calendar and informing others of deadlines and other important dates; and similar clerical support work within an organization. This work requires a knowledge of the clerical requirements and processes involved in maintaining the functional programs of the unit. Assistance work is defined as technical work to support the administration or operation of the programs of an organizational unit. This work requires a working knowledge of the work processes and procedures of an administrative field and the mission and operational requirements of the unit.

In addition to the grade level definitions contained in 5 USC 5104, the guide uses two evaluation factors: *Nature of Assignment* and *Level of Responsibility*.

#### Nature of Assignment:

This factor measures the knowledge required to perform the work and the complexity of the work processes.

At the GS-3 level, work consists of many different prescribed tasks, steps, or operations. Deciding what needs to be done requires the employee to choose from among similar procedures. The work varies primarily in factual ways, such as in the sources of information or in the kinds of forms, transactions, or entries. Work requires good understanding of the structure of the organization served and enough knowledge of the organization's terminology and work flow to employ the correct set and sequence of tasks, steps, and operations.

At the GS-4 level, the work involves performing the full range of standard clerical assignments and resolving recurring problems. The work consists of related steps and processes which require the employee to identify and recognize differences among a variety of recurring situations. The actions taken or responses made differ in nature and sequence due to the particular characteristics of each case or transaction.

The primary function of the appellant's TASO and AAA activities is to obtain activation/deactivation of computer passwords. She does not control password access but facilitates the procedure by reviewing NLN forms for access or by recommending to the ADP Security Office that a password be terminated. In order to perform this activity, the appellant needs to be familiar with the supply organization to determine that requests for computer access are appropriate. She must maintain an awareness of staff departures to advise the Security Office to terminate a password. The appellant must be aware of Navy ADP security requirements, particularly those concerning the sharing of passwords, in order to recommend password termination in situations of misuse. The processing of requests for activation/deactivation of passwords is relatively routine, offering few complexities or the need for the appellant to delve beyond the information provided on the NLN form. She contacts other organizations outside of [the command] to obtain procedural information on gaining access to their computer systems. This is comparable to the GS-3 level.

The nature of the appellant's duties does not require her to have subject matter knowledge of the Navy's ADP security program. She must be familiar with a very limited aspect of the security program, i.e., how to process requests for activation/deactivation of passwords. The written and oral guidelines governing these activities are well-established and straightforward and do not require the appellant to select from among a variety of potentially applicable procedures as described at the GS-4 level. Assigning LAN ID's is done in conformance with [command] instructions which provide specific directions on ID configuration.

The appellant's assignments are evaluated at the GS-3 level.

#### Level of Responsibility:

At the GS-3 level, the supervisor provides individual assignments by explaining what is to be done and how to accomplish it. Routine assignments are performed independently, but problems or unfamiliar situations are referred to the supervisor. Review of the work increases with more difficult assignments. A large number of procedural guides such as manuals and written and oral instructions apply directly to the work and are always available. The employee exchanges information with co-workers. Contacts outside the organization are in closely controlled or structured settings.

At the GS-4 level, the supervisor provides little assistance with recurring assignments. The employee uses initiative to complete work following accepted practices. Unusual situations may require the assistance of the supervisor or a higher level employee, and the completed work may be reviewed more closely. The number and similarity of guides require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines and procedures. The employee makes minor deviations to adapt the guidelines in specific cases. Contacts are with co-workers and those outside the organization to exchange information and, in some cases, resolve problems.

Comparable to the GS-3 level, the appellant receives her assignments from the General Supply Specialist and performs the routine work independently. The General Supply Specialist provides specific instructions related to retrieving certain data and reviews her work for accuracy and

conformance to instructions. The appellant exchanges information with co-workers within her organization.

The GS-4 level is not met since the appellant does not have to exercise the type of independent judgment described in order to select from numerous, similar guidelines and procedures nor does she deviate from the guides.

GS-3 is credited for this factor.

Since both factors are evaluated at GS-3, the appellant's clerical duties are properly graded at GS-3.

### **OFFICE AUTOMATION DUTIES**

Office automation, as used in the Office Automation Guide, refers to the practical use of electronic systems to provide general clerical office support. Electronic systems used in an office environment are comprised of hardware and software components. When used together, these components are capable of storing, retrieving, manipulating, transferring, computing, and printing information. Hardware components include, but are not limited to, electronic typewriters, word processors, personal computers, work stations (keyboards and visual displays) linked to a computer, and associated equipment such as printers, optical scanners, and modems. Typical types of software used in office automation include word processing, electronic mail, calendar, project management, database management, desk-top publishing, graphics and spreadsheet programs.

