

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



Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242

**Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code**

Appellant: [the appellant]

Agency classification: Budget Analyst
GS-560-09

Organization: Resource Management Office
Medical Support Squadron
[group number] Medical Group
[group number] Fighter Wing
Air Combat Command
Department of the Air Force
[installation]

OPM decision: Budget Analyst
GS-560-09

OPM decision number: C- 0560-09-04

/s/
Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

3/31/98
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:

[the appellant]

Civilian Personnel Officer
[the appellant's
servicing personnel
office]

Director of Civilian Personnel
HQ USAF/DPCC
1040 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1040

Chief, Civilian Policy Division
Directorate of Civilian Personnel
Headquarters, USAF
Washington, DC 20330-9106

Director of Personnel
11 MSS/DPC
1460 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1460

AFPC/DPC
550 C Street West
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4759

Chief, Classification Branch
Field Advisory Services Division
Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

Introduction

On November 20, 1997, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellant]. Her position is currently classified as a Budget Analyst, GS-560-09. The appellant believes her position is erroneously classified, although she does not provide what she considers as the correct classification of her position. The appealed position is assigned to the Resource Management Office, Medical Support Squadron, [the group] Medical Group, [the group] Fighter Wing, Air Combat Command (ACC), Department of the Air Force, at [the installation]. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

General Issues

The appellant's position was audited by a classification specialist from the local Civilian Personnel Office in May of 1997. The official position description (PD) for the appellant's position is a modified Air Force Standard Core Personnel Document, which was developed and signed in October 1997 after the appellant's supervisor provided input on the PD's content. The appellant believes that the classification of her position was based on a standardized core document for budget analysts. She objects to this since she believes that her position is different from other standard budget analyst positions.

In conducting classification appeals, we classify positions solely by comparing the current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines. Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's current duties to other budget analysts at [the installation]. The appellant and her supervisor have certified that the appellant's PD is an accurate and complete statement of the position's duties and responsibilities. We find that the PD is adequate for classification purposes.

Position information

The appellant's position serves as the Resource Advisor for the [the group] Medical Group, which consists of four squadrons, the Aerospace Medical Squadron, Medical Operations Squadron, Medical Support Squadron, and Dental Squadron. The appellant's position is in the Resource Management Office of the Medical Support Squadron. The organization consists of her position, a Resource Management Officer (a military slot currently filled by a Captain), a non-commissioned officer in charge, and three different budget/financial assistant positions (one is a military slot). The appellant's immediate supervisor is the Resource Management Officer.

The appellant is responsible for the day-to-day control and management involving the formulation, execution, and analysis of the Group's budget and funding requirements. The budget runs the medical treatment facility at Davis-Monthan AFB. The appellant has responsibility for annually appropriated funds for the Group, which includes Operation and Maintenance, Military Pay, and Civilian Payroll. The Group also receives Investment funding, which is requested and received as

needed, rather than as an annual appropriation. The funds support the programs and activities of the Medical Group and a few various programs of the Wing, such as the Demand Drug Reduction Program, Substance Abuse Program, and 12th Air Force Humanitarian Missions. The appellant advises the Resource Management Officer, Squadron Commanders, Executive Staff members, and the Group Commander on budgetary matters affecting the Group. The Medical Group's funding is separate from the Wing, due to its uniqueness. The guidance on medical budget issues is provided by Headquarters ACC or the Department of Defense (DOD) Regional Lead Agent Office, rather than by the Wing's base budget office. The Group's budget reports are submitted directly to ACC, which monitors the budget status.

The appellant spends a large portion of her time on the day-to-day execution of the enrollment based capitation (EBC) program. This is a new program recently implemented at [the installation] AFB at the beginning of fiscal year 1998. The EBC program is fairly new within DOD, and currently the expertise for this program is mostly with staff of the DOD Regional Lead Agent Offices. The EBC program changes the funding allocation process for Defense medical treatment facilities to become more in line with civilian counterpart facilities. The way the program works at the Group's clinic is that the medical facility is capitated for the individuals who have enrolled in the TRICARE Prime program at the clinic. The facility also receives funding for traditional readiness and line support missions and for the Medicare-eligible population. The facility sells its services to non-Prime enrollees and offers "space available" services to patients who are not enrolled at the facility. This is a source of revenue. The facility purchases from a TRICARE contractor health care services that it is unable to provide for its enrollees. The contractor's bid is based on the level of health care needed by the beneficiary population that cannot be performed at the Group's clinic. The element of bid price adjustment (BPA) is built into the contract. The contract's bid price is adjusted for changes in resource intensity by either the contractor or the facility. This new structure involves a unique financial arrangement between the Group's medical facility and the contractor.

