

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

Philadelphia Oversight Division  
600 Arch Street, Room 3400  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1596

**Classification Appeal Decision  
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [appellant's name]

**Agency classification:** Supervisory Civil Engineer  
GS-810-12

**Organization:** [name] Team  
[name] National Forest  
Region [number]  
Forest Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
[location]

**OPM decision:** Supervisory Civil Engineer  
GS-810-12

**OPM decision number:** C-0810-12-02

/s/ Robert D. Hendler

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Robert D. Hendler  
Classification Appeals Officer

4/6/01

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Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 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* (PCS's), appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

### **Decision sent to:**

PERSONAL  
[appellant's name]  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
[name] National Forest  
[address]

[name], Director  
[name] Human Resources  
Management Service Center  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
[address]

Ms. Donna D. Beecher  
USDA-OHRM-OD  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
J. L. Whitten Building, Room 402W  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

## **Introduction**

On November 17, 2000, the Philadelphia Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant's name]. His position is currently classified as a Supervisory Civil Engineer, GS-810-12. He believes the classification should be Supervisory Civil Engineer, GS-810-13. The appellant works in the [name] Team, [name] National Forest, Region [number], Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, [location]. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

## **General issues**

In his November 10, 1999, appeal to Region[number], the appellant stated that his position as Forest Engineer supported evaluation at the GS-13 grade level under Parts II, III, and IV of the Civil Engineering Series, GS-810 PCS. He said that his position should be credited at Level 3-3a and 3-3b under the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) which would also support the GS-13 grade level. He stated that the General Engineering Series, GS-801, because of the diversity of his work, might cover the position. The appellant said that he was concerned that the PCS's did not adequately address the role of today's engineers. In his June 28, 2000, appeal letter to agency headquarters, he requested that his position be reclassified as GS-810-13. He reiterated his belief that the PCS's do not give enough credit to leadership positions since they credit technical expertise in one specialized area and appear to give less credit to program leadership and coordination of projects completed by technical experts working as subordinates. He said that he managed more projects that have increased in size, cost, and complexity than when he was the GS-12 assistant to the former GS-13 grade level Forest Engineer. On October 3, 2000, the appellant requested that his appeal be forwarded to OPM for adjudication.

OPM is required by law to classify positions on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements by comparison to the criteria specified in the appropriate PCS or guide (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). The law does not authorize use of other methods or factors of evaluation, such as comparison to other positions that may or may not have been classified correctly. The adequacy of grade level criteria in PCS's is not appealable (5 CFR 511.607). All occupations change over time, but the basic duty patterns and qualification requirements generally remain stable. Duties that are not specifically referenced in the PCS can still be evaluated by comparing them with similar or related duties described in the PCS and the entire pattern of grade-level characteristics. Therefore, careful application of the appropriate PCS should yield the correct grade level for the position.

## **Position Information**

The appellant serves as the Forest Engineer, and is responsible for planning, directing, and coordinating engineering activities including facilities maintenance and construction. These programs cover buildings and related facilities, dams, bridges, roads, and water and wastewater systems. He is the Forest safety official and manages the Forest vehicle and equipment fleet. He directly supervises one Civil Engineer, GS-810-12, four Civil Engineers, GS-810-11 (full performance level), three Civil Engineers, GS-810-9 (full performance level), one Construction

Inspector, GS-809-7, one Engineering Technician, GS-802-9, and one Safety Technician, GS-019-6. One GS-11 Civil Engineer supervises an Engineering Aid, GS-802-2 (1040-hour seasonal appointment). Another GS-11 Civil Engineer supervises two Engineering Equipment Operators, WG-5716-10, one of whom is on a 1040-hour appointment, a Motor Vehicle Operator, WG-5703-8, and up to eight intermittent U.S. Department of Labor employees who work up to 48 hours per pay period performing unskilled and semi-skilled laboring work. Four Engineering Technicians, GS-802-9, under District Ranger supervision periodically assist another GS-11 Civil Engineer on contract oversight. The Forest consists of approximately 500,000 acres. It has 5 administrative center locations, 13 major developed campgrounds, with about 660 total sites. Approximately 30 percent of the 1,200 miles of roads are paved. The remainder are dirt and gravel.