The work is evaluated by application of the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide. The Guide is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the knowledge required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to nonsupervisory General Schedule positions.

A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor levels. For a position to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor-level description in the standard, the lower point value must be assigned unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

Under FES, positions which significantly exceed the highest factor level or fail to meet the lowest factor level described in a classification standard must be evaluated by reference to the Primary Standard, contained in Appendix 3 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards. The Primary Standard is the "standard-for-standards" for FES.

### Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position:

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work, such as the steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts; and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge.

Level 1-2 requires skill in operating a computer terminal using a standard typewriter style keyboard with additional function keys, as well as skill in operating related equipment, such as printers and modems. The work requires a knowledge of processing procedures and function keys to execute at least several basic office automation functions such as storing and retrieving electronic documents or files; activating a printer; inserting and deleting text; printing standardized paragraphs from a glossary; and producing letters and memoranda in much the same way as they would be typed on a standard typewriter. Such positions also require a knowledge of grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation and terminology commonly used in office settings and a knowledge of standard processing procedures, formats, and distribution and retention policies.

At Level 1-3, positions require a knowledge of varied and advanced functions of one software type or varied functions of more than one software type; or other equivalent knowledge. Employees in Level 1-3 positions apply knowledge of software functions to produce a wide range of documents that often require complex formats such as graphics or tables within text; to edit and reformat electronic drafts; and to update or revise existing databases or spreadsheets.

The documents produced by the appellant (memoranda and Naval messages) are in a standardized format. She often uses a previous document and inserts the new information provided by the General Supply Specialist. Documents produced do not contain charts, graphs, or highly technical or specialized terminology. The database functions performed by the appellant are of a routine nature consisting of accessing the appropriate database, inserting/correcting data, and capturing specified data elements to be printed in hard copy. The appellant is not required to establish a database or manipulate data within a database. She does not import data information into a text document. The knowledge and skill exercised by the appellant fully meets Level 1-2.

Level 1-2 is credited for 200 points.

### Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls:

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility for carrying out assignments, and how completed work is reviewed.

At Level 2-2, the employee works independently in carrying out familiar assignments in accordance with previous instructions, standard procedures for creating documents and established use of software packages. The employee seeks further guidance when new or unusual assignments call for deviations from established procedures or otherwise require special instructions. Completed work



is usually checked for compliance with office procedures or instructions, technical accuracy and appearance.

Assignments at Level 2-3 are given with information on general administrative changes, deadlines, and priorities. The employee works independently to plan and carry out steps for completing assignments in accordance with established office instructions and practices. When current practices or deviations in an assignment cause problems, the employee uses his/her own initiative to resolve them and coordinates efforts with other employees involved in or affected by the nonstandard procedures.

The appellant is expected to produce a final text document in accordance with established practices and procedures based on her knowledge of Navy correspondence requirements and previous experience. Documents produced are standardized in nature with minimal variation. The General Supply Specialist reviews the finished product for content and accuracy and adherence with published correspondence guidelines. In adding/correcting data in the automated supply system, the appellant follows instructions given by the General Supply Specialist, or those contained in the Naval Aviation Logistic Support Systems (NALSS) handbook or the instruction on the Interim Supply System. If a hardcopy of data elements is needed, the General Supply Specialist gives specific directions on data pieces to be included in the printout. The appellant's assignment fully meets the requirements of Level 2-2. The nature of her assignments does not allow for the scope of employee initiative and flexibility described at Level 2-3.

Level 2-2 is credited for 125 points.

### Factor 3 - Guidelines:

This factor covers the nature of guidelines used, and the judgment needed to apply them.

At Level 3-1, there are detailed procedural guidelines covering all aspects of the work which are directly applicable to the work performed. Level 3-1 employees follow step-by-step instructions to use a word processing system. They enter text from drafts in a designated format and follow instructions for identifying and electronically storing documents and for printing hard copies.

At Level 3-2, the employee must exercise judgment because of the number and similarity of guidelines or the availability of alternative procedures for accomplishing a function.

The appellant is expected to follow the guidance contained in the Navy Correspondence Manual which specifies format, addresses, etc., or a previously issued document provided by the General Supply Specialist. Guidance concerning the operation of the automated supply system is contained in the NALSS and various other instructions. Equipment operation procedures are covered by available software user manuals. There is no requirement that the appellant exercise judgment in document format, data input/retrieval, or machine operation. The straightforward nature of the documents produced and the requirement for adherence to the Navy's correspondence and automated

supply system requirements fully meet Level 3-1. Level 3-2 is not met since the appellant does not have to use the degree of judgment described at this level, e.g., selecting from a number of alternative procedures when deciding how to accomplish the task at hand.

