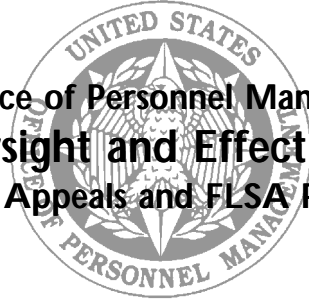


U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



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]

Agency classification: Audiovisual Aids Technician
GS-1001-7

Organization: [appellant's organization]
USAF
[location]

OPM decision: GS-1001-7
title at agency discretion

OPM decision number: C-1001-07-01

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon
Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

4/15/99
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]

Director, Civilian Personnel
[address of servicing personnel office]

Chief, Classification Branch
Field Advisory Services Division
Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 2209-5144

Director, Civilian Personnel Operations
U.S. Department of the Air Force
AFPC/DPC
550 C Street West
Randolph Air Force Base, TX 78150-4759

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

Introduction

On December 30, 1998, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellant]. His position is currently classified as Audiovisual Aids Technician, GS-1001-7. [The appellant] believes its classification should be in the GS-1001 series at a higher grade. The appellant works in the [appellant's organization in the U.S. Air Force] in [location]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

To help decide the appeal, an Oversight Division representative conducted telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor. We have carefully reviewed the information obtained through these interviews and all of the information of record provided by the appellant and his agency, including his official position description (PD), number [number]. Both the appellant and his supervisor agreed that PD [number] is an accurate description of the appellant's major duties and responsibilities.

Position information

The appellant provides support to the [appellant's activity] on the operation and use of computer projection and audiovisual equipment used for briefings and classroom instruction at the [appellant's location]. Such support includes researching various sources for appropriate software and equipment and their applications to the education environment; designing the layout of the room to fit the computer and audiovisual needs of the class, seminar, symposium, briefing, or conference; installing and setting up the computer or audiovisual equipment for the room; assisting in the operation of multimedia equipment; and maintaining the multimedia equipment, e.g., troubleshooting when equipment malfunctions, performing minor repairs, arranging for repairs. He submits recommendations for purchase of items to the equipment board after researching and narrowing down the selection of equipment, software, etc., requested by the various departments. The appellant provides training to [department staff members, students], and others on the operation of the multimedia equipment. He also schedules the use of lecture halls and theaters and controls access to the rooms.

The work of the appealed position requires knowledge of computer graphics operations, applications, and theories; of theories on design and configuration of video teleconferencing centers, conference rooms, theaters, and classrooms in relation to the multimedia requirements for these sites; of computer operation relating to visual presentation software and hardware; and of multimedia assembly, installations, and minor repair. The work also requires the ability to evaluate information about various projection requirements, to install necessary equipment for temporary and permanent conference facilities, and to communicate orally and in writing with staff and others.

Series and title determination

The GS-1000 Information and Arts Group includes positions which involve professional, artistic, technical, or clerical work in (1) the communication of information and ideas through verbal, visual, or pictorial means; (2) the collection, custody, presentation, display, and interpretation of art works, cultural objects, and other artifacts; or (3) a branch of fine or applied arts such as industrial design, interior design, or musical composition. Positions in this group require writing, editing, and language ability; artistic skill and ability; knowledge of foreign languages; the ability to evaluate and interpret informational and cultural materials; or the practical application of technical or aesthetic principles combined with manual skill and dexterity; or related clerical skills.

The appellant does not disagree with the activity's allocation of his position to the GS-1001 series. This series includes positions that perform, supervise, or administer (1) any combination of work characteristic of two or more series in the GS-1000 group where (a) no one type of work is series controlling, (b) the paramount qualification requirements are not characteristic of another series in the group, and (c) the combination of work is not specifically provided for in another series, or (2) other work typical of this group for which no other series has been established. We find that the appellant's position is best covered by the GS-1001 series in that the position requires the application of technical principles combined with manual skill and dexterity in providing advice and assistance related to the use of audiovisual equipment. The appellant provides support by conferring with customers (e.g., instructors) to determine the visual and audiovisual communications equipment needed and advising on the visual communication of information. The GS-1001 series covers both one-grade and two-grade interval work.