The appellant reports to the [name] Team Leader, one of two staff officers reporting to the Forest Supervisor. As part of the Forest Leadership Team, the appellant's supervisor assists in prioritizing short- and long-term Forest targets and budgets and interprets policies and regulations, and resolves technical and administrative conflicts with Forest users for Team operations. The Team Leader plans, organizes, directs and evaluates the Team accomplishment of Forest Plan objectives; and represents the Forest in contacts with the public, the media, and other agencies. The appellant manages the Forest engineering program within these parameters. The position description (PD) of record ([#PD number]), certified as current and accurate on November 27, 2000, by the appellant and his supervisor, states that the appellant recommends selections, promotions, status changes, awards, disciplinary actions, and separations for supervised employees as delegated by the Forest Supervisor.

To help decide this appeal, we conducted a telephone audit with the appellant on February 16, 2001, and a telephone interview on February 21, 2001, with his immediate supervisor, [name]. We also conducted telephone interviews on February 26, 2001, with [name], National Road System Operations and Maintenance Engineer, U.S. Forest Service, on February 27, 2001, with [name], Deputy Director of Engineering, U.S. Forest Service, on March 8, 2001, with [name], Regional Engineer and [name], Regional Architect, on March 14, 2001, with [name], Regional Environmental Engineer, and on March 16, 2001, with [name], Regional Structural Engineer. In reaching our decision, we reviewed the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his agency, including his official PD and detailed project descriptions. Our audit confirmed that the PD of record contains the major duties and responsibilities of the appellant's position and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

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

The agency has placed the appellant's position in the Civil Engineering Series, GS-810, which is covered by a published PCS, and titled it Supervisory Civil Engineer. The agency applied Parts II, III and IV of the GS-810 PCS to evaluate the appellant's technical and program management responsibilities, and the GSSG to evaluate the appellant's supervisory responsibilities. The appellant has not disagreed. Based on our audit and review of the record, we concur.

## **Grade Determination**

### ***Evaluation using the GS-810 PCS***

#### *Part II, Planning and design*

This part covers planning and design functions. It defines grade levels in terms of: (1) the inherent complexity of the planning and design problems assigned, and (2) the level of judgment and authority exercised. The variety and depth of qualifications required for these positions are reflected in the discussions of the two elements. These criteria address work for which the position evaluated has primary responsibility. This is in keeping with the classification concept that any work performed may only be credited to a single position.

GS-12 grade level assignments typically include work on advanced planning or design problems, or coordinating and monitoring planning and design work that is largely conventional in nature, but which encompasses a number of components or phases of project work. Assignments usually deal with systems or facilities that: (1) encompass a fairly wide range of interrelated elements some of which are conflicting and difficult to reconcile or accommodate; (2) pose critical problems of performance requirements versus costs, under application of standard materials and criteria; or (3) require designs and plans which must deal with factors of an undetermined or unprecedented nature. As at the GS-11 grade level, the engineer is expected to coordinate work efforts with those in other specialties to insure compatibility of approach and optimum results. In addition, the engineer contacts other government agencies (e.g., Federal, State, local) and representatives of business and private interests to negotiate differences, to obtain their cooperation in carrying out investigations, to get their clearances, and the like. The guidance given to an engineer largely is in the nature of an indication of results desired with limits placed by the supervisor on proposed actions that may require policy decisions.

