

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

CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION

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

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Position: **Museum Specialist (General)**
GS-1016-9

Organization: Regimental Museum
U.S. Army Military [organizational identifying information]
[large military post name and location]

Decision: **Museum Specialist (History)**
GS-1016-9
(Appeal Denied, Change in Title)

OPM Decision Number: C-1016-09-01

Kathy W. Day Date 6-17-97
Classification Appeals Officer

Rdrive# 1016097a.AT

Copy of decision sent to:

[appellant's name and address]

[name]

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Background

On March 6, 1997, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Museum Specialist (General), GS-1016-9, Regimental Museum, U.S. Army Military [organizational identifying information, large military installation name, and address]. The appellant is requesting that his position be reclassified to Museum Curator, GS-1015-11 or Museum Specialist, GS-1016-11.

This 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 February 26, 1997, appealing the classification of his position.
2. The agency's letter dated April 28, 1997, providing position and organizational information.
3. A telephone interview with [name], the servicing personnel management specialist, on May 6, 1997.
4. A telephone interview with the appellant on May 14, 1997.
5. A telephone interview with [name], the appellant's immediate supervisor, on May 15, 1997.

Position Information

The appellant is assigned to Position Number 12720. The appellant, supervisor and agency have certified to the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant also submitted a copy of a draft position description which he had furnished to the agency and which he believes better reflects his current duties and responsibilities. The servicing personnel specialist reviewed the draft position description, audited the appellant's position, and found the draft position description to be substantially the same as the current job description. Although the appellant's position description is 10 years old, we also found that it does reflect the major duties and responsibilities of his position, and there is no substantial difference between his current position description and the draft position description.

The appellant's primary duties and responsibilities in the museum involve the collection, conservation, and restoration of artifacts, and research of the history of the Military [organizational identifying information]. In this capacity, he acquires artifacts; catalogs and inventories artifacts; maintains a system for indexing and cross-referencing fields for the collection; and updates historical

property catalog cards, property jacket donor files, and reports. He performs research to identify historic properties and catalog artifacts, prepares signage for exhibits, and answers inquiries from visitors, professionals, and organizations. He prepares bibliographic data, brief historical summaries or extracts of significant documents, and historical studies.

The appellant conducts research of Military [organizational identifying information] Units through history which serves as a reference source for exhibits, for expansion of the collection, and for individuals engaged in historical research. He performs limited conservation/restoration of artifacts when necessary; maintains environmental controls to preserve the artifacts; and monitors the collection for conservation problems.

He assists in the development and preparation of military history collections, policies, the museum master plan, training plans, exhibit plans, the 5-year plan, disaster plans, and story line plans. He develops and maintains applicable regulations and files and assists in the preparation of the budget including forecasting requirements for temporary assignments, travel, exhibit materials, and contracts for construction and services, e.g., air conditioning system, security and fire systems, lighting, exhibits, supplies, etc. He composes tour information and conducts guided tours and orientations for individuals and groups including [organizational identifying information] trainees, students, military and civilian personnel and their families, as well as various civic and educational groups.

The appellant receives direction from the Museum Curator. The appellant independently plans and carries out assignments resolving problems as they occur within established methods, procedures, oral and written instructions, and museum practices and regulations. Unusual problems, controversial issues or questions of policy are referred to the supervisor. Recommendations for changes in policy, standard operating procedures, budget, exhibits, scripts, and the selection of objects to be used for presentations are discussed with the supervisor. Completed work is evaluated in terms of effectiveness of results, compliance and adherence to local policy, regulations and procedures.

Standards Referenced

Museum Specialist and Technician Series, GS-1016, December 1961.
Museum Curator Series, GS-1015, February 1962.

Series and Title Determination

The agency placed the position in the Museum Specialist and Technician Series, GS-1016. The appellant believes his position may be more appropriately covered in the Museum Curator Series, GS-1015.

