

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:** [appellant's name]

**Agency classification:** Supervisory Petroleum Engineering  
Technician, GS-802-11

**Organization:** Oil and Gas Inspection and Enforcement Team  
Assistant District Manager's Team  
[District Office]  
[State Office]  
Bureau of Land Management  
Department of the Interior  
[city, state]

**OPM decision:** Supervisory Petroleum Engineering  
Technician, GS-802-11

**OPM decision number:** C-0802-11-03

/s/Bonnie J. Brandon

Bonnie J. Brandon  
Classification Appeals Officer

7/23/98

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:**

[appellant's name and address]

Personnel Officer  
[name of state] State Office  
Bureau of Land Management  
Department of the Interior  
[address of servicing personnel office]

Director  
National Human Resources Management Center  
Bureau of Land Management  
Department of the Interior  
Denver Federal Center, Building 50  
P.O. Box 25047  
Denver, CO 80225-0047

Director of Personnel  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20240

## **Introduction**

On September 5, 1997, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [appellant's name]. The position is assigned to the [name of appellant's organization], Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of the Interior, [city, state]. The appellant's position is currently classified as Supervisory Petroleum Engineering Technician, GS-802-11. The appellant believes his position should be classified as either Supervisory Oil and Gas Inspector, GS-1801-12, or Supervisory Petroleum Engineering Technician, GS-802-12. In May 1996, the appellant's position was reclassified from Supervisory Oil and Gas Inspector, GS-1801-12, as a result of a BLM consistency review of Oil and Gas Inspection and Production Accountability positions within BLM. The appellant appealed this classification to the Department of the Interior, which sustained the series and grade as GS-802-11. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

## **Position information**

The appellant serves as supervisor of the [activity] which includes 10 GS-802-10 Petroleum Engineering Technician (PET) positions. The work performed by the PET's entails inspection and enforcement functions on oil and gas leases on Federal and Indian lands in [names of specific states]. The GS-10 PET's work includes duties related to inspections of drilling/workover, plugging and abandonment activities, and oil and gas production operations and activities. In his role as the [name of a specific district] expert concerning the inspection and enforcement function on Federal and Indian oil and gas leases, the appellant supervises inspections of oil and gas operations to ensure operators are in compliance with applicable rules, regulations, and other guidance and requirements. Such inspections may involve production accountability audits, incidents of noncompliance, and assessment of fines. In addition to his supervisory duties, the appellant personally performs work that involves coordinating and participating in complex production accountability audits; reviewing and analyzing oil and gas condensate theft and spill reports and other documents to identify anomalies or trends to determine appropriate courses of action, type of inspection, investigation, or audit needed; and examining and analyzing oil company site security plans and requiring modifications as needed.

The position description (PD) of record, number [number], adequately describes the major duties and responsibilities of the appellant's position. The PD, however, provides limited information about the appellant's supervisory responsibilities and delegated authorities.

## **Series and title determination**

The Introduction to the Position Classification Standards defines the characteristics of work classifiable under the General Schedule.

Professional work requires knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's or higher degree. Professional occupational series follow a two-grade interval pattern. The appellant's work does not require extensive advisory,

administrative, or research work based on established principles of a profession or science acquired through professional scientific or technical training equivalent to that of a bachelor's or higher degree.

Administrative work involves the exercise of analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and personal responsibility, and the application of a substantial body of knowledge of principles, concepts, and practices applicable to one or more fields of administration or management. Employees engaged in administrative work are concerned with analyzing, evaluating, modifying, and developing the basic programs, policies, and procedures which facilitate the work of Federal agencies and programs. They apply a knowledge of administrative analysis, theory, and principles in adapting practice to the unique requirements of a particular program. Administrative occupational series typically follow a two-grade interval pattern. The appellant's work is not administrative, since it does not involve or require analyzing, evaluating, modifying, and developing programs, policies, and procedures. Although the appellant uses independent judgment, the work does not require a high order of analytical ability. The guidelines used by the appellant are extensive, but straightforward and applicable and do not generally require significant interpretation or adaptation to accomplish the work.

