

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

CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION

Under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [the appellant]

Position: Budget Assistant (Office Automation)
GS-561-05

Organization: Directorate of Resource Management
[the installation]
Department of the Army
[city] Virginia

Decision: Budget Assistant (Office Automation)
GS-561-05
(Appeal Denied)

OPM decision number: C- 0561-05-01

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

Date:4/2/97

rdfile # 0561057A.AT

Background

On October 10, 1996, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Budget Assistant (Office Automation), GS-561-05, Directorate of Resource Management, Fort Pickett, Department of the Army, Blackstone, Virginia. The appellant is requesting that her position be reclassified as Budget Analyst, GS-560-07.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

Sources of Information

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

1. The appellant's letter dated October 8, 1996, appealing the classification of her position.
2. The agency's letter dated February 26, 1997, providing position and organizational information.
3. A telephone interview with the appellant on March 14, 1997.
4. A telephone interview with Mr. John Rand, the servicing classifier, on March 7, 1997.
5. Telephone interviews with [the appellant's immediate supervisor], the supervisor on March 10, 1997, and March 28, 1997.

Position Information

The appellant is assigned to Position Number 31946, which was classified on September 23, 1996. The appellant, supervisor, and agency have certified to the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant assists the Senior Budget Analyst in the formulation and execution of the budget for the command. The appellant reviews budget estimates to assure amounts requested are within established ceilings; cross checks the accuracy of data in related budget forms, documents, schedules and reports; and corrects inconsistent totals, subtotals and individual entries. She extracts and gathers budget data and information from a variety of documents, schedules, files, and reports. She consolidates budget estimates and organizes budget data by appropriation, account, object class and line item code for nine different operations and maintenance accounts. The appellant adjusts

figures in budget accounts to reflect changes in amount of funding and monitors the rate and amount of obligations and expenditures. She brings significant trends or deviations to the attention of appropriate staff members to preclude over-obligation of funds. She researches files, gathers information and obtains data from personnel and assembles data as required in support of budgets. She compiles data and prepares recurring and special summary reports, reviews printouts of financial data to assure validity of resource obligation for posting to commitment ledgers and prepares the manpower Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) Report.

She maintains supply/equipment files, a roster of military augmentees and civilians performing temporary duty, and a reimbursement control register; updates the list of installation reimbursable account processing codes; and establishes new codes as required. She uses a computer terminal to input and extract budget data and manpower information, to prepare reports, and to type letters and other correspondence.

The appellant receives direction from the senior budget analyst. The senior budget analyst provides guidance and instruction regarding work methods and procedures and is available for assistance. The appellant exercises initiative and judgment in planning and executing work assignments. Problems not covered by the instruction are referred to the senior budget analyst. Work is reviewed by the supervisor for conformance with instructions and accepted budgetary requirements.

Standards Referenced

Budget Analysis Series, GS-560, July 1981.
Budget Clerical and Assistant Series, GS-561, March 1983.
Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, November 1990.

Series and Title Determination

The agency placed the position in the Budget Clerical and Assistant Series, GS-561. The appellant believes her position should be classified in the Budget Analysis Series, GS-560.

The Budget Analysis Series, GS-560, includes all positions the paramount duties of which are to perform, advise on, or supervise work in any of the phases or systems of budget administration in use in the Federal service, when such work also primarily requires knowledge and skill in the application of related laws, regulations, policies, precedents, methods, and techniques of budgeting. Positions in this series are concerned with the performance of functions such as: formulation of budget and cost estimates to support plans, programs, and activities; presentation and defense of budget estimates before fund reviewing and granting authorities; review and evaluation of budget requests; administration and review of requests for apportionments and allotments; review, control, and reporting of obligations and expenditures; and development, determination, and

interpretation of budgetary policies and practices. Work in this series also includes analyzing and offering recommendations concerning the costs and benefits of alternative methods of financing agency program and administrative operations; implementing legal and regulatory controls, and/or expenditure of funds in approved budgets; and providing advice on effective and efficient means for the acquisition and use of funds to support agency programs and activities. The kinds of decisions made by incumbents of positions in this series concern the accuracy, validity, and technical treatment of budgetary data in forms, schedules and reports, or the legality and propriety of using funds for specific purposes.