The Museum Curator Series, GS-1015, includes all classes of positions the primary duties of which are to administer, supervise, or perform professional work related to research, collections, and exhibits in Federal museums, when such work is not classifiable in other professional, scientific, or

historical series. The GS-1015 standard is intended to cover only those positions which include professional responsibility for all four of the functions outlined below:

Research

Professional research work may be grouped into three general categories: (a) scholarly research (research that is characterized by the use of accepted scholarly methodology) which frequently results in the publication of “learned” papers; (b) technical research involving study and innovation necessary to the restoration and preservation of specimens, artifacts, or objects of a collection (ranging from objects that require very little care in some instances because the best preservation methods have been established to problems of halting deterioration and restoring and preserving valuable or rare objects) and resulting in publication of technical articles; and, (c) applied research (all of the investigation, collection and arrangement of information necessary to support the education and public service responsibilities of museums).

Collections

Professional duties and responsibilities related to museum collections include the planning necessary to establish, develop and/or expand a collection and the arrangement for its documentation and physical preservation. Duties may vary from one museum to another, but the responsibility of planning a “balanced” collection which is meaningful as a source of information for scholars and laymen and of providing machinery for its physical care is common. In some cases, efforts to add to a collection involve public relations duties, including contacts with persons or organizations that can contribute items to the collections or arrange for such donations, gifts and bequests. In other cases, these expansion responsibilities involve field work, i.e., the actual physical collection of artifacts or specimens from the field. When budgets include funds for the purchase of material for collections, the responsibilities of the curator include such duties as locating and appraising the material, negotiating purchase agreements and related activities. Management of a large and/or rare collection requires lending and borrowing material with other museums or collections, correspondence with other curators and collectors, and research and professional writing resulting from study of the collection itself. Preservation and storage of the collection involve knowledge of, research in, and planning of conservation techniques, as well as the planning, establishment and maintenance of cataloging records and procedures and of storage space and facilities.

Exhibits

A museum exhibit represents a considerable investment in time, effort and money and, once established, is viewed as a semi-permanent installation. Assignments for developing new exhibits or for making major changes in existing ones are relatively infrequent, of long duration, involving at least several months and often extending several years, and are inherent in professional museum jobs. Minor changes to keep exhibits as current and effective as possible and recommendations and planning for major changes are universal responsibilities. The work involves orderly *research*, the use of *collections*, and the application of effective educational methods. In addition to a thorough

knowledge of the subject matter the exhibit purports to explain, this activity requires artistic ability, language facility, a “flair for the dramatic” and other intangible qualities inherent in teaching situations.

Education

Professional duties and responsibilities related to the educational function of the museum may include writing, lecturing, and teaching assignments in addition to the planning, establishment and maintenance of exhibits. The more successful the museum is in terms of interesting the public, the greater are the demands for educational services, e.g., guide and docent activities; libraries of published materials, film strips and slides; the preparation, publication and distribution of popular articles and informative pamphlets; and programs for “traveling” exhibits.

The appellant’s work involves technical and specialized work with the management, preservation, and maintenance of the museum collection. He composes tour information and conducts guided tours and orientations; however, he is not responsible for the full range of educational services described, i.e., scholarly, applied or technical research or professional planning activities, and he does not have the level of professional responsibility for the exhibits and educational functions as described in the GS-1015 series. The supervisor has total control and responsibility for all professional museum functions.

Exclusion #5, on page 6 of the GS-1015 standard, states that museum positions in which the duties are technical and administrative in nature and positions where assignments are specialized in one or more (but not all) of the museum functions should be classified in the Museum Specialist and Technician Series, GS-1016. The appellant’s position is appropriately placed in the GS-1016 series.

The GS-1016 series includes all classes of positions the duties of which include technical and specialized work in connection with the operation of public museums or the management of museum collections. The appellant performs technical work in the collection, conservation, restoration and research of Military [organizational identifying information] history, artifacts, documents and other objects. In addition, the GS-1016 series includes parenthetical titles which cover a broad range of subject matter specializations found in museums and museum collections.

The agency designated “General” as the subject-matter specialization for this position. There are two conditions in which the “General” parenthetical title is used. The first includes activities where the required knowledge cuts across several subject-matter fields, and the second is where the work does not logically fit into any of the other specializations provided. Since the appellant’s work does not cut across several of the broad subject-matter specializations, the first condition is not met. The second option requires a review of the established subject-matter specializations authorized for use in the GS-1016 series. In addition to “General”, other subject-matter specializations listed cover the specialized areas of aeronautics, anthropology, art, geology, history, natural science, technology, and zoology.