Illustrative assignments include: (1) defining criteria for, and giving technical review to assisting engineers in the development of specifications for projects of highly specialized nature, such as facilities to house and support scientific experimentation and systems development operations; the operations utilize novel mechanical and electrical equipment systems, requiring highly customized housing, foundations and utilities; (2) conducting preliminary investigations and planning for public work projects, e.g., hydroelectric power development in a river basin, and prepares reports and recommendations that serve as a basis for project approval and funding, including ascertaining the amount of power that can be produced by the facilities (dams and reservoirs) that can be constructed in the basin, in relation to the other uses which these facilities must serve (conservation, navigation, recreation, irrigation, and the like); developing preliminary designs and cost estimates based on such factors as the type of power plant and equipment, including capacity of generating units to be installed, layout of principal features including intakes, penstocks, powerhouse, tailrace and switchyard; and estimating the total cost of the hydroelectric power production project, and translates into a schedule of annual charges to customers, based on cost of construction, interest, maintenance and operation, amortized over a specified period of years; and (3) furnishing technical guidance and coordinating project work on irrigation engineering matters in an area characterized by considerable variation in physiography, climate, soil conditions and agricultural practices for construction and operation of irrigation

facilities usually carried out cooperatively under several jurisdictions with such complicating situations as variations or conflicts in application and interpretation of water rights, lack of uniformity in organizing and financing operations, differences in methods and standards traditionally applied to different crops and areas, and the like; adapting and modifying facility designs and operational methods to accommodate a variety of needs and situations; and consulting with and working out compromises with, and gains the cooperation of, representatives of the several jurisdictions and user organizations involved.

Most Forest projects fall short of the GS-12 grade level criteria and illustrations in the PCS. For example, designing the non-architectural components of a new 12,000 square foot administrative building and a facility to store supplies and equipment fall short of the design demands of integrating multiple building projects in a river basin, or dealing with the highly customized housing, foundations and utilities or the materials and configuration issues for the large and complex structures envisioned at the GS-12 grade level. While road repair agreements have the potential to become politically contentious, gravel and paved road design options are limited and entail the use of well-established design techniques. Most projects in the appellant's organization meet the GS-11 grade level since they involve applying standard theory and practices in the field to conventional projects or pieces of work but often require consideration of, and selection from, several alternative approaches or solutions to problems to arrive at the best treatment from a technical standpoint. They sometimes require substantial adaptation of standardized guides and criteria. Our analysis fully considers the bridge, water treatment plant, and other design work performed for other Forests. The most demanding projects, e.g., passive wetland and evaporation transpiration wastewater treatment system designs, are performed by a single subordinate and, as such, do not reflect the nature and complexity of the appellant's engineering planning and design program.

However, the appellant's program management duties meet the GS-12 grade level based on his responsibility for coordinating and monitoring planning and design work that is largely conventional in nature, but which encompasses a number of components or phases of project work. The appellant coordinates and monitors largely conventional planning and design work that consists of a number of components and phases. For example, the appellant must assure that limited road funds are leveraged to support access and safety requirements, reduce ground water sedimentation, support wildlife and other multi-use requirements, including minimizing recreational program disruption. Major campground repairing and upgrading requires phasing to limit user disruption, ensure environmental protection, and deal with some complicated design issues, e.g., designing a handicapped accessible boat dock. The appellant must assure that the [name] office building architectural plans prepared by the zone design staff meet operational requirements and mesh with non-architectural design components. The appellant's overall program contacts with other government agencies (e.g., Federal, State, local) and representatives of business and private interests to negotiate differences, to obtain their cooperation in carrying out investigations, to get their clearances, and the like are typical of the GS-12 grade level. The appellant's self-generation of potential projects, prioritization of projects and proposals, cooperative road projects, and similar program initiatives further support evaluation to the GS-12 grade level.

The appellant states that his position meets the GS-13 grade level because he functions as the technically responsible specialist in an organization in which his field constitutes a major activity and presents problems of significant depth and complexity. He points to the highway engineering expertise that he has used on projects with Forest Service headquarters and the region, working as the Forest Service representative to the "Dirt and Gravel Roads" Committee in [state name], acting as the lead proponent for Lands Highway Funding in submissions to the State and as the lead for the Forest in establishing Forest Highways networks and improvements, and similar assignments.