The appellant applies extensive practical knowledge gained through experience and specific training as described for technical work in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*. The appellant's position is predominately technical in nature and has characteristics of a one-grade interval series. Although some of the work performed by the appellant may involve substantial elements of work found in the professional or administrative field, it does not require knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's or higher degree. His work involves operation, maintenance, repair, troubleshooting, and adaption duties related to various audiovisual production and visual arts equipment, e.g., projectors, VCR's, graphics display equipment. Further, the appellant's work does not require analytical, research, writing, or judgment skills typically gained through a college level education. The appellant exercises analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and personal responsibility and applies knowledge of the principles, concepts, and practices applicable to audiovisual equipment in a more limited capacity than that found in two-grade interval professional or administrative positions. By applying the guidance in the *Introduction*, the appellant's position does not meet the requirements for professional or administrative positions. Accordingly, the appellant's position is allocated as a one-grade interval position in the GS-1001 series.

OPM has no specified titles for positions in the GS-1001 series. Therefore, the title of the appellant's position is at the agency's discretion. The agency may construct any title consistent with guidance in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*.

Guide determination

There is no published OPM position classification standard with grade-level criteria for the GS-1001 series. The *Introduction* states that if there are no specific published grade-level criteria, then the standard selected as the basis for comparison should be for a kind of work as similar as possible to the work evaluated with respect to (1) the kind of work processes, functions, or subject-matter of work performed; (2) the qualifications required to do the work; (3) the level of difficulty and responsibility; and (4) the combination of classification factors which have the greatest influence on grade level.

The Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work provides general criteria for use in determining the grade level of nonsupervisory clerical and assistance work. Assistance work is defined as technical work performed to support the administration or operation of the programs of an organizational unit. This work requires a working knowledge of the work processes and procedures of an administrative field and the mission and operational requirements of the unit. The appellant's work in researching, designing, installing, and maintaining the computer projection and audiovisual equipment is consistent with that defined as assistance work in that the work is performed in support of the multimedia needs of the academic departments, and a working knowledge of the work processes and procedures involved in obtaining and configuring the audiovisual equipment and assisting with presentations is needed to determine the appropriate software, hardware, etc., to support the departments. Therefore, this Guide is used to determine the grade level of the appellant's position.

Grade determination

The Guide provides a general description of the characteristics of each grade level from GS-1 to GS-7 in a three-part format:

- (1) the definition of the grade level as spelled out in the law (5 United States Code 5104);
- (2) a description of grade level criteria pertaining to clerical and assistance work written in narrative format as expressed in two evaluation factors: *Nature of assignment*, which includes the elements of knowledge required and complexity of the work, and *Level of responsibility*, which includes the elements of supervisory controls, guidelines, and contacts; and
- (3) general work examples to illustrate each grade level.

The appropriate grade is determined by applying the total criteria (i.e., the law, the evaluation factors, and the work examples) and assigning the highest level that matches the work being evaluated. Weaknesses as well as strengths are considered in matching work to the grade level criteria. The following is our evaluation of the appellant's position in terms of this Guide.

Nature of assignment

At the GS-6 level, the work requires considerable evaluative judgment within well-defined, commonly occurring aspects of an administrative program or function. The work involves continuing processes based on direct application of established policies, practices, and criteria. Assignments consist of a relatively narrow range of case situations that remain stable and resemble past problems or situations. The work requires practical knowledge of guidelines and skill to recognize the dimensions of a problem and express ideas in writing.

Work at the GS-7 level consists of specialized duties with continuing responsibility for projects, questions, or problems that arise within an area of a program or functional speciality as defined by management. Work assignments involve a wide variety of problems or situations common to the segment of the program or function for which the employee is responsible. Each assignment typically consists of a series of related actions or decisions prior to final completion. Decisions or recommendations are based on the development and evaluation of information that comes from various sources. The work involves identifying and studying factors or conditions and determining their interrelationships as appropriate to the defined areas of work. The employee must be concerned about taking or recommending actions that are consistent with the objectives and requirements of the program or functions. The work requires knowledge and skill to recognize the dimensions of the problems involved, collect the necessary information, establish the facts, and take or recommend action based upon application or interpretation of established guidelines. The work also requires practical knowledge, developed through increasingly difficult, on-the-job training or experience dealing with the operations, regulations, principles, and peculiarities of the assigned program, function, or activity.