The “History” subject-matter specialization includes work with collections of objects and memorabilia which relate to historical events and to the persons who figure prominently in them. Included in this subject-matter area are civil and political history, military and naval history, economic history, cultural history, history and science of numismatics and philately, etc. Since the appellant’s work involves the research, collection, exhibit, education, conservation and restoration of artifacts, clothing, ordinance, documents, notable persons and other items dealing with the history of the Military [organizational identifying information] Corps, the work logically fits in the “History” subject-matter specialization. Therefore, the second option is not met, and the “General” parenthetical title is not appropriate.

The position is properly coded and titled as Museum Specialist (History), GS-1016.

Grade Determination

The GS-1016 series uses three basic factors to determine grade level: (1) *Assignment*, which covers the variety and difficulty of the duties; (2) *Responsibility*, which covers the kind and degree of supervision and, where pertinent, indication of the extent of accountability and value of objects handled; and (3) *Requirements*, which assesses the required knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to accomplish the work.

Assignment

At GS-9, museum specialist positions are characterized by a strict specialization pattern. This specialization occurs in two ways: first, these positions are specialized within the subject area of the museum or collection where they are located (American History, Numismatics, Geology, Archeology, Medicine, etc.) and second, they specialize further in one of the basic fundamental areas found in museums (management of the collection, conservation of objects, educational responsibilities, etc.). At the GS-9 level, there are some positions which share the “assistant” characteristics which are typical of Museum Technician assignments. Such positions will be filled with trusted and experienced employees who carry out special research assistance duties for professional employees or who assist higher-level specialists or professional museum employees in the management of very large collections, in the operation of large museums, or in especially difficult research and experimentation in the development of new and improved methods and techniques of conservation. Most Museum Specialist positions, however, include independent assignments. At this level, for example, some incumbents undertake the entire management of a small and well-established collection, being responsible for the acquisition, storage, record, loans, packing, preservation and security; others are in charge of public education facilities of a moderate-sized museum, managing film and slide service, library, docent activities and related services; and still others are responsible for conservation programs involving fairly complex procedures, delicate techniques or extremely valuable objects, but requiring little innovation, experimentation or development of improved methods. Because the variation in subject specialization is as broad as the subject of museums, it is impossible to detail the possible variation in such assignments. Characteristic of this grade level, however, are these

conditions: responsibility for a single museum function; administration of an established and operating program; difficult technique and complex methods; and little requirement for technical research.

The GS-9 level is met. The appellant's position is comparable to the conditions characteristic of the GS-9 level. It involves administration of an established and operating program; it involves some difficult and complex methods; there is not much technical research required; and it does not involve responsibility for one of the main museum functions, but rather assists with each one, i.e., research, education, exhibits, and collections. The appellant assists the Museum Curator in the management of the museum. His work is similar to managing an entire small collection as described at GS-9. He actively monitors and prepares requirements for the budget including obtaining supplies, equipment and tools to restore, conserve or maintain artifacts, exhibits, or maintenance and repair services through purchase requests or negotiated contract services including sole source advertisement. He maintains records of donations, manages the exchange program, and is responsible for the acquisition, storage, preservation, conservation and restoration of artifacts and objects. He coordinates all lending activities and ensures the items which are lent to other museums, schools, and traveling displays are properly wrapped, stored, preserved, transported and returned. He writes some tour information and conducts guided tours. He assists the Museum Curator in the design and construction of displays, scripts, exhibits, and the selection of objects to be used in presentations and is the back-up to the Historian giving lectures to visitors as required. The appellant assists in the expansion of the collection by performing detailed research of facts. He contacts individuals who have personal knowledge of the subject-matter, other museums such as the [name] Museum and the [location and collection type] Museum, libraries, book stores and antique dealers who specialize in military collections to get information relative to identifying possible dates of events, weapons, clothing, and other items and for the purpose of establishing historical information on the Military [organizational identifying information] Corps.

