

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



Atlanta Oversight Division
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972
Atlanta, GA 30303

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

Appellant: [appellant's name]
Agency classification: Supply Technician
GS-2005-5
Organization: Veterans Affairs Medical Center
OPM decision: Supply Technician
GS-2005-5
OPM decision number: C-2005-05-05

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

9/20/99

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 address]

[agency's address]

Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources Management
Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420

Introduction

On June 16, 1999, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted an appeal for the position of Supply Technician, GS-2005-5, Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, [city\state]. The appellant is requesting that his position be changed to Supply Technician, GS-2005-6.

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

General issues

The appellant discusses his concerns over possible conflict of interest because his agency has only one individual to assist with preparing position descriptions, and that same individual performs the desk audits and evaluations. He further states his agency is not upgrading employees in order to save money. These issues have no impact on our classification of the appellant's position and should be addressed directly to the agency.

In addition, the supervisor provided information concerning possible duties to be added to the appellant's position in the future. The classification of a position is based on the duties currently assigned to the position and performed by the incumbent. If other duties are added to the position in the future, the appellant's position should be re-evaluated by the agency at that time to determine whether or not those duties impact the classification of the position.

Position information

The appellant is assigned to [position description number]. The appellant, his supervisor and the agency have certified to the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant performs clerical and technical supply duties in the [section] of the Medical Center. He is responsible for maintaining accurate supply inventory levels from central store rooms that are located within the Medical Center. He generates distribution orders and picking tickets, conducts barcode inventories, and receives and restocks medical supplies. He processes all orders and requisitions received from the serviced organizations; reviews and posts the requisitions into warehouse stock; and ensures that the price, quantity, description, and other factors are correct. He ensures the proper cataloging of new items.

The appellant operates the Generic Inventory Package (GIP) automated system to maintain specified sets of official inventory records for medical supplies and to perform record searches, data input, and data corrections. He is responsible for keeping the records current and accurate.

He spends 60 percent of his time maintaining medical supplies that are used in the operating rooms to ensure adequate inventory. He determines the appropriateness of additions, deletions, and

restocking quantities of supplies based on experience, history, and knowledge of the installation's operations. He spends 25 percent of his time maintaining the supply fund inventory in the warehouse. He processes and posts receipts and issue book distribution orders. He makes adjustments and researches and compiles data related to item identification, stock numbers, cost, units of issue and suitability for inventory of items available.

The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines. He is available to discuss unusual situations which do not have clear precedents. The appellant independently plans and carries out his routine work in accordance with instructions, policies, training, priorities and accepted practices. Completed work is usually evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements.

Standard determination

Supply Clerical and Technician Series, GS-2005, May 1992.

Series determination

The appellant does not contest the agency determination that the position is classified in the GS-2005, Supply Clerical and Technician Series. The GS-2005 series includes positions involved in supervising or performing clerical or technical supply support work necessary to ensure the effective operation of ongoing supply activities. It requires knowledge of supply operations and program requirements and the ability to apply established supply policies, day-to-day servicing techniques, regulations, or procedures. We agree with this determination.

The appellant's position is properly classified in the Supply Technician Series, GS-2005.

Title determination

Supply Technician is the title authorized for all GS-5 level positions and above.

Grade determination

The GS-2005 standard is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to nonsupervisory General Schedule positions.

A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor levels. For a position factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully

equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor-level description in the standard, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

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

The appellant disagrees with the agency evaluation of factors 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. We have reviewed factors 1, 2, 8, and 9 and agree with the agency evaluation. Therefore, only those factors contested by the appellant will be addressed in the appeal decision.

Factor 3 - Guidelines:

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. The agency assigned Level 3-2 for this factor. The appellant believes that Level 3-3 more accurately describes his position.

At Level 3-2, procedures for doing the work have been established and a number of specific guidelines are available in the form of supply regulations, policies, and procedures. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use some judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines, references, and procedures for application and in making minor deviations to adapt the guidelines in specific cases. At this level, the employee may also determine which of several established alternatives to use. Situations to which the existing guidelines cannot be applied or significant proposed deviations from the guidelines are referred to the supervisor.

At Level 3-3, the highest level described for this factor in the standard, guidelines are similar to the next lower level, but because of the problem solving or case nature of the assignments, they are not completely applicable or have gaps in specificity. The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines such as policies, regulations, precedents, and work directions for application to specific cases or problems. The employee analyzes the results of applying guidelines and recommends changes.