Clerical occupations involve structured work in support of office, business, or fiscal operations. Clerical work is performed in accordance with established policies, procedures, or techniques and requires training, experience, or working knowledge related to the tasks to be performed. Clerical occupational series follow a one-grade interval pattern. The appellant's work is not in direct support of office, business, or fiscal operations, so the clerical group is inappropriate for the position.

Technical work is typically associated with and supportive of a professional or administrative field. It involves extensive practical knowledge, gained through experience and/or specific training less than that represented by college education. Technical employees carry out tasks, methods, procedures, and/or computations that are laid out either in published or oral instructions and covered by established precedents or guidelines. These procedures often require a high degree of technical skill, care, and precision. Technical work typically follows a one-grade interval pattern. The appellant's work is technical in nature. His work is supportive of BLM's Oil and Gas Inspection and Enforcement Program where the objective is to promote the legal, orderly, safe, and efficient exploration, development, and production of oil and gas. The technical work that the appellant performs is supportive of and associated with the professional field of petroleum engineering in meeting those objectives and ensuring compliance. The acceptable boundaries of the oil and gas operations are detailed in the applicable approved plans, regulations, and Onshore Orders. To perform the technical work, the appellant must have an extensive practical knowledge of the petroleum field. The appellant possesses a knowledge of the processes, methods, and equipment used in the onshore exploration and development of oil and gas resources. This knowledge is gained through specialized training covering production and drilling operations, cementing, gas measurement, and hydrogen sulfide gas. He provides supervision and technical oversight to PET's who carry out on-site inspections, procedures, and computations that are specified within a framework of established approved plans, regulations, policies, notices, and Onshore Orders. The appellant may also conduct on-site inspections similar to those for which he provides supervisory and technical oversight.

The appellant's nonsupervisory work is best covered by a technical classification series. The GS-802 Engineering Technician Series includes technical positions that primarily require application of a practical knowledge of (1) the methods and techniques of engineering, and (2) the construction, application, properties, operation, and limitations of engineering systems, processes, structures, machinery, devices, and materials. The positions do not require professional knowledge and abilities for full performance and therefore do not require training equivalent in type and scope to that represented by the completion of a professional curriculum leading to a bachelor's degree in engineering. This series includes positions performing nonprofessional technical work in functions such as research, development, design, evaluation, construction, inspection, production, application, standardization, test, or operation of engineering facilities, structures, systems, processes, equipment, devices, or materials. The functions involve the solution of technical problems that primarily require application of a practical knowledge of the methods and techniques by which materials, natural resources, and power are made useful.

In addition to performing nonsupervisory technical work that is appropriately classified in the GS-802 series, the appellant supervises employees whose positions are also classified in the GS-802 series. He provides guidance and direction over [a specific program] where the objective is to promote the legal, orderly, safe, and efficient exploration, development, and production of oil and gas that involves evaluation, inspection, testing, and production and accountability of oil and gas resources. The appellant uses his knowledge of the processes, methods, and equipment used in the onshore exploration and development of oil and gas resources. Through supervision of and participation in on-site inspections, he ensures that oil and gas operations are in compliance with specific BLM approved plans and all applicable regulations and policies. Although a portion of the appellant's nonsupervisory work (i.e., production verification) may be covered by another series, the paramount duties and knowledge requirements of the position fit within the GS-802 series. In summary, the GS-802 series is appropriate for the appellant's position.

The series requested by the appellant, the GS-1801 General Inspection, Investigation, and Compliance Series, is inappropriate for the position since this series covers administrative work in a two-grade interval pattern where there is a requirement for extensive examination, analysis, and judgment. Situations found in inspections by two-grade interval positions are not susceptible to instant determinations of compliance or noncompliance. They require subsequent evaluation of inspection data, and findings are generally recorded in a written narrative. Decisions made by the appellant are more clear-cut and readily apparent than those encountered in two-grade interval positions.