The appellant's work does not meet the intent of the GS-560 series. The appellant is primarily concerned with the maintenance of financial and budgetary records and the identification of the status of funding. She is not concerned with the technical treatment of budgetary data, the legality of using funds for specific purposes, or the performance of other analytical and interpretative work typical of the Budget Analysis Series. Rather, the appellant maintains records and data which support the budgeting function. The appellant's analytical activities are limited to comparing future funding estimates with historical data to identify variances, and in reconciling accounting transactions with budgetary records. She does not analyze budget estimates and transactions for such matters as effectiveness in the use of funds, or alternative means of funding operations.

Positions in the Budget Analysis Series require knowledge of the principles and practices of budgeting, and the proper budgetary treatment of specific funding actions. The appellant, on the other hand, is concerned with the practical application of budgetary processes and procedures to record and control the expenditures of funds, and to support the Senior Budget Analyst. The appellant's position does not require a knowledge of budgetary principles and concepts, or of the laws, regulations, policies, and precedents which are the framework of the Federal budget process, but requires knowledge of the agency's budget procedures and processes. Consequently, the position is properly excluded from the GS-560 series.

The Budget Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-561, includes all positions the principal duties of which are to perform clerical and technical work in support of budget analysis and administration when such work requires primarily knowledge of the procedures which facilitate budgeting as conducted in the Federal Service. Work of this series requires practical understanding and skill in the application of administrative rules, regulations, and procedures as associated with recording, reporting, processing, and keeping track of budgetary transactions, e.g., the credit, receipt, transfer, allotment, withdrawal, obligation, or outlay of funds.

The appellant's position requires procedural and technical knowledge necessary to perform budgeting support tasks, and most closely compares to the Budget Clerical and Assistance Series, both in terms of the knowledge and skill required, and in terms of the

actual duties performed. Since the position is graded above the GS-4 level, as discussed below, the proper title for the position is Budget Assistant, following the mandatory titling practices specified in the GS-561 standard.

The work also requires a qualified typist and the use of office automation software and equipment to accomplish budget support functions. The Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide is used in combination with other standards or guides to evaluate positions classified in other series when office automation duties, which include word processing, are assigned to those positions. In accordance with the titling practices outlined on page 2 of the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, the parenthetical title, Office Automation, is added to the title of position.

The position is properly titled and coded as Budget Assistant (Office Automation), GS-561.

Grade Determination

Budget Clerical and Assistant Series, GS-561

The GS-561 standard is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to nonsupervisory General Schedule positions.

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

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

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required By The Position:

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work, such as the steps, procedures, practices, rules,

policies, theories, principles, and concepts; and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge.

At Level 1-3, the work requires detailed knowledge of procedures and regulations for the allotment and distribution of funds, and code structures of accounts of assigned activities (e.g., supply, personnel, travel, transportation, utilities, and procurement). Knowledge is used to compare requests for funds with allowable funding limits in selected budgetary documents, and to verify that funds are available for the stated purpose. Knowledge of different object classes and line items is applied in determining where to locate funding information and in adjusting entries to reflect current status of funds in different accounts involving many different object classes and line items within the same appropriation or revolving fund.

Level 1-3 is met. The appellant maintains budget accounts for nine organizations. The accounts are for operations and maintenance programs (e.g., services and supplies, transportation, procurement, food service, troop support, accounts). The appellant uses knowledge of the budget procedures and processes to review, extract and gather data and information for budget estimates and to ensure proper format. She uses knowledge of the accounting classification codes structures, organizations and programs of the organizations to relate accounting transactions to budget accounts, to ensure obligations and expenditures are accurately reflected in accounts, and to extract data for a variety of recurring and special reports. She reports problems to the senior budget analyst who determines whether to reprogram funds or seek additional funding.

