

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

Atlanta Oversight Division
75 Spring Street, SW., Suite 1018
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Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant's name].

Agency classification: Food Service Worker
WG-7408-4

Organization: [name] Department
Naval Hospital
Marine Corps Air Station [location]
U.S. Department of the Navy
[location]

OPM decision: Food Service Worker
WG-7408-4

OPM decision number: C-7408-04-01

/s/ Virginia L. Magnuson
Virginia L. Magnuson
Classification Appeals Officer

May 2, 2003
Date

As provided in section S7-8 of the *Operating Manual: Federal Wage System*, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name]

[address]

[location]

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Introduction

On January 13, 2003, the Atlanta Oversight Division, now the Atlanta Field Services Group, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted an appeal from [appellant's name]. His job is graded as Food Service Worker, WG-7408-4. He works in the [name] Department, Naval Hospital, Marine Corps Air Station [location], U.S. Department of the Navy, [location]. The appellant requests that his job be re-graded at a higher grade, either as a Cook, WG-7404, or Food Service Worker. The appellant filed a job grading appeal to his agency and on December 11, 2002, it sustained the current grading of his job. We received a complete administrative report on February 14, 2003. We accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General Information

The appellant makes various statements about the agency's evaluation of his job and the grading of food service jobs at other locations. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper grading of the position. By law, job grading decisions must be based solely upon a comparison between the actual duties and responsibilities of the job and the appropriate Job Grading Standards (JGS's)(5 U.S.C. 5346). Since comparison to standards and guidelines is the exclusive method for grading jobs, we cannot compare the appellant's job to others as a basis for deciding the appeal. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

The appellant states in his letter of appeal that he is a one-man shop and performs the duties of three different occupations, 7404 Cook, 7408 Food Service Worker, and 6914 Store Worker, describing selected functions from them. The job grading standards do not try to describe every work assignment of each position in the occupation covered. Because of the differences in duties, skills, knowledge, and other aspects of trades and labor jobs, standards are developed mainly along occupational lines. The standards identify and describe those key characteristics of occupations which are significant for distinguishing different levels of work. Performance of individual tasks identified in any of a variety of JGS's for occupations does not necessarily warrant grading to that occupation or to the grade level at which the task is described.

The method of grading jobs involves consideration of the total job. Trades and labor jobs are graded considering the actual skill, knowledge, and other requirements of the work performed. OPM has determined that work performed for less than 15 percent of the time rarely, if ever, constitutes grade-controlling work within the meaning of the Federal Wage System (FWS) since it typically does not involve performing the full range of work and qualifications intended for an occupation or level of work.

Most of the duties the appellant identifies are functions considered in our appeal decision. Our fact finding determined that the credit card balancing requires checking the statement once a month and verifying that all expenditures are correct. This process takes approximately 30 minutes per month and occupies too little time to be considered for grading purposes. The appellant is also responsible for recording employee timesheets. However, this duty is rotated

among employees and is not performed on a continuing basis. It also is not considered for grading purposes.

Job Information

Both the appellant and his supervisor have certified the accuracy of the appellant's official job description, number [#].

The appellant works in the [name] Department. The function of this division is to administer and coordinate the hospital's Food Service Program, and to provide food service for inpatients. The primary purpose of the appellant's job is to ensure accurate, prompt, and courteous delivery and service of meals to hospitalized bed patients. The appellant is the only Food Service Worker in the [name] Department. As such, he prepares and assembles meals for patients using specialized instructions, distributes menus to patients and collects menu selections for use in meal preparation, cleans the galley and service area, and inventories and requisitions food and non-food supply items to ensure adequate stocks are readily available.

The appellant works with general supervision and receives work in the form of written/oral meal requests. He may consult with his immediate supervisor on unusual matters.

In reaching our decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including information obtained from telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor. We find that the position description of record contains the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

Pay category

Although the appellant has not questioned the pay category placement of his job, he points to his performing administrative duties such as ordering food and non-food supplies for the kitchen, reconciliation of the monthly credit card statement using the computer, and compiling daily patient counts and issue of all items from the kitchen. A job is exempt from the General Schedule (GS) only if the paramount requirement of the job is knowledge and experience in trades, crafts, or laboring. Some FWS and GS occupations share common duties. For example, employees who occupy Supply Clerical and Technician, GS-2005, positions and 6907 Materials Handler jobs regularly input data into and extract data from automated supply systems. The primary duty for the appellant's job is providing food service to medical patients. The chief requirement of his job is knowledge and experience of a trades, craft, or manual-labor nature. The appellant's administrative tasks are performed in conjunction with and are a component of the direct food service work. Consequently, his job is exempt from the GS and falls under the FWS.

Series, title and standard determination

The appellant's paramount duties (those most important for recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, or reduction in force purposes) involve providing proper meal service for patients by preparing meals using specialized instructions and/or recipes. Preparation primarily involves heating prepackaged frozen foods and assembling food items for meals. The appellant is also responsible for checking patient meal trays for accuracy against diet orders and modifying them as appropriate. He inventories and requisitions food and non-food supply items using a checklist of standard items used for meal preparation. Work of this type is appropriately included in the 7408 Food Service Worker occupation.