The nature of the appellant's assignments exceeds the GS-6 level in that the work involves a broader range of situations and problems than described at this level. As at the GS-7 level, the appellant's work is specialized and involves continuing responsibility for configuring audiovisual and electronic briefing sites, including existing classrooms and conference rooms and those under renovation and new briefing facilities; researching various sources for availability of equipment to meet the [specific] departments' needs, etc., and recommending purchase of audiovisual and electronic equipment and software; ensuring that new and old equipment are compatible; and troubleshooting to identify problems with malfunctioning equipment. His work involves different coordination requirements, e.g., the various departments require different equipment depending on the method by which material (e.g., visual aids) will be presented. The appellant works with instructors and other presenters to determine the most effective presentation techniques to use in obtaining the desired results or objectives. Similar to the knowledge required at the GS-7 level, the appellant's position requires a practical knowledge of standard procedures in a technical field,

e.g., knowledge gained through extended training or experience to adapt equipment when the functional characteristics of the equipment must be considered. Overall, the nature of the appellant's assignments and the knowledge required for the position fully meet the intent of the GS-7 level.

Level of responsibility

At the GS-6 level, the supervisor assists with precedent assignments by providing an interpretation of policy. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting goals. Guidelines are available but often are not completely applicable to the assignment or have gaps in specificity. The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines and bases decisions and recommendations on facts and conventional interpretations of guidelines rather than on theory or opinion. Personal contacts are with employees in the agency or in other agencies, with management, or with those using the services. The contacts are for the purpose of providing, receiving, or developing information in order to identify problems, needs, or issues or coordinate work efforts and resolve problems.

At the GS-7 level, the supervisor makes assignments in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee independently completes assignments in accordance with accepted practices, resolving most conflicts that arise. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and conformance to policy. Guidelines for the work are more complex than at the GS-6 level because the employee encounters a wider variety of problems and situations which require choosing alternative responses. Guides, such as regulations, policy statements, and precedent cases, tend to be general and descriptive of intent, but they do not specifically cover all aspects of the assignments. Employees must use significant judgment and interpretation to apply the guides to specific cases and adapt or improvise procedures to accommodate unusual or one-of-a-kind situations. The contacts and purpose of contacts are usually the same as at the GS-6 level. However, to a greater degree, the employee serves as a central point of contact to provide authoritative explanations of requirements, regulations, and procedures and to resolve operational problems or disagreements affecting assigned areas.

The appellant's level of responsibility exceeds the GS-6 level in that he operates with more independence and receives less assistance from the supervisor than described at that level. Based on overall program objectives, the appellant works independently, using a general understanding of the expected outcomes and the scope of the assignments. He draws upon experience in resolving problems (e.g., repairing or arranging for repair of malfunctioning equipment; ensuring that newer equipment integrates with older equipment; configuring classrooms, theaters, or conference rooms to meet the needs of the instructors, presenters, or others who use the facilities). He keeps his supervisor informed of the status of projects or other work. For the most part, his work is reviewed after it is completed. Guidelines used by the appellant include Air Force regulations, oral instructions, and vendor-supplied operator's manuals. Similar to the illustration at the GS-7 level where the employee may obtain assistance from others, the appellant also calls upon other sources, such as other Air Force personnel, universities, and vendors, for guidance or

assistance. He uses judgment in applying guidelines to specific situations, such as determining which computer software or hardware or other audiovisual equipment will meet the needs of the instructors, the [students], or others for the variety of briefings, presentations, symposiums, conferences, or programs that are held at the [appellant's location]. The appellant is the central point of contact within the [specific] department concerning multimedia needs. Contacts are established with instructors, [students], vendors, visiting dignitaries and entertainers and other celebrities, and other users of the facilities to plan, coordinate, or advise on requested audiovisual services; to provide training to users of the equipment; or to resolve operating or equipment problems. During the renovation of [two specific facilities], his contacts with representatives of the contractor and Air Force engineers are to ensure that conduits, cables, etc., are installed appropriately within the rooms. Overall, the appellant's level of responsibility is consistent with that depicted at the GS-7 level.

Summary

Based on application of this Guide, GS-7 is the proper grade of the appellant's position since both factors meet that level.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly covered by the GS-1001 series, graded at GS-7, and titled at the agency's discretion.