At Level 1-4, the employee has a practical knowledge of agency budgetary processes and procedures for transactions involving two or more appropriations with different guidelines and procedures or a comparable mix of appropriated fund and/or revolving fund accounts. Knowledge typically includes: regulations which apply to the processing of requests for allotments to cover substantive, mission-oriented programs; procedures for transferring funds between accounts and object classes among different appropriations; requirements for reporting on budget execution; and/or methods for calculating budgetary information from many different source documents (e.g., accounting records, vouchers, job orders, payroll records, cost estimates, utility bills, and appropriations documents) when this requires considering the applicability of the information and the characteristics (e.g., accuracy and reliability) of the sources. Knowledge at this level is also used to compile, consolidate, organize, and summarize information about the budget of the employing organization in annual budget estimates and a variety of one-time and recurring reports.

Level 1-4 is not met. The appellant uses established processes and procedures to maintain budget accounts. There is no evidence in the appeal record that shows the appellant performs research of budget data and information. She actually extracts budget data and information from a variety of documents, forms or reports to reflect the status of accounts. In formulating the budget, the appellant uses a standardized sheet which

separates accounts by line items, e.g., payroll, contracts, supplies, travel, awards, services and other categories) for each organization assigned. She gathers the information for all assigned organizations and submits it to the senior budget analyst. Together they compile the total budget for the facility. The actual budget formulation process is performed mid-year and annually. She estimates the next year's budget request by adding an inflation increase cost (approximately 2 percent) to current figures. During the interview, the appellant stated she does not obligate or transfer funds between accounts and object classes among different appropriations or process requests for allotments to cover programs. These functions are performed by another employee or the senior budget analyst. Although she compiles the budget estimates for assigned organizations, the sources of budget data are extracted from documents with actual figures and costs such as payroll records, supply requisitions purchase requests, Government Billings of Lading, and vouchers and other documents and are easily verified with the program office. Whether compiling the budgets for the assigned organizations or the entire budget, the appellant is not concerned with the accuracy or reliability of the source of information, such as positions requiring Level 1-4 knowledge. In maintaining budget accounts, the appellant uses established procedures to adjust accounts to reflect obligation and expenditures. In addition, she stated she normally receives paperwork notifying her of any fund obligation or expenditure. This lessens the number of problems of overages or shortages in account balances. If and when this situation occurs, the supervisor obtains headquarters' approval for additional funds and the appellant makes adjustments to accounts. Therefore, the work does not meet Level 1-4.

Level 1-3 is credited for this factor, for 350 points.

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls:

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

At Level 2-2, the supervisor makes continuing or individual assignments by indicating generally what is to be done, limitations, quality and quantity expected, deadlines, and priorities. The supervisor provides additional specific instructions for new or difficult assignments, such as those involving cross-checking totals, subtotals, and percentages among different documents, budgetary accounts, object classes, line items, types of products or services, or organizational subdivisions. The employee exercises initiative in completing recurring assignments within prescribed time limits. The employee selects the proper procedures from among a limited range of instructions. Situations for which instructions and procedures are not specific are referred to the supervisor. Completed assignments and methods used in processing budget transactions and in arriving at account totals, subtotals, and percentages are reviewed for accuracy and compliance with accepted guidelines and procedures for the work.