The appellant is also involved with various other duties. She performs budget formulation work involving the review and preparation of budget estimates and financial plans. She oversees and performs budget execution and administration work involving the monitoring of obligations incurred and the actual expenditure of funds. She conducts analyses, reviews, and special studies of budget or related information. The appellant also supervises a military support staff member (i.e., A1C).

Series and title determination

The GS-560 Budget Analysis Series covers positions that 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. The appellant's position fits within the GS-560 series and is correctly titled Budget Analyst.

Standard and guide determination

The position is graded using the GS-560 standard. The appellant has supervisory responsibilities over a military support staff member. Her supervisory duties and responsibilities regarding this position are not evaluated against the General Schedule Supervisory Guide, since this work does not meet the requirements for coverage under the guide. The specific reasons are that the supervisory duties do not occupy at least 25 percent of the appellant's overall time or meet the intent of the requirement concerning the supervisory authority exercised.

Grade determination

The standard for the GS-560 series uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES), which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description explains the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

The appellant must have a thorough knowledge of the regulations, policies, methods, and procedures surrounding the Medical Group's budget. This includes a knowledge of commonly used budgetary methods, practices, procedures, and statistical formulas, in addition to a knowledge of the medical unique guidance that is specific to medical programs and funding. She must have a knowledge of the regulations and guidelines governing the use of the appropriated funds received by the Group and of the missions, functions, and programs of the four squadrons within the Medical Group. The appellant is required to have a thorough knowledge of the EBC concept and program, which includes the element of BPA, as well as the financial relationship between the medical treatment facility and the contractor. She uses this knowledge in developing strategies and making recommendations to the facility's Executive Staff on how to meet revenue shortfalls; determining the impact of care changes or mission requirements (e.g., deployments) on the program and the BPA process; and ensuring that funding decisions do not negatively impact the program or the BPA.

The appellant uses her knowledge to carry out the formulation and execution phases of the budget process, by assisting in the preparation of the Group's business plan, with particular responsibility for the Capitation Based Resource Allocation portion of the Strategic Resourcing Portfolio; preparing the Group's budget using three different methods, including elements of expense, capitation based, and EBC; carrying out transfers of funds; and monitoring and analyzing the budget through the use of historical data, trend analysis, and depreciation accounting. She uses the Medical cost accounting system to perform analyses such as make versus buy, manhours versus productivity, and cost per visit/stay/procedure. She uses her knowledge in preparing detailed monthly and other reports which are submitted to ACC.

This degree of knowledge equates to level 1-6, in that employees at this level are required to have a good knowledge of budgetary methods, practices, procedures, regulations, precedents, policies, and other guides of the component, installation, or office. This level of knowledge is used to perform continuing assignments for appropriated fund and commercially funded activities. The work at this level requires a good practical knowledge of the missions, functions, goals, objectives, work processes, and sources of funding of assigned budget activities. Employees at this level apply analytical skill in interpreting information and applying it to the budget. Knowledge of regulations and guidelines governing the use of funds in single purpose appropriated or revolving fund accounts is used in recommending transfers of funds within accounts under the same appropriation. Knowledge is used to enter and adjust budgetary data in a wide variety of forms, schedules, and reports to reflect changes in the amount and type of funds for programs handled. Where the assignment involves specialization in a single phase of budgeting, the employee typically applies a more intensive knowledge of the methods and practices of the phase (e.g., cost-benefit analysis, calculation of trends in rates of obligation and expenditure of funds). This level of knowledge is usually required of positions in organizations below which there are no subordinate budget offices.

The level of knowledge required of the appellant's position does not fully meet level 1-7. Her position does not require a detailed, intensive knowledge of a wide range of sources and types of funding (e.g., direct multi-year appropriations, allotments from many different appropriations, transfers of funds from other agencies, reimbursements for services, revenue from working capital funds, and trust fund accounts). Her position does not require an intensive knowledge of budgetary and financial relationships between the facility's budget and the budgets and programs of other agency components and organizations. Although she must be knowledgeable about the financial relationship between the facility and the contractor, her concern is focused on how the facility's budget is affected by that relationship. The appellant's position does not require knowledge and skill in the application of a wide range of methods and techniques for analyzing and evaluating the continuing changes in program plans and funding (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, planning-programming-budgeting, program evaluation review technique, decision theory, probability theory, and linear programming). Although there are occasional proposed changes to the health care services provided by the medical treatment facility that must be analyzed by the appellant, these are not continuing changes to program plans that require the level of knowledge and skill for analysis and evaluation as envisioned at level 1-7. She applies analytical skills in evaluating the effects of proposed changes to health care services on the EBC program. For example, she must consider numerous factors when analyzing the cost effectiveness of such decisions as whether or not to hire more nurses or technicians for a triage system or whether or not to close down the facility's ambulance service and have that service provided by a contractor. While being a complex procedure, this alone does not meet the full intent of level 1-7.

