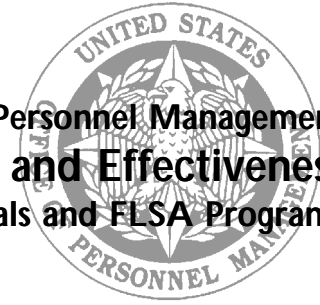


U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness  
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Dallas Oversight Division  
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22  
Dallas, TX 75242

**Classification Appeal Decision**  
**Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [appellant]

**Agency classification:** Personnel Management Specialist  
GS-201-11

**Organization:** [the appellant's activity]  
Department of the Air Force  
[location]

**OPM decision:** Personnel Management Specialist  
GS-201-12

**OPM decision number:** C-0201-12-02

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon  
Bonnie J. Brandon  
Classification Appeals Officer

4/21/99  
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Since this decision changes the classification of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of this decision (5 CFR 511.702). The servicing personnel office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected position description and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the effective date of the personnel action.

**Decision sent to:**

[appellant's name and address]

Civilian Personnel Officer  
[address of servicing personnel office]

Director, Civilian Personnel Operations  
U.S. Department of the Air Force  
AFPC/DPC  
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Randolph Air Force Base, TX 78150-4759

Director of Civilian Personnel  
HQ USAF/DPCC  
1040 Air Force Pentagon  
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Chief, Classification Branch  
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## **Introduction**

The Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellant] on January 4, 1999. [The appellant] is a Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-11, assigned to [a large organization], Department of the Air Force, [location]. [The appellant] believes that his position should be classified as Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-12. We have accepted and decided the appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

The appellant's position was previously evaluated by both the Air Force Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF) and the Department of Defense (DOD) Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS). In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and his agency, including the official position description [number]. Both the appellant and his supervisor agree that the official position description is accurate. We also considered information obtained during telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor.

## **Position Information**

This is a unique, one-of-a-kind position where the appellant serves as a personnel management specialist under the immediate supervision of the Director [of the appellant's organization]. The appellant provides assistance to the Director in the areas of civilian personnel management and administration, overall human resources management, and facilities planning, build-up, and maintenance. The appellant participates in special projects and studies; develops or modifies plans related to centralization of civilian personnel services; advises the Director on resource management issues, including workyear utilization, civilian pay, personnel levels, workforce performance, and funding; and prepares various reports, review documents, and briefing materials. The appellant also serves as the Directorate liaison with the servicing personnel office, Air Staff personnel program managers, and the various staff and support activities at the [appellant's activity] and host installation. The position description and other material of record furnish more information about the duties and responsibilities.

## **Series, title, and standard determination**

The duties and responsibilities assigned to most positions are covered by one occupational series, and the series determination is clear. For these positions, the series represents the primary work of the position, the highest level of work performed, and the paramount qualifications required.

Some positions, however, are a mix of duties and responsibilities covered by two or more occupational series and classified by more than one standard or guide. For positions whose duties fall in more than one occupational group, the most appropriate series for the position depends on consideration of a number of factors. For many of these positions the grade controlling duties will determine the series. Sometimes, however, the highest level of work performed does not represent the most appropriate series, and the series can be determined only after considering the paramount qualifications required, sources of recruitment and line of progression, the reason for establishing the position, and the background knowledge required.

The classification standard for the Personnel Management Series, GS-201, includes positions which either (1) direct or assist in directing a personnel management program; or (2) advise on, supervise, perform, or provide staff leadership and technical guidance for work which involves two or more specialized personnel functions; or (3) perform specialized personnel management work not covered by other series in this group.

The Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide is designed specifically to evaluate staff analytical, planning, and evaluative work concerned with the administrative and operational aspects of agency programs and management. Typical positions covered by this guide require knowledge of (1) the overall mission, functions, and organization of the agency or component; (2) the principles, functions, and processes of management and the organization of work; (3) agency program operations, processes, goals, and objectives; and (4) evaluative, planning, and analytical processes and techniques (quantitative and qualitative). Knowledge is applied in a staff advisory capacity to line management in support of planning, development, and execution of agency programs; the administrative management of agencies and their component organizations; or the performance of related functions requiring comparable knowledge and skills.