Level 3-2 is met. The appellant stated that guidelines are available and he refers to them when he needs help in the areas of price changes, tracking supplies, and spending procedures. Although the appellant must use judgment to determine which guidelines apply in specific cases, there is no indication that he interprets or adapts the guidelines or deviates from established regulations, policies, or standard procedures on a routine basis. The appellant generally follows established methods and procedures which have been developed. He deals with similar or precedent situations that can be found in the GIP training manual for automation functions and VA directives and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for other functions of his work. Situations requiring significant deviation from the guidelines are referred to the Lead Supply Technician or the supervisor.

Level 3-3 is not met. Although the appellant is required to use some judgment when selecting guidelines and courses of action from generally established procedures, he is not routinely required to interpret or adapt policies, regulations, etc., or analyze the results of applying guidelines and recommending changes.

Level 3-2 is credited for 125 points.

Factor 4 - Complexity:

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work. The agency credited this factor at Level 4-2. The appellant believes that Level 4-3 should be credited.

At Level 4-2, the work consists of duties that involve related steps, processes, or methods, including work such as performing routine aspects of technical supply management functions in support of a specialist. The employee decides what to do by recognizing the existence of and differences between a few easily recognizable situations and conditions, and choosing a course of action from among options related to the specific assignment. Actions to be taken by the employee, or responses to be made, differ in such things as the source of information, the kind of transactions or entries, or other differences of a factual nature.

At Level 4-3, the highest level described for this factor in the standard, the work involves unusually complicated or difficult technical duties involving one or more aspects of supply management or operations. The work at this level is difficult because it involves actions that are not standardized or prescribed; deviations from established procedures; new or changing situations; or matters for which only general provision can be made in regulations or procedures. This typically involves supply transactions which experienced employees at lower grades have been unable to process or resolve, or which involve special program requirements for urgent, critical shortage items requiring specialized procedures and efforts to obtain. The employee decides what needs to be done, depending on the analysis of the subject, phase, or issues involved in each assignment, and the chosen course of action may have to be selected from many alternatives.

Decisions are based largely on the employee's experience, precedent actions, and the priority assigned for resolving the particular problem. The methods and procedures used vary based on the circumstances of each individual case. The work involves conditions and elements that the employee must identify and analyze to discern interrelationships with other actions, related supply programs, and alternative approaches.

Level 4-2 is met. The appellant's work typically consists of duties involving related steps, processes, or methods in performing standard supply management functions. Decisions on what course of action to take are based on the ability to identify easily recognizable situations and conditions, select the most feasible of the options available, and apply established methods or techniques as they relate to the assignment at hand. Although he does sometimes have to contend with new and changing situations resulting from changing demands and requirements of serviced organizations or specialized procedures to procure urgently needed or critical shortage items, the majority of the appellant's work involves routine processes or methods to obtain items that are generally readily available.

Level 4-3 is not met. The appellant's work does not routinely involve unusually complicated or difficult duties requiring deviation from established procedures. The appellant and supervisor stated that correcting errors made by others such as items ordered or quantity or vendor location changes, and inputting and posting items correctly complicated matters. However, these examples are not considered unusually complicating or difficult to handle and the actions taken require standard procedures. Additionally, the supervisor stated that the requisitions are reviewed before the appellant processes them and that the system recognizes some errors while the posting takes place. The level of difficulty and the degree to which standard procedures do not apply, as described at Level 4-3, are not characteristic of the appellant's assignments.

Level 4-2 is credited for 75 points.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect:

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, i.e., purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization. The agency credited this factor with Level 5-2. The appellant contends that Level 5-3 is more appropriate.

At Level 5-2, the work involves the execution of specific rules, regulations, or procedures and typically comprises a complete segment of an assignment or project of broader scope, such as when assisting a higher grade employee. The work or supply service affects the accuracy, reliability, or acceptability of further processes or services in meeting customer requirements in supported organizations and other supply units.

At Level 5-3, the highest level described in the standard for this factor, the work involves dealing with a variety of problem situations either independently or as part of a broader problem solving effort under the control of a specialist. Problems encountered require extensive fact finding, review of information to coordinate requirements, and recommendations to resolve conditions or change procedures. The employee performs the work in conformance with prescribed procedures and methods. The results of the work affect the adequacy of local supply support operations, or they contribute to improved procedures in support of supply programs and operations.