Level 2-2 is met. The appellant works under general supervision of the supervisor but receives technical direction, guidance and assistance from the senior budget analyst. The appellant independently plans and carries out assignments in accordance with established policies, procedures, processes and guidelines. She works with nine separate accounts, but the procedures used to maintain budget accounts and prepare budget estimates is the same. The techniques used to accomplish assignments are not normally reviewed. The appellant works with program offices to obtain missing or incomplete information in order to complete work or to ensure budget requests are in compliance with regulatory requirements. The senior budget analyst provides advice and assistance on problems or conditions of an unusual nature which do not follow precedence or established guidelines. The supervisor reviews budget reports for accuracy. He discusses trends identified from previous reports and resolves any discrepancies and inconsistencies found prior to finalization with the appellant or the senior budget analyst. This compares favorably with Level 2-2.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor or an employee of higher grade provides general guidance on the techniques and procedures for processing unusual or one-of-a-kind transactions which are without precedent, and which are not clearly covered by existing guidelines and instructions for the work. The employee independently plans and carries out the most difficult procedural and technical processing of budgetary transactions covered in available guidelines. The employee makes adjustments to the most complicated appropriated and/or revolving fund (industrially funded) accounts covered by guidelines without reference to the supervisor. At this level employees may suggest alternative processes and procedures for accomplishing budgetary transactions. Completed work is spot checked by the supervisor or an employee of a higher grade for net availability of funds and for overall conformance to budgetary policies, requirements, and procedures. Methods used by the employee in arriving at final balances are rarely reviewed.

Level 2-3 is not met. While the appellant functions independently on recurring assignments, she does not deal with complex accounts or resolve problems encountered in such matters as those represented at Level 2-3. For example, the appellant stated she compiles budget data for 9 accounts using the same basic processing procedures for budgetary transactions per established guidelines. She assists the senior budget analyst in consolidating budget data for the total command budget estimates. She also stated she is not involved in obligating or requesting funds for these accounts. This is handled by a higher grade employee or senior budget analyst. Furthermore, the immediate and permanent supervisor, stated the appellant is not dealing with the more complex accounts found in the Directorate of Public Works and Directorate of Logistics where there are several different types of engineering appropriations such as construction, superfund, or specialized stock accounts that require different or unusual processing methods and techniques for accomplishing budget transactions. These accounts are handled by other program/budget analyst in the directorates. Since the appellant does not regularly handle

complex accounts requiring difficult procedural and technical processing, she does not have the degree of responsibility intended by Level 2-3.

This factor is credited at Level 2-2, for 125 points.

Factor 3 - Guidelines:

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

At Level 3-2, guidelines include established operating procedures, budgetary forms and formats, manuals for the preparation of budgetary correspondence and reports, and related procedural guidelines, with specific guides available for use by the employee which cover methods of entering, recording, checking, verifying, and consolidating budgetary data in forms, reports, records, and schedules used by the employing office. Due to the number of similar guidelines available, the employee is required to use judgment in locating and selecting for use those methods and procedures to apply to various transactions, such as transfers of funds between budgetary accounts, object classes, and line items; and/or suballotments within the same overall allotment. Work of this level may involve making changes in format when entering or consolidating data representing obligations and expenditures; or adjusting figures in related forms and schedules to obtain internal agreement and consistency with overall totals and subtotals. At this level, the employee may also determine which of several alternative methods to use in computing obligations and/or expenditures (e.g., for salaries, expenses, and employee travel.) The employee refers to the supervisor or higher graded co-worker those situations to which existing guidelines cannot be applied, or which involve deviations in the amount of funds available for use within an account (e.g., a questionable purpose).

Level 3-2 is met. Similarly to this level, the appellant uses a variety of locally established procedural and Defense Finance and Accounting manual guidelines to accomplish budget transactions. Some accounts are further supplemented with procedural guidelines requiring the appellant to use judgment in the selection of the appropriate guide to process budget transactions. She updates local directives based on changes made in agency or department guidelines to indicate changes in services offered, dropped or gained. Budget estimates and recurring reports follow standard format where the appellant is required to determine the methods to compute, consolidate, adjust budget data and prepare special and one-of-a kind budget reports.