This occupation includes nonsupervisory work involved in serving food and beverages and preparing simple food. It includes setting and waiting on tables where food service is informal; attending food counters; portioning and serving food; assembling trays for hospital patients; recording and retrieving patient diet and other food service information using a computer or manual file system; washing dishes, pots, pans, glasses, and silverware; transporting food, equipment, and supplies by manual or motorized carts; and assembling and tossing salads, measuring and weighing ingredients, brewing coffee and tea, and mixing bulk fruit juices. In addition, the work typically includes sweeping, washing, mopping and buffing floors, and washing walls and ceilings. It also includes retrieving food service information using a computer or manual file system and transporting food, equipment, and supplies.

The appellant believes his job should be placed in the 7404 Cook occupation due to the level of responsibility required. The cook occupation includes cooking meats, poultry, fish, shellfish and vegetables and making soups, gravies, sauces, desserts, and other foods. Cooks use standardized recipes and menus and personal knowledge and experience to measure, assemble, and mix ingredients; regulate cooking temperatures; and add seasoning to foods. They use specialized knowledge and skill to design and prepare decorated foods and aesthetic food arrangements. The appellant does not cook food or use the full range of specialized skills and knowledge required for the cook occupation.

The appellant also believes he performs the duties of a 6914 Store Worker. This series includes work involved in handling, marking, and preparing displays of merchandise or other items for selection by customers. This requires skill in observing, counting, and maintaining stock levels, and in matching names, codes, numbers, or sizes of items on shelves or counters to lists on which these items are shown. The appellant does not use the full range of specialized skills and knowledge required for the store worker occupation in handling, marking, and arranging displays for customers.

The paramount knowledge, skills, and abilities of the appellant's job meet the definition for placement in the 7408 occupation. The agency titled this position as Food Service Worker and we concur. The JGS for Food Service Worker is used for grade determination.

Grade determination

The 7408 occupation includes four grade levels, and uses four factors for grade determination. The four factors are: *Skill and knowledge*, *Responsibility*, *Physical effort*, and *Working conditions*.

Skill and knowledge

Employees at the grade 4 level, the highest level described, apply skill and knowledge in planning and organizing their work to complete assignments. They have a basic understanding of recipe construction. Employees at this grade apply a thorough knowledge of basic modified diets when providing the final check on patient trays to verify that the food items are correct for the prescribed diet. They provide basic information to the patient about the diet. They have a working knowledge of some diet principles, such as the diabetic exchange lists for meal planning. In some work situations, workers at this level are able to use a computer to enter and retrieve basic information, such as diet orders or recipe, menu, and inventory data. Food service workers at this level may carry out the function of a small work unit. For example, in the nourishment unit they decide what supplies are needed, obtain supplies from other areas of the kitchen, prepare the number and kind of nourishments ordered from an ingredients list, label and distribute nourishments, and clean and sanitize the work area.

The appellant's job is a direct match to the grade 4 level. As described at that level, the appellant prepares meals using specialized instructions and/or recipes. He also checks each tray for completeness to ensure that food items are accurate for the diet prescribed for the patient. He uses knowledge of types of foods to prepare and serve and modify diets, such as low sodium, low caloric, low cholesterol, bland, diabetic, clear liquid, etc. Typical of the grade 4 level, he uses his knowledge of modified diet patterns to modify trays, prepare nourishment, and assist patients in selecting proper food alternatives. The appellant prepares attractive food items (soups, salads, gelatin desserts) and heats food with microwave and conventional heating equipment.

The appellant is responsible for keeping his work area and the galley clean. He ensures the food service area is properly sanitized and secured, maintains job safety and appropriate care of assigned equipment at all times. Like some workers at the grade 4 level, the appellant is responsible for all inventories and requisitions of food and non-food supply items to ensure adequate stocks are readily available. He uses a computer list of standard items and checks those needed. Once the items have been ordered, the appellant picks up the items, enters necessary receipt information in the computer system and rotates and stores the items. According to the appellant's supervisor, the combination of the inventory, ordering, and stocking functions occupies 40 percent of the appellant's time.

This factor is credited at the grade 4 level.

Responsibility

At the grade 4 level, food service workers receive limited supervision from the immediate supervisor. The supervisor provides oral and written instruction on changes in procedures and special requirements. Food service workers perform routine work independently in accordance with written guides and established policy. They use judgment in recognizing work objectives and in planning and organizing duties to accomplish those objectives. They refer questions on new work situations to the supervisor. Workers at this level may assist lower grade employees and provide training on technical work matters. The supervisor spot checks work in progress to be sure that set procedures are being followed and that work will be accomplished according to a specific time schedule.

The appellant's job is a direct match to the grade 4 level. As described at that level, the appellant works under the general supervision of the Head, [name] Department and a consulting dietitian on the ward. He receives work in the form of written requests, menus, and oral job orders. As at the grade 4 level, he works independently in carrying out his assignments in accordance with established written guidelines and instructions, diet guides, and directives. The appellant is reviewed by his supervisor through monthly progress reports and routine feedback from the dietitian and nurses on the ward he services. He carries out his job with sound judgment and initiative.

This factor is credited at the grade 4 level.

Physical effort and Working conditions

Physical effort and *Working conditions* are the same at grade 2, 3, and 4 levels. Because they do not have grade level impact, and the appellant's work meets the levels described in the JGS, we will credit both factors as being met and will not address them further.

In summary, the appellant's food service work is credited at the grade 4 level.

Decision

The appellant's job is properly titled and graded as Food Service Worker, WG-7408-4.