However, GS-13 grade level technical advisory and program functions are based on dealing with work assignments of the difficulty and complexity described at the GS-13 grade level in the PCS. They include planning or designing facilities, structures, or systems characterized by some of the following conditions: (1) a broad range of elements, subsystems or components to meet a variety of operational requirements; (2) unusually difficult site conditions and limitations, or major aspects of environmental conditions that cannot be adequately determined from actual measurement or observation; and (3) novel problems relating to efficiency and safety requirements; and controversial economic and public policy issues. The work involves in-depth analysis of the variety of interrelated and conflicting conditions present in such projects; experienced judgment in selecting optimum planning and design approaches from a technical, economic, and public need standpoint; and outstanding skill in representing the activity in connection with the assigned project, to present and explain controlling policies, objectives and needs to cooperating or concerned authorities, agencies, and groups. Work is reviewed primarily to determine that objectives are being properly realized.

Illustrative of this work is coordinating the site investigation and planning for construction of systems and facilities to develop a river basin, normally including substantial areas in several States, for purposes of water conservation and supply, flood control, power development, irrigation, fish preservation, and recreational use. The economic implications are broad and varied, touching upon agricultural, industrial and municipal development. The concerns of various governmental jurisdictions and special interest groups, e.g., conservation and recreation, and limitations of established water rights, and the prior interests of already constructed utilities systems present complicated problems as to the type and extent of development that is possible. Also illustrative of such work is coordinating the development of the designs for the water-controlling elements of a system of large multipurpose projects for flood control, production of hydroelectric power, water supply and navigation. Extensive design problems occur because of extreme variations in the amount and frequency of rainfall, the topography and the soil characteristics along the river basin involved. Unusual sediment loads and pollutive conditions in the main stream and tributaries pose great difficulty in determining the operating limits and requirements of the components of the system. Limitations and compromises on design and operating procedures result from the concentrations of population and the considerable agricultural and industrial development. These complicating factors limit the amount of water available for various purposes, limit the areas available for water storage, transportation and treatment, and make acquisition of these areas extremely costly.

Because the projects planned and designed by the appellant do not meet GS-13 grade level difficulty and complexity as discussed previously, his technical advisory and program functions

fail to meet that grade level. Therefore, we find the appellant's overall planning and design program management functions are credited properly at the GS-12 grade level.

### *Part III, Construction*

This part covers surveillance and control of construction operations. The two elements used in evaluation of construction engineering positions are: (1) level and kind of authority exercised, and, (2) scope and complexity of construction operations. The point values indicated for the degrees or levels under these elements are to be converted to grades by applying the grade-level conversion table in the PCS.

#### Element 1, Level and kind of authority exercised

The agency has credited Degree E, the highest level described in the PCS. However, it concluded that this degree was weakened by the authority of the Forest Contracting Officer position. The appellant disagrees, stating that he exercises the full range of field and office engineering functions.

The PCS requires that degree definitions be applied in the context of the kinds of functions performed or supervised by the engineer.

Degrees A (20 points), C (40 points), and E (60 points) are defined in the PCS. Degrees B and D may be assigned when a position falls between the defined degrees. Therefore, the degrees are cumulative in nature. Degree E presumes the exercise of the level and kind of authority exercised at the preceding levels. Degree C is based on overseeing such complex construction activities as the clearing and building of a reservoir and the construction of roads, bridges, railroads, and utilities that have to be relocated in connection with the construction of a large dam, or the entire field or office phase of activities with equivalent authority and responsibility. In contrast, at Degree E the engineer is in charge of a construction project or of construction activities in a geographic area, and carries out the full range of field and office engineering functions, usually through a staff of subordinate supervisors.

The appellant exercises Forest-wide geographical responsibility and local level technical authority for both office and field functions typical of Degree E. However, the construction activities that he manages do not exceed those defined as major portions of construction activities at Degree C. The construction functions performed are not so extensive as to require management through subordinate supervisors. Because this element exceeds Degree C due to his office and field function responsibilities, but fails to fully meet Degree E, Degree D (50 points) is assigned.