The appellant's work is directly related to the implementation and operation of the centralized Air Force civilian personnel management program and support of Civilian Personnel Flights located worldwide. A paramount requirement of the appellant's position is a sound theoretical knowledge and practical understanding of Federal personnel management functions, theories, and techniques and the relationship of the various personnel disciplines. Therefore, we agree with the previous evaluations by the CPF and CPMS that the appellant's position is properly assigned to the GS-201 series with a title of Personnel Management Specialist.

The appellant's personnel management duties will be evaluated using the classification standard for the Personnel Management Series and the administrative and analysis duties will be evaluated using the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide.

## **Grade determination**

### ***Evaluation using the personnel management standard***

The grade-level portions of this standard describe separately, at each grade, the characteristics of each of three different kinds of positions in terms of the kind of function and work situation. The use of this functional breakdown in the standard is primarily for editorial convenience and clarity of presentation. Each function requires the same basic skills, knowledges, and abilities. The functions described are program operations, program evaluation, and program development. We agree with the CPF and CPMS that the appellant's duties fall within the program operations functional area.

The standard distinguishes between grade levels on the basis of the complexity and difficulty of the technical personnel problems dealt with, management advisory service functions, nature of supervision received, authority, and personal contacts.

The appellant serves as the primary point of contact for plans related to the centralization of Air Force civilian personnel services. The appellant uses his broad knowledge of personnel operations to develop, modify, or extend both short-range and long-range plans throughout their life cycles. The appellant develops the annual Civilian Employment Plan which provides the staffing strategy for assigning employees to the Directorate based on workload requirements, budget limitations, and manpower authorizations. The appellant assists managers in their dealings with the local CPF by writing position descriptions, interpreting the DOD Priority Placement Program exceptions, initiating waiver of qualifications for reassignment of employees, interpreting and implementing special provisions for the handicapped, researching and interpreting the Student Education Employment Program authorities, intervening in disputes, and other personnel management functions.

The appellant provides advisory services within the Directorate of Civilian Personnel Operations. The appellant listens to employee and supervisory concerns and recommendations, seeking appropriate solutions or relaying these to the Director for resolution. The appellant also works with managers within the Directorate to resolve disagreements with personnel decisions affecting their units.

Both the CPF and CPMS evaluated these duties at GS-11 and the appellant does not disagree. Our evaluation of the appellant's personnel management work agrees that these duties are comparable to those described at the GS-11 level. The GS-12 level is not met in that the advisory service provided by the appellant is limited in the amount and type of personnel management advice given to supervisors in the exercise of their supervisory responsibilities. The appellant's authority in this context does not include the responsibility to make final decisions for the organization.

### *Summary*

The appellant's position is evaluated at GS-11 utilizing the personnel management standard.

### ***Evaluation using the administrative analysis guide***

This guide utilizes the Factor Evaluation System (FES) which employs nine factors for evaluating the position. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard or guide describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

The appellant disagrees with the CPF and CPMS evaluation of factors 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. While our evaluation covers all nine FES factors, the following analysis will concentrate on those with which the appellant disagrees.

*Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position*

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts which the worker must understand to do acceptable work and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply those knowledges. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, a knowledge must be required and applied.

Assignments at Level 1-7 require knowledge and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to issues or studies concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations carried out by administrative or professional personnel, or substantive administrative support functions. This level includes knowledge of pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and precedents which affect the use of program and related support resources (people, money, or equipment) in the area studied. Projects and studies typically require knowledge of the major issues, program goals and objectives, work processes, and administrative operations of the organization.

Knowledge is used to plan, schedule, and conduct projects and studies to evaluate and recommend ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or support setting. The assignments require knowledge and skill in adapting analytical techniques and evaluation criteria to the measurement and improvement of program effectiveness and/or organizational productivity. Knowledge is applied in developing new or modified work methods, organizational structures, records and files, management processes, staffing patterns, procedures for administering program services, guidelines and procedures, and automating work processes for the conduct of administrative support functions or program operations. Knowledge may also be applied in analyzing and making recommendations concerning the centralization or decentralization of operations.