The GS-802 standard authorizes the title of Petroleum Engineering Technician for positions involved in specialized work concerned with the discovery, development, production, and conservation of petroleum, natural gas, or helium. Since the appellant performs supervisory duties more than 50 percent of his time, the word "Supervisory" is used as a prefix to the title authorized by the GS-802 standard. Therefore, the proper title and series for the appellant's position are Supervisory Petroleum Engineering Technician, GS-802.

## **Standard determination**

We used two standards to determine the grade level of the appellant's position. The GS-802 Engineering Technician standard was used to evaluate the appellant's nonsupervisory work, and the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) was used to evaluate the supervisory duties and responsibilities.

## **Grade determination**

### *Evaluation using the GS-802 standard*

The GS-802 standard defines grade levels under two criteria, nature of assignment and level of responsibility. The following is our evaluation of the appellant's position in terms of the two criteria.

#### *Nature of assignment*

At the GS-9 level, engineering technicians typically perform a variety of work relating to the area of specialization that requires the application of a considerable number of different basic but established methods, procedures, and techniques. Assignments usually involve independent responsibility for planning and conducting a block of work which is a complete conventional project of relatively limited scope, or a portion of a larger and more diverse project. Assignments require study, analysis, and consideration of several possible courses of action, techniques, general layouts, or designs and selection of the most appropriate. They generally require consideration of numerous precedents and some adaptation of previous plans or techniques. Assignments typically require coordination of several parts, each requiring independent analysis and solution, and a good understanding of the effect that recommendations made or other results of the assignment may have on an item, system, or process and its end-use application.

At the GS-11 level, engineering technicians perform work of broad scope and complexity that requires application of (1) demonstrated ability to interpret, select, adapt, and apply many guidelines, precedents, and engineering principles and practices which relate to the area of specialization; and (2) some knowledge of related scientific and engineering fields. Technicians at this level plan and accomplish complete projects or studies of conventional nature requiring the independent adaptation of a general fund of background data and information and interpretation and use of precedents. They are typically confronted with a variety of complex problems in which considerable judgment is needed to make sound engineering compromises and decisions. Initiative, resourcefulness, and sound judgment are needed in planning and coordinating phases of assignments and in selecting which of several sound alternatives is to be used in arriving at acceptable engineering compromises. Ingenuity and creative thinking are required in devising new ways of accomplishing objectives and in adapting existing equipment or current techniques to new uses.

To administer inspection and enforcement functions on Federal and Indian oil and gas leases, the appellant examines and analyzes oil company site security plans and requests modifications as needed.

He reviews and analyzes oil and gas condensate theft and spill reports and monthly reports of operations to identify anomalies or trends. The appellant reviews, compiles, and makes recommendations for approval or disapproval of applications/requests for a variety of technical and complex issues relating to oil and gas inspection and enforcement operations. The appellant provides expertise in the resolution of operational and production accountability issues. He works closely with the production accountability specialist to determine the best action to provide production accountability. Input into the Inspection and Enforcement Strategic Plan for local and nationwide implementation to assure production accountability is also provided by the appellant. He ensures compliance with applicable regulations or orders. The work may affect the amount of royalty collected, the Government's interest in oil and gas leases, and the enforcement and promotion of safe and efficient operations and environmental conditions. The appellant may be required to use considerable judgement and resourcefulness in applying pertinent principles and practices to the Inspection and Enforcement Program, especially where the results of inspections may create local and national public opinion. The nature of the appellant's assignments exceeds the intent of the standard at the GS-9 level, which envisions an employee who has independence in performing a block of work within a conventional project or a portion of a larger, more diverse project.

The appealed position does not fully meet the GS-11 level because the appellant is not required to interpret and adapt engineering standards or make engineering compromises. The oil and gas inspections are generally performed in accordance with pre-established, standardized regulations. The appellant's work is not characterized by complex systems requiring design adaptation or the need for creativity in devising ways to accomplish the work that is typical of GS-11 positions. Since the nature of the appellant's nonsupervisory work exceeds the GS-9 level and does not meet the full intent of the GS-11 level, the GS-10 grade level is appropriate.