#### Element 2. Scope and complexity of construction operations

The definitions of levels under this element consider such aspects as: (1) size of projects; (2) diversity of structures or facilities; (3) installation of technical or specialized facilities; (4) problems posed by construction site; and (5) presence of controversy or obstructive attitudes. This element has a range of seven levels, numbered 1 through 7, with point values of 20, 25, 30,



35, 40, 45, and 50, respectively. Levels 1, 3, 5, and 7 are described. The intermediate levels 2, 4, and 6 are used when the scope and complexity of assigned construction operations exceed, or do not quite measure up to, one of the defined levels. The timeframes considered under this element are limited to actual construction requirements presented by the technical demands of the project. They do not consider planning and design or other functions addressed under Parts II and IV of the GS-810 PCS.

The agency credited the position at Level 3. The appellant points to the variety of structures and number of years to complete them as supporting a higher level. The most complex construction projects managed by the appellant's organization meet Level 3 (30 points). While construction time may be longer to provide for phased funding or customer use, e.g., avoiding campground closing, actual construction would not exceed that required for facilities of Level 3 scope and complexity. As at Level 3, these projects, e.g., [name] office complex, and [name] and [name] Campgrounds, include several kinds of structures and facilities construction that contain "custom-built" features or specialized equipment, requiring specially adapted construction methods and equipment. Some projects require close planning and coordination of construction schedules to accommodate concurrent operation and modification of connected or related facilities, e.g., campgrounds. These more complex projects compare favorably with the scope and complexity of projects illustrated at Level 3 in the PCS, e.g., a group of barracks, administration and training buildings and facilities with features specially designed to house and support technical training operations and equipment. The appellant's most complex program operations also meet Level 3 where operations cover several kinds of facilities and present special user requirements with respect to layout of installation and facilities, and finishing operations, e.g., buildings, roads, and utilities to accommodate camping and recreation activities as well as special visitor centers and exhibits for the display of natural or social history collections in park areas. Our analysis fully considers the multi-year time phase of road projects that are affected by political and funding considerations.

The appellant's operations and projects fail to meet Level 4. At that level, projects are characterized by: (1) a variety of kinds of facilities and structural components, requiring about four years to construct; construction is likely to involve new and specialized equipment, materials and methods, and to present considerable site layout and foundation preparation problems; (2) a highly specialized facility requiring about two years to construct, involving extensive special purpose technical equipment installation, and structural features requiring specially adapted construction methods and quality control techniques; or (3) a series of two or three main types of structures of facilities that require about five years to complete construction; such an operation is subject to considerable variation in terrain, soil and climatic conditions, and requires dealing and coordinating with a number of contractors, different local government jurisdictions, business and civic groups, and landowners. Illustrative of this work is constructing an earth and rockfill dam 41 meters ( 133 feet) high and 695 meters (2,280 feet) long. The projects includes a reservoir of 105,625 hectare- 3 decimeter (261,000 acre-foot) capacity, a main canal about 40 kilometers (25 miles) long, and lateral canals up to 11 kilometers (7 miles) long for which relocation requires construction of several kilometers (miles) each of railroad, secondary roads, power transmission and telephone lines. The construction is carried out under a number of separate contracts. As discussed previously, the appellant's projects do not reflect this

breadth and depth of construction issues with regard to size, diversity of structures and facilities, specialized or novel equipment, or other conditions found at Level 4.

Also found at Level 4 is overseeing construction operations in an area that includes a variety of types of facilities, with considerable variations in climate and soil conditions. Such construction presents problems of adapting materials, construction methods and schedules to the different conditions, e.g., managing the construction of several large housing projects, including utility and recreation facilities, located throughout the State or larger geographic area. The construction area managed by the appellant covers portions of 4 counties in a State consisting of 67 counties and does not meet the geographic scope found at Level 4. The appellant's projects, e.g., the Marionville administrative building and the campgrounds previously discussed, are not of the scale and do not deal with the large and complex utility and other systems, or the related recreational and other facilities found at Level 4.