Level 3-1 is credited for 25 points.

#### Factor 4 - Complexity:

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-1, the work consists of clear-cut repetitive tasks such as entering a few items of information to produce standard documents, retrieving specified items of information from an existing data management system, or acknowledging receipt of and printing electronic mail. The sequence of steps and the function keys used to activate the equipment and to perform the processing functions are prescribed in detailed instructions.

At Level 4-2, the work requires a varying number and sequence of steps and use of different functions from one assignment to another. Processing steps and procedures required to complete assignments are varied and numerous. These steps and procedures differ in terms of the type of software used, the type of document or specific report to be produced or edited, the specific formatting required for a document, the existence of prerecorded formats, and other differences of a factual nature. Some assignments at Level 4-2 involve using one type of software to create or edit a variety of standard documents requiring differing procedures and functions, or to process lengthy documents with a variety of format changes within each document. Other assignments at this level involve using two or more types of software, e.g., word processing and database management, to process different types of documents, paragraphs, tables, reports, etc., that can be combined in a number of ways and that require extensive entry of data from drafts.

The standardized and specific nature of the appellant's assignments meet the criteria described at Level 4-1.

Level 4-1 is credited for 25 points.

#### Factor 5 - Scope and Effect:

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, as measured by the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-1, the purpose of the work is to perform specific, recurring tasks required to maintain electronic records and/or to produce various items, e.g., correspondence, memos, publications, manuscripts, reports, or forms, in draft or final form according to most recent data. Production

usually includes steps such as selecting and adhering to the proper format; determining the spacing and arrangement of material; making entries to and retrieving data from electronic records; and checking references, distribution requirement, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The services performed facilitate the work of the originators of the documents or the users of the data maintained.

At Level 5-2, the purpose of the work is to collect, select, organize, and provide information in oral or written form. This may involve telephone conversations, electronic mail, reports, on-line databases, etc. The work affects the way in which other employees document, store, receive, or transmit information, and increases the availability and usefulness of the information involved.

Like Level 5-1, the appellant performs specific tasks including preparing standard correspondence and Naval messages and maintaining electronic records. Her assignments facilitate the work of the General Supply Specialist. She does not gather and collect information which she then must organize and present in another format, either written or oral, as described at Level 5-2.

Level 5-1 is credited for 25 points.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts and Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts:

These factors measure the type and purpose of face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. The level of regular and recurring personal contacts selected under Factor 6 is to be matched with the purposes of those contacts under Factor 7, and the appropriate point value credited using the chart provided in the standard.

*Persons Contacted*

At Level 1, contacts are with employees within the immediate work unit or related support units such as points-of-contact and document originators.

At Level 2, contacts are with employees at various levels throughout the agency who are involved in or affected by integrating or changing automated office procedures.

The appellant's office automation contacts meet Level 1 criteria in that they are within the immediate work unit or associated supply operation units.

*Purpose of Contacts*

At Level A, the purpose of contacts is to exchange information about the assignment or methods to be used to complete the assignment, e.g., to clarify terminology, determine priorities, discuss additions or revisions, or discuss equipment capabilities.

At Level B, the purpose of contacts is to plan, coordinate, and integrate work processes or work methods for office automation between and among related work units.

The appellant's contacts are to exchange information about the work of the [Section] and to determine priorities or discuss correspondence. This is comparable to Level A.

Level 1A is credited for 30 points.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands:

This factor measures the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee in performing the work assignment, including the agility and dexterity required, and the extent of physical exertion.

The work is sedentary and requires no special physical demands.

Level 8-1 is credited for 5 points.

Factor 9 - Work Environment:

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings, and the safety precautions required.

The work involves minimal risks and observance of safety precautions typical of office settings.

Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

<b>SUMMARY</b>		
<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-2	200
2. Supervisory Controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-1	25
4. Complexity	4-1	25
5. Scope and Effect	5-1	25
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	6-1 7-A	30
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	440

The total of 440 points falls within the GS-2 point range of 255-450 points.

### **Decision**

This is a mixed grade position with clerical duties evaluated at the GS-3 level and office automation duties at the GS-2 level. In conformance with the guidance contained in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, the grade level of the position is determined by the highest level duties occupying the majority of the appellant's time. The clerical duties occupy approximately 60 percent of the appellant's time and are evaluated at the GS-3 level. Therefore, this position is properly classified as GS-303-3 with the title at the discretion of the agency to include the parenthetical (Office Automation).