The appellant uses his knowledge of the regulations, policies, and precedents affecting the use of resources in planning, scheduling, and conducting projects and studies. This knowledge is used to evaluate and recommend ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Directorate's operations and centralization program. Both the CPF and the CPMS evaluated this factor at Level 1-7 and the appellant does not disagree. Our review of the appellant's work also finds that Level 1-7 is appropriate.

*Factor 2, Supervisory controls*

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the employee, priorities and

deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. Responsibility of the employee depends upon the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives.

At Level 2-4, the employee and supervisor develop a mutually acceptable project plan which typically includes identification of the work to be done, the scope of the project, and deadlines for its completion. This is accomplished within a framework of priorities, funding, and overall project objectives.

Within the parameters of the approved project plan, the employee is responsible for planning and organizing the study, estimating costs, coordinating with staff and line management personnel, and conducting all phases of the project. This frequently involves the definitive interpretation of regulations and study procedures, and the initial application of new methods. The employee informs the supervisor of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems with widespread impact.

Completed projects, evaluations, reports, or recommendations are reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives. Completed work is also reviewed critically outside the employee's immediate office by staff and line management officials whose programs and employees would be affected by implementation of the recommendations.

The appellant's supervisor establishes overall basic goals and objectives and the appellant operates with relative independence within those parameters. Technical review only exists when requested by the employee. Both the CPF and the CPMS evaluated this factor at Level 2-4 and the appellant does not disagree. Our review of the appellant's work also finds that Level 2-4 is appropriate.

### *Factor 3, Guidelines*

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

Guidelines at Level 3-3 consist of standard reference material, texts, and manuals covering the application of analytical methods and techniques and instructions and manuals covering the subjects involved.

Analytical methods contained in the guidelines are not always directly applicable to specific work assignments. However, precedent studies of similar subjects are available for reference. The employee uses judgment in choosing, interpreting, or adapting available guidelines to specific issues or subjects studied. The employee analyzes the subject and the current guidelines which cover it and makes recommendations for changes.

Included at this level are work assignments in which the subject studied is covered by a wide variety of administrative regulations and procedural guidelines. In such circumstances the employee must use judgment in researching regulations, and in determining the relationship between guidelines and organizational efficiency, program effectiveness, or employee productivity.

Guidelines at Level 3-4 consist of general administrative policies and management and organizational theories which require considerable adaptation and/or interpretation for application to issues and problems studied. At this level, administrative policies and precedent studies provide a basic outline of the results desired, but do not go into detail as to the methods used to accomplish the project.

Administrative guidelines usually cover program goals and objectives of the employing organization, such as agency controls on size of workforce, productivity targets, and similar objectives. Within the context of broad regulatory guidelines the employee may refine or develop more specific guidelines such as implementing regulations or methods for the measurement and improvement of effectiveness and productivity in the administration of operating programs.

The appellant employs a wide variety of regulations, policies, planning documents, and other guidelines in his daily work covering a variety of subjects such as personnel administration, finance, procurement, safety, and manpower. These reference materials often do not provide sufficient detail to address the Directorate's unique program needs. Reference to the Directorate in Air Force instructions and regulations is often absent or found to be insufficient. The evolving nature of the organization requires considerable adaptation of existing guidelines in order to meet operational needs. The appellant develops or refines the necessary implementing guidance or methods used and routinely applies initiative, resourcefulness, and past personal experience in solving operational problems.

The appellant cites several work examples where existing guidelines were limited in their utility or where none existed. The Directorate utilizes state-of-the-art computerized equipment and applications that cause unforeseen problems. Guidelines were nonexistent for support of the interactive voice response telephone system used for agencywide external recruitment and internal benefit and entitlement services. The appellant developed guidelines for the placement of the local area network (LAN) file server room, switching rooms, and telephone exchange areas including the requirements for space, location, air conditioning, uninterruptable power supplies, and the number of computers which could be supported. The appellant developed guidelines for determining the number, configuration, facility requirements, and computer access requirements for no-walk powerfiles used for storing and retrieving official personnel files. Internal guidelines were also developed for standard systems furniture configurations and total space utilization. The standard systems furniture configuration he established for the Directorate was adopted as the standard for all of the [appellant's major organization]. A recent study by the [specific] Command recognized the Directorate for its design efficiency and effectiveness.