The combination of Degree D (50 points) and Level 3 (30 points) results in a total of 80 points which falls in the GS-12 grade level range of 80-85 points.

#### *Part IV, Facilities Management*

This part covers positions in programs that have an end product of construction facilities, and make judgments and recommendations as to what facilities to build, with what resources, where and in what order, and take actions to insure that approved facilities are built and maintained. Positions are evaluated principally in terms of: (1) scope and complexity of facilities for which the position has engineering responsibility; (2) range of facilities engineering activities managed; and (3) level of responsibility assigned. The grade-level definitions address these elements and include examples that assist in determining the grade-level definition a covered position meets.

The appellant believes that the position meets the GS-13 grade level based on his full program development and coordination duties for all phases of engineering for a wide variety of facilities scattered over a wide geographic area. He cites his partnering with townships, [acronym], and the Federal Highway Administration on road [number], and his work on the Dirt and Gravels Task Force as examples of GS-13 grade level work. He says that he plans approaches to the work, and develops memoranda of understanding with other political entities without any guidance from his supervisor. He believes that the variety of systems at campgrounds and Forest administrative sites, roads, and bridges represent the wide range of facilities found at the GS-13 grade level, and that the Forest constitutes a large geographic area as defined at the GS-13 grade level.

The appellant's position is located at the operating level of a construction agency as defined in Part IV of the PCS. The appellant's work exceeds the GS-11 grade level Assistant Forest Engineer illustration. Unlike the assistant, the appellant is responsible for all engineering activities. He develops annual program proposals and work plans. The appellant coordinates with design, construction, and operations personnel to assure their accomplishment, for maintenance, improvement, and additions to facilities to support timber operations, fire protection, water conservation, and recreation activities, including roads and bridges, drainage

structures, buildings, towers, equipment shops and yards, small dams and reservoirs, and recreation area structures.

As at the GS-12 grade level, the appellant must apply experienced professional judgment in dealing with a number of statutory, regulatory, and procedural jurisdictions and restrictions, e.g., dealing with various funding restrictions and State, local and Federal environmental, land use and related requirements. Although most facilities are not substantially complex within the meaning of the PCS, they are at a variety of locations under the control of different activity managers. As at the GS-12 grade level, the appellant works with considerable freedom from technical guidance, and their recommendations for action in matters of normal engineering practice are considered authoritative. While the appellant's technical work does not receive local technical review, major plans and funding proposals are reviewed at higher levels within the agency for feasibility and priority. Although the appellant's supervisor does not provide engineering guidance or clearance on technical actions that may be of a controversial nature, or that represent a new approach or course for the organization, he does make or propose action on those kinds of program decisions. The supervisor's PD shows that he is responsible for the public interest implications and broad program plans for all functions under his control. As at the GS-12 grade level, the appellant must respond to different activity requirements and standards, and compliance with differing legal and technical requirements under various jurisdictions.

Illustrative of operating level work is coordinating construction activities for an extensive group of smaller projects (such as levees, channel improvements, bank stabilization, flood control reservoirs, and floodways). The tasks include coordinating engineering and other technical and administrative matters between field project offices and higher levels in the organization; reviewing design plans and layouts prior to start of construction, for adequacy and harmony with overall, long-range facilities plans; advising and assisting in preparation and issuance of construction contracts, negotiation of change orders, and investigation and settlement of contractor's claims; conducting periodic engineering inspections of construction activities and project sites; and initiating and coordinating measures to resolve major problems, to obtain scheduled progress. The appellant performs these functions for the group of smaller projects typical of this illustration.