At Level 3-3, a wide variety of general procedural guidelines for the work are available, but guidelines may not specifically cover all aspects (e.g., documents, forms, adjustments) of the assignment. Guides characteristically include definitions of account codes, procedures for obtaining, transferring, and distributing funds, program and financial records, job order logs, OMB and Treasury Department circulars, and agency and organizational reporting forms and procedures. The employee applies a thorough understanding of procedures for

the formulation and/or execution of a budget when interpreting and applying guides. In addition, work of this level requires that the employee independently adapt guidelines as necessary to cover new and unusual work situations. This may involve adapting or deviating from procedural instructions to complete assignments with short deadlines; to react to major shifts in program funding; and/or to process transactions for which no clear procedures have been established; or to process actions involving conflicting guidelines.

Level 3-3 is not met. The primary budget work involves the procedural processing of budgetary transactions which are governed by established guidelines. Any technical problems or situations not covered by guidelines are explained to the appellant in detail to ensure the accuracy of budget account records and balances. Although the preparation of special budget reports requires some judgment and initiative and there are no clear precedents for format, presentation and/or briefing, there is no other evidence in the appeal record that shows the appellant deals with new or unusual situations requiring adaptation or deviation from procedural guidelines. Additionally, special reports are prepared as requested. In this respect, the appellant's work situation falls short of meeting the full intent of Level 3-3.

This factor is credited at Level 3-2, for 125 points.

Factor 4 - Complexity:

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

At Level 4-3, the highest level in the standard, assignments involve working with different and unrelated appropriated and or revolving fund accounts, each of which is subject to different rules, regulations, and procedures. Generally, the assignments include responsibility for a number of accounts, object classes, and line items of a diverse and different nature (e.g., supplies, services, revenue, equipment, contracts, grants, utilities, etc.). Where the work involves preparation of reports, it is often necessary to gather and consolidate information from a wide variety of management and budget documents (e.g., accounting records, payroll records, vouchers, bills, job order files and workload reports) to prepare a completed report. The decision concerning the type of information needed or the best source for the information depends upon such variables as the accounts, types of transactions, amounts of funds involved, purposes for which funds are used, and the rules for processing transactions, or the kind of report being prepared. A considerable volume of data may have to be interpreted and reorganized to arrive at the desired end product.

The work requires the employee to identify and consider the financial relationships among the various accounts serviced to locate those factors (e.g., procedures or other

requirements) which affect the amount, availability, and use of funds. At this level the employee extracts and arranges budgetary data from a wide variety of forms and records based upon a general knowledge of the purpose or end product for which data is to be used.

Level 4-3 is met. The appellant works with nine different accounts, subject to specific requirements including different account numbers, object classes and line items. She must be familiar with the missions and functions of the activities, as well as the various forms, documents, or papers that contain budget obligations and expenditures (e.g., vouchers, requisitions, military and civilian purchase requests, payroll records, government billing of lading, reports, reimbursement agreements, travel records, contracts, and awards); must recognize and extract budget information from a variety of documents; and must ensure accounts accurately reflect obligations and expenditures. When preparing special reports, the appellant must review a variety of historical budget data, information and reports; select specific data; and determine the appropriate format. Dependent upon the nature of the information requested the appellant may be able to print out one or two line items or may have to select, compute or consolidate a variety of line items, install tables, columns and/or graphs to present the information.

The highest level described in the standard is Level 4-3. Therefore, the Primary Standard in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards* must be used for comparative purposes. At Level 4-4, the work typically includes varied duties that require many different and unrelated processes and methods, such as those relating to well established aspects of an administrative or professional field. Decisions regarding what needs to be done include the assessment of unusual circumstances, variations in approach, and incomplete or conflicting data. The work requires making many decisions concerning such things as interpretation of considerable data, planning of the work, or refinement of the methods and techniques to be used.

Level 4-4 is not met. The appellant's work does not require the application of many different and unrelated processes and methods or the assessment of unusual circumstances and incomplete or conflicting data, as described at Level 4-4. The appellant's duties require the application of a few different and unrelated processes and procedures and the analysis of situations in order to select the appropriate method of processing the budget transactions. Much of the appellant's work involves the maintenance of budget accounts using procedures to verify and record information in the accounts. She uses different procedures to compile budget estimates and to report on the status of funds.