The dynamic environment of the Directorate and unprecedented effort to consolidate personnel services in one location affords little guidance to deal with unforeseen program requirements. Program revisions require innovation and sound planning to accommodate overall program needs. Often decisions are made to extend programs in the field beyond their projected transition dates with no guidance on how to address the manpower and budgetary requirements. Examples include changes in base foreclosure schedules, extension of the European (USAFE) service center a full year beyond the transition schedule, the staffing and funding of interim Delegating Examining Units (DEUs), and the addition of a centralized DEU. The appellant, in conjunction with his servicing financial management analyst, developed guidance to accommodate the temporary staffing and funding of these programs when requirements exceeded available resources.

The appellant developed guidance for obtaining centralized civilian personnel services during emergencies (e.g., natural disasters, repatriation of civilians from overseas locations, terroristic attacks, etc). This guidance is incorporated in the Air Force Emergency Actions Book, an agencywide directive.

The appellant has recently been assigned to work with the [appellant's major organization] project officer for the Aerospace Expeditionary Force. This major project is a new concept within the Air Force for global deployment of combat and support forces. The appellant serves as the Directorate's representative in developing guidelines for civilian personnel on such issues as reduction-in-force implications, surge hiring, designation of emergency essential positions for deployment, civilianization of military positions (including costing of these conversions), and competitive sourcing and privatization.

The appellant's position clearly exceeds Level 3-3, where guidelines are more specific and provide directly applicable instructions. However, it does not reach Level 3-5, where guidelines typically consist of basic policy statements, legislative history, applicable laws, and court decisions. The appellant's work matches Level 3-4 where administrative policies and guides provide a basic outline of the results desired, but do not go into detail as to the methods used to accomplish the project. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at Level 3-4.

#### *Factor 4, Complexity*

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

The work at Level 4-4 involves gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues, and developing recommendations to resolve substantive problems of effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or program support setting. Work at this level requires the application of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques that frequently require modification to fit a wider range of variables. Characteristic of this level is originality in refining existing work methods and techniques for application to the analysis of specific issues or resolution of problems.

The appellant's work involves a variety of administrative functions which entail the gathering, identifying, and analyzing of issues and developing recommended solutions to resolve substantive problems affecting the Directorate. He may independently identify and initiate special projects and studies. He advises the Director on such resource management issues as workyear utilization, civilian pay, staffing levels, workforce performance, facilities, equipment, safety, and funding. Often the issues being dealt with are not always susceptible to direct observation and analysis such as projected workload, program coverage, funding, and a variety of other variables. The complexity of the appellant's work is comparable to that described for Level 4-4.

Level 4-5 is not met in that the appellant does not fully meet the criteria specified in the guide. The appellant is not responsible for developing criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the operating programs. While the appellant develops or adapts plans for the implementation and administration of the civilian personnel centralization program, his work is subordinate to the long-range goals and objectives established by the Director or the Air Staff. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at Level 4-4.

*Factor 5, Scope and effect*

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

The purpose of the work at Level 5-4 is to assess the productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency of program operations or to analyze and resolve problems in the staffing, effectiveness, and efficiency of administrative support and staff activities. Work involves establishing criteria to measure and/or predict the attainment of program or organizational goals and objectives. Work at this level may also include developing related administrative regulations, such as those governing the allocation and distribution of personnel, supplies, equipment, and other resources, or promulgating program guidance for application across organizational lines or in varied geographic locations.

Work contributes to the improvement of productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency in program operations and/or administrative support activities at different echelons and/or geographical locations within the organization. Work affects the plans, goals, and effectiveness of missions and programs at these various echelons or locations. Work may affect the nature of administrative work done in components of other agencies.

