

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

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Librarian (Cataloging)
GS-1410-11

Organization: [organization] Division
[organization]
[organization]
[organization]
Department of Defense
[location]

OPM decision: Librarian (Cataloging)
GS-1410-11

OPM decision number: GS-1410-11-02

Robert D. Hendler
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Classification and Pay Claims
Program Manager
Center for Merit System Accountability

August 8, 2007
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).

Decision sent to:

[appellant]

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Introduction

On March 15, 2007, the Atlanta Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant]. The appellant occupies a position currently classified as Librarian (Cataloging), GS-1410-11, in the [organization] Division, [organization], Department of Defense, in [location]. The appellant requests classification of his position at the GS-12 level. We received the complete agency's administrative report on April 13, 2007. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

The appellant states he was detailed to perform and later permanently assigned the major duties previously performed by a GS-12 Librarian. He also makes various statements about his agency's understanding of some of his duties and its evaluation of his position.

In adjudicating this appeal, our responsibility is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing the appellant's current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. Since the comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others which may or may not be classified correctly, as a basis for deciding the appeal. Since our decision sets aside any previous agency decision, any actions previously taken by the agency in its review of the appellant's position are not germane to the classification appeal process.

Position information

The [acronym] educates national security leaders in joint, multinational, and interagency operational-level planning and warfighting. The [organization] Division provides comprehensive library service to the college, area, and national commands within the Department of Defense, and military researchers generally. The purpose of the position is to provide a wide range of cataloging services and coordinate local integrated library systems responsibilities in support of the academic mission of the college.

The appellant provides cataloging services of original or unique library materials not previously cataloged in the On-Line Computer Library Center (OCLC) or other national databases. He resolves complex cataloging issues or problems that involve relationships among the different cataloging functions and performs bibliographic research in order to catalog electronic/online and digital resources. The appellant creates and updates names, series, and subject authority records for the University's Union Library Catalog in conjunction with appropriate staff at the University. He serves as the college's liaison for the Program for Cooperative Cataloging of the Library of Congress. He recommends and established new subject headings for local uses and recommends new subject headings to the Library of Congress for approval. He establishes original classification numbers using the Library of Congress classification scheme. The appellant manages retrospective conversion projects for the library's collection. He acts as the

cataloging and Horizon Integrated Library System (ILS) liaison between the college and University libraries for cataloging, classification, authority control, and the construction of bibliographic and authority records including information on display and indexing capabilities, as it relates to machine readable cataloging (MARC) conventions.

The appellant serves as the college's local ILS administrator. The system, including software and servers, is administered by the University. He reports problems to the University and works with its systems and cataloging personnel for resolution. The appellant coordinates with the Athena (software) ILS vendor for the use of Athena for classified, official use only, and archives catalogs.

The appellant supervises the work of one library technician and other employees who may be temporarily assigned to the Cataloging group. He advises and assists other library staff members who perform cataloging-related operations, and works at the information desk as needed.

The appellant's official position description (PD), number [#], and other material of record furnish much more information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are performed. Both the appellant and his supervisor certified the accuracy of the PD. In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including the PD of record which we find contains the major duties assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into this decision. We also conducted telephone interviews with the appellant and his current supervisor.

Series, title, and standards determination

The agency classified the appellant's position in the Librarian Series, GS-1410, and titled it Librarian, the authorized basic title for nonsupervisory positions in this series. As provided for in the series titling instructions, the agency added the parenthetical title, Cataloging, to identify the specific functional area of the work. Although the appellant supervises one individual, the percentage of time involved does not meet the criteria of the General Schedule Supervisory Guide for classification as a supervisor. The appellant does not disagree with the agency's series and titling determinations, and we concur. The appellant's librarian work is evaluated using the GS-1410 position classification standard (PCS).

Grade determination

The GS-1410 PCS is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, under which factor-levels and accompanying point values are to be assigned for each of the following nine factors, with the total then being converted to a grade level by use of the grade conversion table provided in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor-levels. For a position to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor level description, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect that meets a higher level.

The appellant disagrees with the agency's determination of Level 1-7 for Factor 1 and Level 3-3 for Factor 3. The appellant believes Factors 1 and 3 should be credited with higher factor-levels than those determined by the agency because he performs national-level cataloging and original descriptive and subject cataloging in a highly specialized field of military-related topics. After careful review, we concur with the agency's crediting of Levels 2-4, 4-4, 5-3, 6/7-3b, 8-1, and 9-1 and have so credited the position. Our analysis of Factors 1 and 3 follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information an employee must understand in order to do the work and the skills needed to apply that knowledge.

The knowledge required by the appellant's position matches Level 1-7 at which librarians use knowledge of a wide range of duties in one or more library functions to modify standard library practices, precedents, and techniques; adapt computer systems; or make significant departures from previous approaches to similar problems or projects to solve a variety of information access, dissemination, and preservation problems. They evaluate, select, and adapt precedents to meet specialized information requirements. Librarians apply standard practices of other disciplines as they relate to the library profession (e.g., physical and biological sciences, social sciences and humanities, languages, engineering, law, medicine, archival work, contracting, information systems analysis). Assignments typically include a broad area, e.g., reference, cataloging, or computer services; or a specialty within a functional area requiring considerable depth of knowledge of the specialty, e.g., preservation of rare books, serials cataloging. They may include a specialty within a functional area requiring knowledge of a particular subject such as engineering or foreign language, or familiarity with a subject field such as biological sciences or a language group. Employees may perform staff assignments relating to program planning or coordination of services, or serve as librarian-in-charge of a library that serves clientele with varied information needs. Catalogers either perform the full range of original cataloging duties for a variety of materials, or specialize in a type of difficult information, such as serials, maps, or rare books, or specialize in one or more language and/or subject areas.