The appellant does not oversee the broad range of facilities engineering activities, covering a variety of complex facilities in a sizeable geographic area, found at the GS-13 grade level. While the appellant receives assignments on the basis of recognized competence, demonstrated through considerable experience related to the area of assignment, and is subject to very general supervision, he is not responsible for the broad range of engineering activities and multitude of jurisdiction found in GS-13 grade level program assignments. Working within a four county area is not equivalent to dealing with widely scattered organizations and groups typical of the GS-13 grade level, e.g., water resources development, control and conservation in a watershed area covering portions of several states. While the appellant initiates action (correspondence, project directives, reports, conferences, and the like) on all matters pertaining to the area of assignment, these actions are not for a program of GS-13 grade level scope and complexity. Although the appellant refers those matters that impinge on programs or projects outside his jurisdiction, or those that require higher echelon interpretation or formulation of policy to and

discusses with the superior those matters likely to generate significant controversy or interest, or that indicate need for significant redirection of program activities, they are for a program that does not exceed the GS-12 grade level scope and complexity.

Illustrative of GS-13 grade level operating level work is program development for a broad range of facilities for water resources development, control and conservation, in a watershed area covering portions of several States. The programs cover all phases of facilities engineering, including planning, design, construction operation and maintenance. The projects range from local protection works (such as levees and channel improvements) to major multiple purpose projects (usually including facilities for power production, flood control, navigation, water supply, fish and wildlife preservation, and recreation). A variety of statutes and regulations provide for the Federal participation in the construction and operation of such facilities. Work on the various phases of projects extends over long periods of time. The engineer must consider and coordinate many elements relating to budget and funds requirements and availability of engineering resources. The appellant's Forest program does not deal with the major multi-purpose projects or the large number of jurisdictional issues presented by several states and wide range or subordinate jurisdictions found at the GS-13 grade level. Therefore, the appellant's position is evaluated properly at the GS-12 grade level.

### Summary

The appellant's engineering program functions are evaluated properly at the GS-12 grade level under Parts II, III, and IV of the GS-810 PCS.

### *GSSG*

#### *Evaluation using the GSSG*

The appellant believes that his position should be credited at Level 3-3a and 3-3b. After careful review of the record, we concur with the crediting of Levels 1-2, 4A2, 4B4, 5-6 and 6-4. The GSSG is a threshold PCS. A defined level must be fully met before it can be credited. Our analysis of the remaining factors follows.

#### *Factor 2, Organizational setting*

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher levels of management. The appellant reports to the Team Leader, a position two reporting levels below the first SES position (Regional Forester). This situation meets Level 2-1 (100 points) where the position is accountable to a position two or more levels below the first SES or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain. It does not meet Level 2-2 (250 points) where the position is accountable to a position that is one reporting level below the first SES or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain. Therefore, Level 2-1 (100 points) is assigned.

#### *Factor 3, Supervisory and managerial authority exercised*

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities that are exercised on a recurring basis. To be credited with a level under this factor, a position must meet the authorities and responsibilities to the extent described for the specific level. The agency credited Level 3-2c (450 points). The appellant believes that his position meets Levels 3-3a and 3-3b (775) points.

The appellant states that his position meets Level 3-3a because he assures that the employees he supervises, or the groups that include these individuals, implement program goals and objectives. He says that he should not be penalized for not creating subordinate organizational groups when applying the PCS.

Level 3-3a involves: (1) exercising delegated managerial authority to set a series of annual, multiyear, or similar types of long-range work plans and schedules for in-service or contracted work; (2) assure implementation (by lower and subordinate organizational units or others) of the goals and objectives for the program segment(s) or function(s) they oversee; (3) determine goals and objectives that need additional emphasis; (4) determine the best approach or solution for resolving budget shortages; and (5) plan for long range staffing needs, including such matters as whether to contract out work. Positions exercising these authorities are closely involved with high level program officials (or comparable agency level staff personnel) in the development of overall goals and objectives for assigned staff function(s), program(s), or program segment(s). For example, they direct development of data; provision of expertise and insights; securing of legal opinions; preparation of position papers or legislative proposals; and execution of comparable activities which support development of goals and objectives related to high levels of program management and development or formulation.