#### *Level of responsibility*

At the GS-9 Level, the supervisor outlines requirements, provides information on any related work being performed, and furnishes general instructions as to the scope of objectives, time limitations, priorities, and similar aspects. The supervisor is available for consultation and advice where significant deviations from standard engineering practices must be made and provides further instructions when distinctly new criteria or new techniques are involved. The supervisor observes the work of GS-9 technicians for progress and coordination with work performed by other employees and for adherence to schedules. Standard methods employed are seldom reviewed, but review is made for adequacy and conformance with established policies, precedents, and sound engineering concepts and usage. Contacts at the GS-9 level are with contractors and engineering firms to promote adherence to agency standards and advise of discrepancies in contract terms, to discuss recommendations for acceptable substitutes, and to promote adherence to agency standards.

At the GS-11 level, technicians have considerable freedom to plan and carry out assignments. The supervisor makes assignments in terms of major objectives, providing background information and advice on specific unusual problems. Policy implications may be discussed with the supervisor, but technical assistance is rarely required. The supervisor is usually advised regarding progress, but there

is little review during progress of typical assignments. Completed work in the form of recommendations, plans, designs, reports, or correspondence is reviewed for general adequacy, conformity to the purpose of assignment, and sound engineering judgment. Contacts made and the purpose of contacts at the GS-11 level are similar to those at the GS-9 level. The distinction between contacts at the two levels occurs because the increased scope of GS-11 assignments results in complex engineering and administrative problems that are handled without close supervision.

The supervisor consults with the appellant to establish the overall policy and objectives of the work. The appellant's assignments involve participation in complex investigations of inspection and enforcement activities. Assignments require coordination with other Bureau entities and jurisdictional agencies to resolve complex inspections over extended periods of time. The appellant must be able to recognize sensitive issues that may be encountered as a result of the program. The appellant has the responsibility for maintaining the confidence and cooperation of all involved while still enforcing program rules and regulations. The appellant has contacts with mineral resources development company personnel, oil and gas purchasers, law enforcement personnel, tribal groups, and Bureau and other agency personnel. The contacts are typically to obtain and exchange technical/administrative information, to foster public information and education, to discern and clarify public opinion, and to obtain compliance with regulations and/or contractual agreements.

Although the appellant performs work independently and without technical supervision, major deviations from established plans are approved by agency environmental specialists and petroleum engineers. The appealed position is more structured, with fewer complex problems than that envisioned at the GS-11 level. The appellant's work is also subject to periodic review by his supervisor for accomplishment of objectives and adherence to policy. The GS-11 level of the standard denotes a higher degree of responsibility.

Because the appellant's level of responsibility for his nonsupervisory work exceeds the GS-9 level and does not meet the full intent of the GS-11 level, the GS-10 grade level is appropriate.

### *Summary*

Since the appellant's nonsupervisory work is best evaluated at GS-10 for both *nature of assignments* and *level of responsibility*, it must be graded at GS-10.

### ***Evaluation using the GSSG***

The GSSG is a point-factor guide that uses six evaluation factors designed specifically for supervisory positions. A position must meet the full intent of a particular factor level in order for that level to be credited.



### *Factor 1, Program scope and effect*

This factor assesses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including its organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization. Both the scope and effect criteria must be met in order to assign a particular factor level.

#### *Scope*

This element addresses the general complexity and breadth of the program directed; the work directed, the products produced, or the services delivered; and the geographic and organizational coverage of the program within the agency structure.

At Level 1-2, the program segment or work directed is administrative, technical, complex clerical, or comparable in nature. The functions, activities, or services provided have limited geographic coverage and support most of the activities comprising a typical agency field office, an area office, a small to medium military installation, or comparable activities within agency program segments.