The appellant's knowledge meets level 1-6 but not level 1-7. As discussed earlier, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Therefore, the appellant's positions is evaluated at level 1-6.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

The appellant performs her work as Resource Advisor for the Medical Group with great independence. She plans and carries out the work under the broad supervision of the Resource Management Officer and within the overall budget and program priorities, objectives, and deadlines that are established for the Group. She is given wide latitude in using her judgment to make recommendations and resolve problems. She contacts specialists at Headquarters ACC or the DOD Regional Lead Agent Office for assistance with new programs or unique issues, such as with the EBC program. She directly briefs the Group Commander, the Executive Staff, and Squadron Commanders on budgetary issues. The appellant's work is reviewed for meeting suspense dates and milestones in the budget cycle and for overall conformance to budget policy and Group requirements.

The supervisory controls over the appellant's position are equivalent to level 2-3, where employees are responsible for independently planning and carrying out information gathering and analysis activities which involve currently used methods and practices of budgeting. Employees use judgment in resolving commonly encountered work problems, while the supervisor provides guidance in interpreting and applying new or revised budget policies and regulations. Work products are reviewed by the supervisor at key stages of development and upon completion for soundness of technical treatment and conformance to budget policy and requirements.

The supervisory controls do not fully meet level 2-4, where employees are assigned long-term, continuing responsibility for independently performing budgetary functions in the budget process for areas of the budget which support the substantive programs of the agency or component. Substantive programs are defined in the standard as those which constitute an essential part of the agency's (i.e., Air Force) assigned mission and purpose, such as the development of aircraft or weapons systems for the national defense, regulation of trade, administration of social welfare, or preservation of natural resources. Although the appellant has fairly independent responsibility over the Medical Group's budget and is involved with the management of a portion of the 12th Air Force Humanitarian Missions budget, this is not comparable to having broad responsibility over the kind of substantive programs envisioned at this level. Completed work at level 2-4 usually receives a supervisory review only for effectiveness in meeting budgetary and program objectives and deadlines.

The appellant's position meets level 2-3 but does not fully meet level 2-4. Since level 2-4 is not fully met, level 2-3 must be credited.

Factor 3, Guidelines

The appellant uses various guidelines to perform her work, such as budgetary regulations; local, ACC, and Air Force policies; program guidance (i.e., EBC and BPA guides); and computer systems and software programs. These guidelines are applicable to the appellant's work, but they do not provide detailed information covering all aspects of the work. She must use her judgment in interpreting and applying these guidelines. Although some general budgetary guidance may come from the Wing's base budget office, guidance on medical budget issues comes from Headquarters

ACC or the DOD Regional Lead Agent Office. The appellant drafts local procedures and instructions for the Group. Since the guidance involving the EBC program area is relatively new and still somewhat sketchy, the appellant coordinates with specialists in the DOD Regional Lead Agent Office or Health Affairs to obtain guidance in this area.

The nature of the appellant's guidelines meets level 3-3, where the guidelines available and regularly used are in the form of budgetary policies, precedents, and regulations. The guidelines are not always applicable to specific budgetary situations, but the employee independently resolves gaps in specificity. Employees at this level use judgment in interpreting, adapting, and applying guidelines.

The guidelines available to the appellant's position do not meet level 3-4, where the guidelines regularly applied consist of broad budgetary guidance, such as circulars, directives, and regulations issued by OMB; judicial decisions; and broad program goals and objectives of the employing organization. The guidelines at this level provide only a general outline of concepts, methods, and goals.

The appellant's guidelines meet level 3-3 but fall short of 3-4; therefore, level 3-3 must be credited.

Factor 4, Complexity

The appellant's work involves the control and management of the Medical Group's budget. The budget supports the activities and programs of the medical treatment facility and a few of the programs within the Wing. The appellant manages appropriated funds in six different fund codes. She is involved with a range of activities concerning the formulation and execution of the budget, such as researching and summarizing budgetary data from various sources; preparing financial plans; forecasting annual budgets; monitoring and analyzing the budget through the use of historical data, trend analysis, and depreciation accounting; carrying out transfers of funds; preparing detailed reports for transmittal to ACC; monitoring year-end close-outs; using the Medical cost accounting system to make decisions; and advising the Executive Staff and Group Commander on budgetary issues. The appellant's work with the EBC program involves her analyzing many factors to ensure that cost effective decisions are made with regard to the budget; pricing out the bid price increase of health care changes and mission requirements; and providing cost effective alternatives to members of the Executive Staff. The Group's services undergo some instability when occasional changes are made to the health care services provided by the facility. This affects the complexity of the appellant's work with the EBC program, in that she must perform cost effectiveness analyses before these kinds of changes are implemented. The Group's funding through annual appropriations is stable. However, occasional budget instabilities exist when unexpected events occur, such as deployments or disasters, which require the appellant to adjust funds to meet requirements.