The appellant's position is supervisory rather than managerial in nature. He executes staff support programs at the field level. In contrast, Level 3-3a covers program management work normally delegated to higher levels in the organization where the position is involved in making decisions related to overall program staffing, budgetary, policy, and regulatory matters. While the appellant provides input to higher levels of management on these issues, e.g., Forest construction projects, they relate to the local Forest resource requirements and working environment. In contrast, Level 3-3a engineering program decisions are made at higher echelons within the Forest Service. Lower and subordinate organizational units refers to organizations at lower echelons within an agency, e.g., programs carried out at multiple field installations. It does not cover employees directly supervised by the appellant or construction inspectors supervised by District Rangers. Therefore, the appellant is not responsible for managing the scale and scope of functions required for crediting Level 3-3a to his position.

To meet Level 3-3b, a position must exercise all or nearly all of the delegated authorities and responsibilities described at Level 3-2c and, in addition, at least 8 of the 15 responsibilities listed below.

The agency credited the appellant's position with fully meeting Level 3-2c and with responsibilities 2, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 15. In his first agency appeal letter, the appellant discussed all remaining factors. In his second agency appeal, he provided a rationale for crediting responsibilities 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 12. Based on our review of the appeal record, we agree that the

position fully meets Level 3-2c and is credited properly with responsibilities 2, 9, 13, 14, and 15. Our analysis of the remaining responsibilities follows.

Responsibilities 1, 5, 6, and 8 are intended to credit only supervisors who direct two or more subordinate supervisors, team leaders or comparable personnel. To support these designations, these subordinate personnel must spend 25 percent or more of their time on supervisory, lead or comparable functions. These responsibilities may only be credited in situations where the subordinate organization is so large and its work so complex that it requires managing through these types of subordinate positions. The appellant has a single subordinate supervisor whose workload of full- and part-time staffs meet this requirement. While other higher graded subordinates have functional responsibilities, e.g., a GS-12 Civil Engineer has primary responsibility for facilities, structures, dams, bridges, and wastewater treatment, and a GS-11 Civil Engineer has primary responsibility for contract oversight, the functions performed are not sufficiently large and complex to justify being classified as team leaders. The appellant's organization does not reflect the difficulty and complexity that would *require* using multiple team leaders or supervisors who would devote at least 25 percent of their time to full leadership responsibilities.

Responsibility 4 is credited to positions that exercise direct control over a multimillion dollar level of annual resources (in 1993 dollars). Because the appellant does not exercise **direct** control over major contract funds, this responsibility may not be credited.

The agency credited responsibility 11 because the appellant would have the authority to approve nonroutine, costly or controversial training. Responsibilities may be credited only if they are regular and recurring functions of a position. Region [number] Supplement No. 93-1 covering delegations of authority and explanatory information show that long-term and equivalent nonroutine training approval is not delegated to the appellant's position, is not a regular and recurring function of the position, and may not be credited.

The appellant disagreed with the agency's decision not to credit responsibility 12 because he did not oversee contractor work in a manner somewhat comparable to the way other supervisors direct the work of subordinate employees. OPM guidance states that authorizing payment for supplies and services, e.g., preprinted envelopes, is not creditable. However, the appellant's construction, maintenance, and repair contract oversight, managed directly and through his subordinates, support the crediting of responsibility 12.

In summary, we have credited the position with responsibilities 2, 9, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Because the position is not credited with 8 or more of the listed responsibilities, it fails to meet Level 3-3b and must be credited at Level 3-2c (450 points).

*Summary applying the GSSG*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Points</b>
1. Program scope effect	1-2	350
2. Organizational setting	2-1	100
3. Supervisory and managerial authority exercised	3-2c	450
4. Personal contacts		
Nature of contacts	4A2	50
Purpose of contacts	4B2	75
5. Difficulty of typical work directed	5-6	800
6. Other conditions	6-4	<u>1,120</u>
Total points:		2,945

A total of 2,945 points fall within the GS-12 grade level point range of 2,755-3,150 points on the Grade Conversion Table in the GSSG.

**Decision**

The position is properly classified as Supervisory Civil Engineer, GS-810-12.