Level 1-3 involves directing a program segment that performs technical, administrative, protective, investigative, or professional work. The program segment and work directed typically have coverage which encompasses a major metropolitan area, a State, or a small region of several States; or, when most of an area's taxpayers or businesses are covered, coverage comparable to a small city. Providing complex administrative, technical, or professional services directly affecting a large or complex multimission installation also falls within this level.

The appellant provides technical direction and guidance on regular inspections of the full range of major and minor drilling, workover/completion and abandonment, and production complexes or facilities on Federal and Indian Tribal lands in the states of [names of specific states]. This [multi-state] area, which includes approximately 435 counties and 25 different Indian Tribes, has a wide variety of resource activities including oil and gas. With respect to geographic coverage, the appellant's position meets Level 1-3. The geographic coverage of the work is comparable to Level 1-3; however, other aspects of criteria at Level 1-3 are not met. Despite the geographic dispersion where activities are carried out in support of the Inspection and Enforcement Program, the appellant does not directly support a major organization that is equivalent to a complex multimission installation or a group of several organizations that include, for example, four or more of the following: a garrison; a medical center or large hospital and medical laboratory complex; multimillion dollar (annual) construction, civil works, or environmental cleanup projects; a test and evaluation center or research laboratory of moderate size; an equipment or product development center; a service school; a major command higher than that in which the servicing position is located or a comparable tenant activity of moderate size; a supply or maintenance depot; or equivalent activities as illustrated by the examples in the standard. The scope includes the geographic and organizational coverage of the program or program segment. Positions cannot be credited at Level 1-3 on the basis

of geographic coverage alone. Since the full intent of Level 1-3 is not met, the appellant's position must be evaluated at Level 1-2 for *Scope*.

### *Effect*

This element addresses the impact of the work, the products, and/or the programs described under *Scope* on the mission and programs of the customer(s), the activity, other activities in or out of government, the agency, other agencies, the general public, or others.

At Level 1-2, the services or products support and significantly affect installation level, area office level, or field office operations and objectives, or comparable program segments; or provide services to a moderate, local or limited population of clients or users comparable to a major portion of a small city or rural county.

At Level 1-3, the activities, functions, or services accomplished directly and significantly impact a wide range of agency activities, the work of other agencies, the operations of outside interests, or the general public. At the field activity level (involving large complex, multimission organizations) the work directly involves or substantially impacts the provision of essential support operations to numerous, varied, and complex technical, professional, and administrative functions.

The services provided by the appellant assure that oil and gas operations being conducted on Federal and Indian lands are in compliance with applicable regulations, etc. This affects the field office activities and Federal, State, and Tribal groups which may be considered as part of the population affected by the outcome of compliance, noncompliance, and production accountability efforts. This is equivalent to Level 1-2. Level 1-3 is not met in that the appellant's work does not directly and significantly impact a wide range of agency activities, the work of other agencies, the operations of outside interests, or the general public. The intent of Level 1-3 is not met for *Effect*.

### *Summary*

Since the appellant's position warrants Level 1-2 for both *Scope* and *Effect*, Level 1-2 is the proper level for Factor 1 overall. Level 1-2 is assigned (350 points).

### *Factor 2, Organizational setting*

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher levels of management.

At Level 2-1, the position is accountable to a position that is two or more levels below the first (i.e., lowest in the chain of command) SES, flag, or general officer, or equivalent or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain.

The appellant reports to the Assistant District Manager of the [name of a specific district] which is three reporting levels below the first SES position, i.e., the State Director. This matches the organizational setting described at Level 2-1.

Level 2-1 is assigned (100 points).

*Factor 3, Supervisory and managerial authority exercised*

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities which are exercised on a recurring basis. A position must meet the authorities and responsibilities to the extent described for the specific level to receive credit under this factor.