By reference to the standard, the complexity of the appellant's work most closely matches level 4-3, where organizations, activities, services, and accounts budgeted for are relatively stable from one year to the next and throughout the fiscal year. Funding is from readily identifiable sources. Activities

typical of this level are hospital facilities, family housing programs, and legal offices. Employees at this level compile, analyze, and summarize budgetary information relating to assigned areas. The work requires consideration of program plans, provisions of applicable policies and regulations, and alternative methods of obtaining and distributing funds. Employees identify, quantify, and analyze relationships among organizational needs and objectives, costs, obligations, revenues, expenses, requirements of budgetary guides, and funding information in unrelated documents and reports.

The level of complexity does not fully meet level 4-4, where work involves the performance of a wide variety of analytical and technical budget administration functions for substantive programs and support activities which are funded through many separate sources. Programs and funding are unstable and subject to change throughout the budget year.

The appellant's position meets level 4-3 but does not fully 4-4. Since level 4-4 is not fully met, level 4-3 must be credited.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

The purpose of the appellant's position is to serve as the Resource Advisor for the Medical Group, performing day-to-day control and management over funds which support the Group's programs and activities and a few of the Wing's programs. The work is performed on the basis of established regulations, procedures, and practices. The appellant is involved in the formulation and execution of the budget and provides analysis and advice on budgetary matters. The work of the appellant's position affects the financial and business operations of the medical treatment facility and the amount and availability of funds for Wing programs, and contributes to the cost effective use of Federal funds.

The scope and effect of the appellant's position are closest to matching level 5-3, where work involves the application of a wide range of standardized, widely accepted budgetary regulations, practices, and procedures for support activities. The work products, advice, and services rendered affect the amount and timely availability of money to pay for personnel salaries and expenses, equipment, routine maintenance services, and similar administrative and support activities in appropriated or industrially funded organizations.

The scope and effect do not meet level 5-4, where the purpose of the work is to formulate and monitor the execution of long-range, detailed budget forecasts and plans to fund the implementation of substantive programs and projects of the employing component or agency. Recommendations and technical interpretations at this level affect the amount and availability of funds for the conduct of major substantive or administrative programs and services.

The appellant's position meets level 5-3 but falls short of level 5-4. Therefore, level 5-3 must be credited.

Factor 6, Personal contacts

The appellant has regular contacts with Group personnel, such as the Group Commander, Squadron Commanders, and other Group supervisors and managers; cost center managers; personnel in other Groups, such as Civil Engineering and Communications, and tenant organizations; other Resource Advisors; specialists at Headquarters ACC and the DOD Regional Lead Agent Office; other DOD agencies; representatives with private industry; and local vendors.

By reference to the standard, this meets level 6-2, where contacts are with persons from outside the immediate organization but within the same Federal agency. This level includes contacts with project managers responsible for substantive technical programs, formal presentations with the director of an agency component, contacts with other budget and financial analysts at headquarters locations, and informal contacts with contractors.

The appellant's personal contacts do not meet level 6-3, where contacts are with individuals from outside the agency who represent the budget and program interests of other Federal agencies, contractors, or Congressional staff members. Characteristic of this level is contact with the agency's director or deputy director.

Since the appellant's contacts do not meet level 6-3, level 6-2 must be assigned.

Factor 7, Purpose of contacts

The purpose of the appellant's contacts is to exchange information about the Group's budget and programs, resolve problems or questions, provide advice and assistance, and ensure compliance with regulations and policies.

The purpose of contacts is equivalent to level 7-2, where contacts are made for the purpose of resolving budgetary issues and problems and carrying out budgetary transactions to achieve mutually agreed upon financial and program objectives.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts does not meet level 7-3, where the purpose is to persuade program managers and other officials in positions of decision-making authority with widely differing goals and interests to follow a recommended course of action. At this level, persuasion and negotiation are necessary due to the presence of conflicting budgetary and program objectives which must be resolved.

Level 7-2 must be credited since the purpose of the appellant's contacts does not meet level 7-3.

Factor 8, Physical demands

The appellant performs work that is primarily sedentary and requires no special physical ability.

This is equivalent to level 8-1, where work is sedentary and no special physical effort or ability is required to perform the work.

Factor 9, Work environment

The appellant performs work in an office environment with no unusual risks or discomforts.

This is equivalent to level 9-1, where the work environment includes the array of risks and discomforts normally found in offices.

Summary

In summary, we have evaluated the appellant's position as follows:

	Factor	Level	Points
1	Knowledge Required of Position	1-6	950
2	Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3	Guidelines	3-3	275
4	Complexity	4-3	150
5	Scope and Effect	5-3	150
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 POINTS			1885

A total of 1885 points equates to the GS-09 grade level, in accordance with the grade conversion table on page 21 of the GS-560 standard.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Budget Analyst, GS-560-09.