Illustrations for Level 1-7 librarian work in the PCS include:

The librarian performs original cataloging where a significant portion of the materials require interpreting, judgment, and deviation from precedent. Many bibliographical elements are not covered by cataloging rules, or require interpretation. Subject categories are often too specialized to be included in published lists of subject headings such as the "Library of Congress Subject Headings" or "Medical Subject headings" and headings specific to the library's needs must be devised or adapted by the cataloger. The librarian recommends new categories based on changes in the subject matter (e.g., refinement of plant pathology categories based on new research on global change), and creates new access points not available through older cataloging entries.

The librarian performs cataloging that requires special subject-matter expertise, such as East Asian religion and philosophy, or proficiency in one or more languages.

As at Level 1-7, the appellant's major duties require cataloging services of original or unique library materials not previously cataloged in the OCLC or other national database, including foreign language and non-print items, such as electronic resumes in the digital and networked environment. He performs a full range of original cataloging duties and resolves problems and inconsistencies within the local cataloging process. The complexity of the appellant's work matches Level 1-7 in that he similarly recommends and establishes new subject headings for local use and, in serving as liaison for the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, recommends new subject headings to the Library of Congress for approval.

At Level 1-8, librarians use a mastery of one or more major library functions to solve highly complex problems within the function, or problems that involve relationships within functions. They develop new approaches for other experienced librarians to use in solving a variety of problems or in expanding services. They also make significant recommendations to change, interpret, or develop important or innovative information policies, programs, approaches, or analysis methods. At this level, assignments involve evaluating and advising subordinate full-service libraries in a library system; and developing policies, programs, services and/or products for a library system or systems. Methods and techniques developed serve as models for other libraries outside of the agency or major component (such as bureau or major military command). Bibliographies, reports and other publications prepared; cataloging and classification practices developed; preservation techniques developed; and the like are cited as authoritative by other libraries. Illustrative of such work are librarians serving as experts in references and information research advising experienced catalogers and serving as senior staff librarians for a library system or a central library with branches, and librarians serves as interagency or Federal experts in the development of cataloging criteria for classifying new and changing fields of knowledge, and advises and guides other experienced catalogers.

While the appellant's duties require that he resolves complex cataloging issues, these duties do not meet Level 1-8 work. He typically uses or adapts professional methods and practices and advises and assists other staff members within the college who perform catalog-related operations, but this assistance does not include developing new approaches for other experienced librarians as required at Level 1-8. He makes cataloging recommendations requiring interpretation and judgment, but these do not significantly change or influence important policies or programs, e.g., those affecting entire library systems. Unlike these illustrations, the appellant works as the sole cataloger in a small professional military library, not a research-level library. The work does not require an expert in the library's specialization of military science. While the appellant has provided occasional requested training for other catalogers outside of the college in past years, this training was permissive on the part of the college and the responsibility to train other catalogers is not a requirement of the applicant's position. Furthermore, it cannot control the grade of the position since it is not regular and recurring work within the meaning of the position classification system occupying 25 percent or more of the appellant's work time.

Level 1-7 is credited (1250 points).

Factor 3, Guidelines

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

The guidelines used by the appellant match Level 3-3. At that level, guidelines include library and agency information policies, regulations, and operating procedures; cataloging rules and formats; authorities lists; subject heading lists; and professional and technical literature; and in some cases. Federal contracting regulations. The librarian uses judgment in interpreting and adapting the guidelines for application to specific cases, problems, or situations, in applying standard library practices to new situations and in relating work situations to precedent ones. In addition, the librarian analyzes the results of adaptations and recommends changes or improvements to the guidelines.

Correspondingly, the appellant's position requires him to maintain, update, and implement local cataloging policy and procedures; and provide input for revisions to the library's Cataloging procedures manuals. The appellant uses judgment in resolving inconsistencies within the local cataloging process, and developing innovative methods of cataloging to provide efficient access to bibliographic records in a timely manner. These functions involve the use of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them reflective of Level 3-3.

The appellant's duties generally do not meet Level 3-4 in that the nature of the work is not such that standard library tools cannot cover rapidly evolving terminology, new or highly specialized fields of knowledge, or historical materials that are difficult to identify or locate. Duties at Level 3-4 also may involve deviating from or extending traditional methods, techniques, or practices; resolving important issues where guidelines are scarce or have limited applicability to specific projects; or identifying areas for improvement in established methods of reference searching, collection development, preservation, or cataloging. The appellant's position requires him to work within established guidelines in providing cataloging services and he does not make the definitive cataloging determinations and resolutions indicative of Level 3-4.

Level 3-3 is credited (275 points).

Summary

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-7	1250
2. Supervisory controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. & 7. Personal contacts/Purpose of contacts	3-b	110
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
Total		2470

The total of 2470 points falls within the GS-11 range (2355-2750) on the grade conversion table provided in the standard.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Librarian, (Cataloging) GS-1410-11.