Level 3-2 is credited to a first-line supervisor who meets either of three different situations. Paragraph a is credited when the supervisor plans and schedules on-going production work on a quarterly or annual basis and performs other related managerial duties. Paragraph b is credited when the supervisor performs a wide range of technical input and oversight tasks for work that is contracted out. Paragraph c is credited when the supervisor carries out at least 3 of the first 4, and a total of 6 or more of the following 10 authorities and responsibilities: (1) plans work to be accomplished by subordinates, sets and adjusts short-term priorities, and prepares schedules for completion of work; (2) assigns work to subordinates based on priorities, selective consideration of the difficulty and requirements of assignments, and the capabilities of employees; (3) evaluates work performance of subordinates; (4) gives advice, counsel, or instruction to employees on both work and administrative matters; (5) interviews candidates for positions in the unit and recommends appointment, promotion, or reassignment to such position; (6) hears and resolves complaints from employees, referring group grievances and more serious unresolved complaints to a higher level supervisor or manager; (7) effects minor disciplinary measures, such as warnings and reprimands, recommending other action in more serious cases; (8) identifies development and training needs of employees, providing or arranging for needed development and training; (9) finds ways to improve production or increase the quality of the work directed; and (10) develops performance standards.

Level 3-3 is credited when a supervisor meets one of two situations. Paragraph a is credited when the supervisor exercises delegated managerial authority that involves setting long-range work plans and participating in the development of overall goals and objectives for the work directed. Paragraph b is credited to supervisors who perform the full range of supervisory duties at Level 3-2 and additional supervisory duties that include directing work through subordinate supervisors, leaders, team chiefs, and similar positions; assuring reasonable equity of performance standards and rating techniques developed by subordinates; making decisions on work problems presented by subordinate supervisors, leaders, or contractors; evaluating the performance of subordinate supervisors or leaders; and similar personnel management duties.

The appellant's supervisory authorities and responsibilities meet Level 3-2c. He exercises most of the authorities at this level. For example, the appellant plans, reviews, and assigns work; evaluates

performance; provides advice, counsel and instruction; interviews candidates; hears and resolves complaints; effects minor disciplinary measures; and identifies development and training needs.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 3-3. Unlike paragraph a under Level 3-3, the appellant does not set long-range work plans for the organization; nor does he participate with high level program officials in setting the goals and objectives of the organization. Further, the intent of paragraph b under Level 3-3 is not met in that the appellant does not direct work through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or similar positions and does not perform the more demanding supervisory duties typical of Level 3-3 (e.g., resolving group grievances, reviewing and approving serious disciplinary actions, and approving major expenditures) or manage a multimillion dollar budget.

Level 3-2c is assigned (450 points).

#### *Factor 4, Personal contacts*

This two-part factor assesses the nature and purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities.

##### *Subfactor 4A, Nature of contacts*

The nature of the appellant's contacts warrants Level 4A-2. The appellant's contacts with personnel of mineral resources development companies; oil and gas purchasers; Bureau staff; law enforcement personnel of the Bureau and other agencies; and other Federal, State, and Tribal groups involved in mineral resource operations are comparable to those described in the standard where contacts are with members of the business community, the general public, and higher ranking managers and supervisors throughout the field activity and below major command level. As is typical at that level, contacts may be informal, occur in conferences or meetings, or take place by telephone.

Level 4A-3 is not met in that the appellant's contacts do not often require extensive preparation of briefing materials nor are they frequently with Bureau and headquarters level management staff, key staff of public interest groups, journalists, congressional committee members, and contracting officials.

Level 4A-2 is assigned (50 points).

##### *Subfactor 4B, Purpose of contacts*

The purpose of the appellant's contacts is to obtain and exchange technical/administrative information, to plan or change actions, to inform the public, to discern and clarify public opinion, and to obtain compliance with regulations and/or contractual agreements. Contacts are also made to advise, counsel, or instruct subordinates in both administrative and technical matters. The purpose of these contacts is comparable to Level 4B-2 where the purpose of contacts is to ensure that information provided to outside parties is accurate and consistent, to plan and coordinate the work

with outsiders and/or to resolve differences of opinion among managers, supervisors, employees, contractor personnel, or others.