Level 4-3, for 150 points, is credited for this factor.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect:

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

At Level 5-2, employees maintain detailed records of budgetary transactions (e.g., allotments, suballotments, obligations, expenditures, reimbursements, and transfers of funds) in the accounts of assigned activities. These records may take the form of ledgers, worksheets, or files which display the current status (i.e., availability and amount) of funds in each account by object class and line item. Work typically involves adjusting account balances to reflect the effects of budgetary transactions. Some positions at this level are responsible for the collection and organization of budgetary data for use in preparing recurring budget reports, or in consolidating budget estimates. Maintenance of records and worksheets affects the accuracy and reliability of budget estimates, allotments of funds for designated purposes, reports on budget execution, and/or evaluation of budgetary accomplishments and practices of others. Work also affects the timely availability of funds for line or administrative programs. Work may affect the accuracy of budgetary information furnished to program managers, or to fund granting and reviewing officials.

Level 5-2 is met. The appellant is responsible for extracting, verifying, compiling, maintaining and computing a variety of budget data and information for nine accounts; reporting on the status of funds; and assisting the senior budget analyst in the formulation and execution of the budget. The work affects the command's ability to perform and accomplish the missions of assigned organizations.

At Level 5-3, positions with this level of scope and effect are typically found in budget or program offices with responsibility for the overall review, coordination, and consolidation of budgetary activities of subordinate budget or program offices. The purpose of work is to consolidate, organize, and maintain an extensive system of budgetary information relating to accounts, appropriations, revolving funds, and reporting requirements. Work may also involve resolving procedural problems in the processing of budgetary transactions relating to the appropriation, obligation, reimbursement, or transfer of funds which could not be resolved by clerical personnel at lower levels within the organization. In some positions, the purpose of work is to compile, consolidate, organize, and coordinate the preparation and submission of the annual budget request for an organization and its subcomponents. Work affects the quality, quantity, and accuracy of a significant portion of the budgetary data in the organization's records, and may also affect the timely distribution of allotments of funds to subordinate budget and program offices, or the submission of budget estimates covering annual operating expenses of an organization in field or headquarters locations.

Level 5-3 is not met. The work does not involve an extensive system of budgetary information as described or the resolution of problems which other personnel could not resolve. The budget information system maintained by the appellant is best characterized as small to moderate in size, consisting of nine accounts made up different line items and object classes that cover a single appropriation. There are no lower level budgetary personnel in the activity. Neither is the appellant responsible for the compilation and submission of the annual budget; such responsibility rests with the senior budget analyst. Consequently, Level 5-3 is not met.

Level 5-2, for 75 points, is credited for this factor.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts:

This factor measures face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain.

At Level 6-2, the highest level described in the standard, contacts are with persons in the same Federal agency, but outside the immediate employing organization or office. People contacted are generally engaged in different functions, missions, and kinds of work (e.g., accounting, data processing, budget, program, and/or administrative personnel). Those contacted may be at different echelons within the agency (i.e., field, district, or regional offices; or headquarters levels). This level also includes routine contacts with persons engaged in budgetary work in other Federal agencies.

Level 6-2 is met. The appellant's personal contacts are with persons in the directorate, and other units, activities or offices located throughout the installation. Contacts include various elements of the parent installation, MACOMs, ARCOMs, National Guard elements of various states, and other DOD agencies, as well as numerous civilian agencies utilizing the post.

At Level 6-3, as described in the Primary Standard, personal contacts are with individuals or groups from outside the employing agency (i.e., outside of DOD) in a moderately unstructured setting. For example, the contacts are not established on a routine basis; the purpose and extent of each contact is different; and the role and authority of each party is identified and developed during the course of the contact.

The appellant's contacts are established on a routine basis and are all within the same agency. Therefore, Level 6-3 is not met.