The appellant's work in support of the Directorate in the centralization of the agencywide civilian personnel operation deals directly with assuring the allocation and distribution of personnel, supplies, equipment, and other resources. The appellant's work affects systems across various organizational lines and in varied geographic locations. Both the CPF and the CPMS evaluated this factor at Level 5-4 and the appellant does not disagree. Our review of the appellant's work also finds that Level 5-4 is appropriate.

### *Factors 6 and 7, Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts*

Personal contacts include face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place.

Above the lowest level, points should be credited under this factor only for contacts which are essential for successful performance of the work and which have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the work performed.

Personal contacts made at Level 2 are with employees, supervisors, and managers of the same agency, but outside of the immediate office, or employees and representatives of private concerns in a moderately structured setting.

Personal contacts at Level 3 are with persons outside the agency which may include consultants, contractors, or business executives in a moderately unstructured setting. This level may also include contacts with the head of the employing agency or program officials several managerial levels removed from the employee when such contacts occur on an ad hoc basis.

The appellant's contacts are with persons within the agency and occasionally with contractors or vendors in a moderately structured setting. His predominant contacts are within the Directorate, with local support activities, with the Air Staff, or with personnel at the various CPF's. His contacts with individuals or groups from outside the agency are not conducted in a moderately unstructured setting where the contacts are established on a nonroutine basis, the purpose and extent of each contact is different, and the authority of each party is identified and developed during the course of the contact. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at Level 2.

The purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives. The personal contacts which serve as the basis for the level selected for this factor must be the same as the contacts which are the basis for the level selected for Factor 6.

The purpose of contacts at Level c is to influence managers or other officials to accept and implement findings and recommendations on organizational improvement or program effectiveness. The employee may encounter resistance due to such issues as organizational conflict, competing objectives, or resource problems.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts match the description of Level c. Both the CPF and the CPMS evaluated this factor at Level c and the appellant does not disagree. Our review of the appellant's work also finds that Level c is appropriate.

### *Factor 8, Physical demands*

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. This includes physical characteristics and abilities (e.g., specific agility and dexterity requirements) and the physical exertion involved in the work (e.g., climbing, lifting, pushing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, or reaching).

At Level 8-1, the work is primarily sedentary, although some slight physical effort may be required.

At Level 8-2, assignments regularly involve long periods of standing, bending, and stooping to observe and study work operations in an industrial, storage, or comparable work area.

The appellant's work is primarily sedentary although it requires him to move throughout the three-story office building in dealing with various staff and work projects. It does not involve long periods of standing, bending, and stooping to observe and study work operations in an industrial, storage, or comparable work area. The position does not require walking over rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces or recurring lifting of moderately heavy items. Although the appellant cites examples where he has been involved in various self-help projects, these are not a regular and recurring requirement of the position nor would they warrant consideration in hiring or retention. Therefore, this factor is evaluated at Level 8-1.

### *Factor 9, Work environment*

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. Although the use of safety precautions can practically eliminate a certain danger or discomfort, such situations typically place additional demands upon the employee in carrying out safety regulations and techniques.

At Level 9-1, work is typically performed in an adequately lighted and climate controlled office and may require occasional travel.

Assignments at Level 9-2 regularly require visits to manufacturing, storage, or other industrial areas, and involve moderate risks or discomforts. Protective clothing and gear and observance of safety precautions are required.

The appellant performs his work in an adequately lighted and climate controlled office setting which requires no special safety precautions, protective clothing, or gear. Both the CPF and the CPMS evaluated this factor at Level 9-1 and the appellant does not disagree. Our review of the appellant's work also finds that Level 9-1 is appropriate.

*Summary*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Points</b>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-7	1250
2. Supervisory controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-4	450
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and effect	5-4	225
6. and 7. Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts	2c	145
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	5
Total points:		<u>2755</u>

The appellant's position is credited with 2755 total points. Therefore, in accordance with the grade conversion table of the guide, his position is properly graded at GS-12.

**Decision**

The appellant's position is properly classified as Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-12.