For positions at Level 4B-3, the purpose of contacts is to justify, defend, or negotiate in representing the project, program segment(s), or organizational unit(s) directed, obtaining or committing resources, *and* gaining compliance with established policies, regulations, or contracts. All three of the conditions stated must be met in order to credit Level 4B-3. Contacts at this level usually involve active participation in conferences, meetings, hearings, or presentations involving problems or issues of considerable consequence or importance to the program or program segments managed.

There is no evidence that the appellant is frequently involved in the type of settings described at Level 4B-3 (e.g., meetings, hearings, presentations, etc.) to discuss substantive program issues where he is justifying, defending, or negotiating in representing his program segment or organizational unit as envisioned for a position at this level. Unlike supervisors at Level 4B-3, the appellant does not have the responsibility and the necessary level of authority to obtain or commit resources for his organizational unit. This responsibility resides in positions at higher managerial levels. Generally, the appellant meets and deals with operators to ensure compliance with applicable regulations or orders and to require corrective actions where violations are found. These contacts do not involve skilled negotiation or defense of matters of considerable consequence requiring a high level of persuasive ability or negotiation skill, as required for credit at Level 4B-3.

Level 4B-2 is assigned (75 points).

*Factor 5, Difficulty of typical work directed*

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization(s) directed. The factor considers the highest grade which best characterizes the nature of the basic (mission oriented) nonsupervisory work performed or overseen by the organization directed and constitutes 25 percent or more of the workload (not positions or employees) of the organization.

The appellant directs the work of 10 GS-10 employees, all in the GS-802 series. The GS-10 level is therefore the highest graded work that represents at least 25 percent of the organization's workload. A GS-10 base level of work equates to Level 5-5, according to the conversion table of the GSSG.

Level 5-5 is assigned (650 points).

*Factor 6, Other conditions*

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions contribute to the difficulty and complexity of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities.

At Level 6-3, supervision and oversight require coordination, integration, or consolidation of administrative, technical, or complex technician or other support work comparable to GS-9 or GS-10.

At Level 6-4, supervision requires substantial coordination and integration of a number of major work assignments, projects, or program segments of professional, scientific, technical, or administrative work comparable in difficulty to the GS-11 grade level.

Similar to Level 6-3, the appellant coordinates the work of 10 petroleum engineering technicians over which he has full and final technical authority. Level 6-4 is not met since the appellant does not direct major work assignments equivalent to the GS-11 grade level or subordinate supervisors or contractors who themselves direct GS-9 or GS-10 level employees. The appealed position meets Level 6-3 of this factor.

The standard instructs that credit for “Special Situations” may be given for positions meeting Levels 6-1 through 6-3. If a position meets three or more of the special situations cited in the standard, a single level is added for this factor.

#### *Special situations*

Supervisory and oversight work may be complicated by special situations and/or conditions. For credit, the condition must be present and dealt with on a regular basis. Since the appellant’s position does not meet any of the special situations, Level 6-3 (975 points) is appropriate. A discussion of each special condition follows.

1. *Variety of Work.* This situation is credited when (1) there is more than one kind of work; (2) each kind represents a requirement for a distinctly different additional body of knowledge of the supervisor; (3) both technical and administrative supervision are exercised over the work; and, (4) the grade level of the work cannot be more than one grade below the base level credited in Factor 5.

The appellant provides technical supervision over petroleum engineering technicians, all requiring a common knowledge of the oil and gas industry. The work performed does not meet the criteria for variety of work, and no credit is assigned.

2. *Shift Operations.* This situation is credited when the position supervises an operation carried out on at least two fully staffed shifts.

Since there is only one scheduled shift for the appealed position, no credit is assigned for this situation.