Level 6-2, for 25 points, is credited for this factor.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts:

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

At Level 7-2, the highest level described in the standard, the purpose of contacts is to coordinate and provide advice or instructions on procedures for the preparation, maintenance, and submission of budgetary forms, schedules, and reports (e.g., budget estimates, quarterly reports on budget execution, or budget requests). Contacts require persuading others to follow recommended methods, practices, and procedures, and to meet established deadlines.

Level 7-2 is met. The appellant's contacts are for the purpose of coordinating and providing advice, instructions or procedures for the preparation, maintenance, and submission of budgetary forms, schedules and reports (e.g., budget estimates, quarterly reports, budget execution, or budget requests).

At Level 7-3, as described in the Primary Standard, the purpose of contacts is to influence, motivate, interrogate, or control persons or groups. The persons contacted may be fearful, skeptical, uncooperative, or dangerous. Therefore, the employee must be skillful in approaching the individual or group to obtain the desired effect, such as gaining compliance with established policies and regulations by persuasion or negotiation, or gaining information by establishing rapport with a suspicious informant.

Level 7-3 is not met. There is no evidence in the appeal record that the appellant has contacts to influence, motivate, interrogate, or control. Rather, the appellant's contacts are to obtain or provide information, and to resolve problems in situations where all parties are working toward a mutually accepted goal. While some of the contacts may involve managers who question the information or advice provided by the appellant, those managers are not typically fearful, skeptical, uncooperative, or dangerous. The appellant does not exercise the degree of interpersonal skill indicated at Level 7-3 in the vast majority of her personal contacts, since those contacts often involve factual or other readily verifiable information, or problems which can be resolved by providing additional information or explanation.

Level 7-2, for 50 points, is credited for this factor.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands:

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

The appellant performs work which is sedentary, performed for the most part while seated comfortably at a desk or table. A moderate amount of standing and walking is required when attending meetings and conferences. This is similar to Level 8-1, where the work is primarily of a sedentary nature, although the employee may occasionally carry light items such as books, files, and reports from one office to another. Typically, the work is performed while comfortably seated at a desk or table.

This is the only level described in the GS-561 standard. The appellant's work is not comparable to the Primary Standard description of Level 8-2, where the work requires some physical exertion, such as long periods of standing; walking over rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces; recurring bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, or similar activities; or recurring lifting of moderately heavy items, such as typewriters and record boxes.

Level 8-1, for 5 points, is credited for this factor.

Factor 9 - Work Environment:

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

The appellant's work is in an office setting. Her work environment is essentially as described at Level 9-1, where the work is normally performed in an office setting with no unusual risks or discomforts. The work area is properly heated, lighted, and ventilated.

Level 9-1 is the only level described in the GS-561 standard. The appellant's position is not comparable to the Primary Standard description of Level 9-2, where the work involves moderate risks or discomforts that require special safety precautions, such as working around moving parts, carts, or machines; or exposure to contagious diseases or irritant chemicals.

Level 9-1, for 5 points, is credited for this factor.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-3	350
2. Supervisory Controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-2	75
6. Personal Contacts	6-2	25
7. Purpose of Contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	910

A total of 910 points falls within the range for a GS-5, 855 to 1100 points, using the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-561 standard.

Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide

The Office Automation duties are in support of the primary and grade controlling work of the position. A summary evaluation of office automation work is as follows:

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-3	350
2. Supervisory Controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-2	75
5. Scope and Effect	5-2	75
6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts	1A	30
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	790

A total of 790 points falls in the range for a GS-4, 655-850 points, using the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide.

Summary

Budget Assistant duties equate to GS-05 and Office Automation duties equate to GS-04. The highest level of work performed is represented in the appellant's budget support functions, at GS-05.

Decision

This position is properly classified as Budget Assistant (Office Automation), GS-561-05. This decision constitutes a classification certificate issued under the authority of section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This certificate is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the Government.