Level 5-2 is met. The purpose of the appellant's work is to maintain the official inventory records of medical supplies using the automated GIP system. This involves applying regulations and procedures in requisitioning, issuing, receiving, managing, and disposing of supply and equipment items. He reviews requisitions for correctness of data; identifies appropriate items and sources for ordering or identifies authorized substitutes; and maintains and reconciles documents related to the receipt and issuance of inventory items. He coordinates efforts with staff of serviced organizations and vendors to ensure that adequate levels of supplies are available to meet the needs of patient care and support organizations and permit them to accomplish their missions.

Level 5-3 is not met. The appellant's primary work does not focus on problem situations either independently or as part of a broader problem solving effort nor does it focus on conducting extensive fact finding and reviewing information in order to develop recommendations to resolve conditions or change procedures. Unlike this level, the appellant is not responsible for improving/changing supply support operations functions or the supply programs and operations.

Level 5-2 is credited for 75 points.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts and Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts:

Factor 6 assesses face-to-face as well as telephone contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain. In General Schedule occupations, the purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, and objectives. The personal contacts which serve as the basis for the level selected for Factor 7 must be the same contacts as those that are the basis for the level selected for Factor 6. The agency credited level 2b. However, during the telephone audit, the appellant stated that he believes 3b should be credited.

Persons Contacted

At Level 2, contacts are with employees in the same agency, but outside the immediate organization. Persons contacted generally are engaged in different functions, missions, and kinds of work, such as representatives from various levels within the agency or from other operating offices in the immediate installation. Contacts at this level may also be with members of the general public, either individually or in groups, in a moderately structured setting, i.e., they are

usually established on a routine basis at the employee's work place or over the telephone. Typical of contacts at this level are employees at the same level of authority in shipping companies, vendor employees concerned with the status of orders or shipments, and others at comparable levels.

At Level 3, contacts are with individuals from outside the employing agency in a moderately unstructured setting, i.e., the contacts are not established on a routine basis, the purpose and extent of each contact is different, and the role and authority of each party are identified and developed during the course of the contact. Typical of contacts at this level are supply employees in other departments or agencies, inventory item managers, contractors, or manufacturers.

Level 2 is met. The appellant's routine and recurring contacts are typically with employees, both clinical and administrative, staffing the various organizations located within the Medical Center. There are also recurring contacts with private sector vendors and their representatives, other supply employees at VA facilities, and warehouse personnel at the installation.

Level 3 is not met. There is no evidence that the appellant deals with individuals outside of the employing agency in a moderately unstructured setting on a regular and recurring basis. He does not typically deal with other departments or agencies, inventory item managers, contractors, or manufacturers.

Purpose of Contacts

At Level a, the purpose of contacts is to obtain, clarify, or exchange facts or information, regardless of the nature of those facts, which may range from easily understood to highly technical.

At Level b, the purpose of the contacts is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts or to resolve operating problems by clarifying discrepancies in information submitted by serviced organizations, resolving automated system problems causing erroneous transaction records, or seeking cooperation from others to resolve complicated supply actions.

Level b is met. The appellant's contacts are for the purpose of clarifying discrepancies in supply requisition information provided by serviced organizations; resolving automated system problems that have resulted in erroneous transactions; and problems related to shipment discrepancies, damages, and delays, etc.

The combination of Level 2 for Contacts and Level b for Purpose equates to 75 points according to the table in the standard.

Factor 6 and Factor 7 are credited with Level 2b for 75 points.

| SUMMARY | | |
|---------|-------|--------|
| FACTOR | LEVEL | POINTS |

| | | |
|--|--------------|------------|
| 1. Knowledge Required by the Position | 1-3 | 350 |
| 2. Supervisory Controls | 2-3 | 275 |
| 3. Guidelines | 3-2 | 125 |
| 4. Complexity | 4-2 | 75 |
| 5. Scope and Effect | 5-2 | 75 |
| 6. Personal Contacts and 7. Purpose of Contacts | 2b | 75 |
| 8. Physical Demands | 8-1 | 5 |
| 9. Work Environment | 9-1 | 5 |
| | TOTAL | 985 |

A total of 985 points falls within the range for GS-5, 855 to 1100 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-2005 standard.

Decision

The position is correctly classified as Supply Technician, GS-2005-5.