At GS-11, Museum Specialists follow the general assignment pattern discussed at the GS-9 level. However, at this level, the position is clearly one of an independent worker highly skilled and expert in the subject of his specialization. Some incumbents of these positions undertake full management responsibility for very large and complex collections; others may develop and operate a very large educational program involving traveling exhibits, formal courses, lecturing services, etc., in a major museum; still others may be in charge of conservation programs where methods and techniques are frequently unknown and require research and development, or they may do other work of similar scope and difficulty. Characteristic of this grade level are the following conditions: responsibility for a single museum function; development or expansion of a museum operating program; extremely difficult technique and few established methods; and regular requirement for technical research.

The GS-11 level is not met. The appellant's assignments do not involve the degree of independence or scope of responsibilities described at the GS-11 level, nor do they have the general characteristics typical of this level. His assignments are limited by the nature and size of the collection and are performed in support of the Museum Curator. He is not concerned with development or expansion of a museum operating program but rather the administration of an established program and the expansion of a specific collection. The preservation, restoration and research activities performed

by the appellant, while time-consuming, are limited and are generally performed using established procedures, techniques and methods. For example, clothing is restored using a special tape to prevent additional tears, artifacts are wrapped to preserve the conditions and prevent overexposure to ultraviolet rays, and temperature and humidity are adjusted to known standards to conserve exhibits. The appellant's research includes preparing brief bibliographic data, summarizing extracts and studies, conducting personal interviews, and relating objects to records, but it does not regularly involve technical research (the kind of difficult and imaginative research required for collections where preservation methods are not established and there is a need to halt deterioration and preserve rare and valuable objects). Educational, exchange program, and budget activities are reviewed and approved by the supervisor. Although he performs his daily work independently, the appellant does not have full program responsibility. He discusses the content and design of exhibits, presentations, and scripts with the supervisor.

This factor is evaluated at GS-9.

Responsibility

At GS-9, the museum specialist works under general supervision. Assignments are of a continuing nature and effectiveness is measured by results. The museum specialist may carry fairly heavy responsibility for valuable and for rare collection material, but accountability is somewhat restricted by established procedures and regulations. The supervisor is readily available for advice and guidance.

The GS-9 level is met. The appellant independently plans and carries out his technical responsibilities within established guidelines, but the supervisor has control and final responsibility over all administrative and technical operations within the museum. The appellant carries out his assignments in accordance with museum policy, regulation, and standards and consults with the supervisor on unusual, controversial or policy issues.

At GS-11, responsibility is similar to that indicated at GS-9. The difference in responsibility between the two grade levels lies in the greater scope of the work typical at the GS-11 level.

The GS-11 level is not met. The appellant's scope of work is not equivalent to the work described at GS-11, as explained above under Assignment. This level of responsibility is delegated to the supervisor. Without performing duties comparable to the GS-11 level, the appellant cannot be credited with an equivalent level of responsibility.

This factor is evaluated at GS-9.

Requirements

At GS-9, the museum specialist must possess extensive knowledge related to the specialization involved. Such knowledge (depending on the specialization) may include techniques of chemistry or

physics, biology, cultural history, archeology or ethnology, geology, art or any other field of learning. Also required may be writing, speaking or design abilities and a thorough mastery of related museum operating procedures.

The GS-9 level is met. The appellant uses extensive knowledge of the history of the Army, the military in general, American History and other related subjects to establish historical information on the Military [organizational identifying information] Corps. He has a knowledge of collection techniques and procedures including identifying and cataloging artifacts, as well as a knowledge of conservation and preservation methods to prevent damage to artifacts. He must have good speaking abilities to relay historical information during tours and to respond to numerous inquiries. He must have good written communication skills to prepare bibliographies, scripts, and to document historical information. He must have some artistic and creative ability to construct exhibits depicting scenes during specific periods of history, or to restore components to their original state. In addition to the requirements indicated at the GS-9 level, GS-11 museum specialists must possess more intensive knowledge of the specialization involved, experience and ability with research methods, or demonstrated ability in writing, speaking or design work.

The GS-11 level is not fully met. The appellant's work does require demonstrated ability in writing, speaking and design work for exhibits. However, there is an inherent limit to the knowledge of military history, research methods, etc., that he can be expected to perform based on the level of the responsibilities assigned to his position.

This factor is evaluated at GS-9.

Summary

Since all three factors are evaluated at GS-9, the position is properly graded at the GS-9 level.

Decision

This position is properly classified as Museum Specialist (History), GS-1016-9. 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.