3. *Fluctuating Work or Constantly Changing Deadlines.* This situation is credited when the workforce supervised by the position has large fluctuations in size (e.g, when there are significant seasonal variations in staff) and these fluctuations impose on the supervisor substantially greater

responsibility for training, adjusting assignments, or maintaining a smooth flow of work while absorbing and releasing employees. This situation is also credited when frequent, abrupt, and unexpected changes in work assignments, goals, and deadlines require the supervisor to constantly adjust work operations under the pressure of continuously changing and unpredictable conditions.

Because of the nature of the work, employees who are supervised by the appellant may be required to report to an inspection site after regular hours of duty, but such situations do not result in significant variations in staff or constantly changing deadlines as envisioned in the standard. Neither of the conditions for this element are met, and no credit is assigned.

4. *Physical Dispersion.* This situation is credited when a substantial portion of the work load for which the supervisor is responsible is regularly carried out at one or more locations which are physically removed from the main unit (e.g., at different buildings, or widely dispersed locations in a large warehouse or factory building) under conditions that make day-to-day supervision difficult to administer.

Although the appellant supervises two employees who are located in other states, there is no evidence that this situation makes his day-to-day supervision more difficult. Further, the substantial portion of the work load is performed by the engineering technicians who are in the same location as the appellant. No credit is assigned.

5. *Special Staffing Situations.* This situation is credited when (1) a substantial portion of the workforce is regularly involved in special employment programs; or in similar situations which require involvement with employee representatives to resolve difficult or complex human resources management issues and problems; (2) requirements for counseling and motivational activities are regular and recurring; and (3) job assignments, work tasks, working conditions, and/or training must be tailored to fit the special circumstances.

None of these special staffing situations exist in the appellant's position. No credit is assigned.

6. *Impact of Specialized Programs.* This situation is credited when supervisors are responsible for a significant technical and administrative work load in grades above the level of work credited in Factor 5, provided the grades of this work are not based upon independence of action, freedom from supervision, or personal impact on the job.

The appellant does not supervise employees whose work is above the base level determined in Factor 5. No credit is assigned for this situation.

7. *Changing Technology.* This situation is credited when work processes and procedures vary constantly because of the impact of changing technology, creating a requirement for extensive training and guidance of subordinate staff.

While there have been some changes in the technology for drilling operations, there is no indication that these changes have resulted in constant variances in work processes and procedures used by the appellant and his subordinate engineering technicians. Although some of the apparatus used by the technicians have changed, there is no evidence that these changes have required extensive training and guidance as envisioned in the standard. No credit is assigned for this situation.

8. *Special Hazard and Safety Conditions.* This situation is credited when the supervisory position is regularly made more difficult by the need to make provision for significant unsafe or hazardous conditions occurring during performance of the work of the organization.

The PET's supervised by the appellant wear proper safety gear and breathing apparatus on certain inspection sites due to toxic substances and other environmental conditions that may be considered hazardous. This work situation does not constitute the kind of environment where a supervisor's job is regularly made more difficult because of significant unsafe or hazardous conditions that continually require attention.



*Summary*

In sum, we have evaluated the appellant's supervisory duties as follows:

| <b>Factor</b>                                     | <b>Level</b> | <b>Points</b> |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Program scope and effect                       | 1-2          | 350           |
| 2. Organizational setting                         | 2-1          | 100           |
| 3. Supervisory and managerial authority exercised | 3-2c         | 450           |
| 4. Personal contacts                              |              |               |
| Nature of contacts                                | 4A-2         | 50            |
| Purpose of contacts                               | 4B-2         | 75            |
| 5. Difficulty of typical work directed            | 5-5          | 650           |
| 6. Other conditions                               | 6-3          | 975           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                      |              | <b>2650</b>   |

A total of 2650 points falls within the range (2355-2750) for GS-11 positions. Therefore, the appellant's supervisory duties are evaluated at the GS-11 level.

**Decision**

The nonsupervisory duties performed by the appellant do not exceed the GS-10 level, and the supervisory duties equate to the GS-11 level. Accordingly, the appellant's position is appropriately classified as Supervisory Petroleum Engineering Technician, GS-802-11.