

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

**Agency classification:** Supply Technician  
GS-2005-5

**Organization:** Customer Service Element  
Combat Operation Flight  
81 Supply Squadron  
Air Education and Training Command

**OPM decision:** Supply Technician  
GS-2005-6

**OPM decision number:** C-2005-06-02

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Kathy W. Day  
Classification Appeals Officer  
1/26/99

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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).

Since this decision changes the grade of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of this decision, as permitted by 5 CFR 511.702. The servicing personnel office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected position description and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the effective date of the personnel action.

### **Decision sent to:**

[appellant's address]

[appellant's agency address]

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

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

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

## **Introduction**

On December 4, 1998, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), accepted an appeal for the position of Supply Technician, GS-2005-5, Customer Service Element, Combat Operation Flight, 81 Supply Squadron, Air Education and Training Command, [city\state]. The appellant is requesting that his position be changed to Supply Technician, GS-2005-7.

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's position was downgraded from GS-7 to GS-5 after the agency conducted a consistency review based on an OPM appeal decision rendered for a similar position in the same organizational location. The appellant disagrees with the agency determination that the position is appropriately classified at the GS-5 level.

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including information obtained from telephone interviews with the appellant and his present supervisor.

## **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's position functions as the primary point of contact for customers of the Standard Base Supply System who have questions or problems concerning the status of requisitions, receipt of supplies, or delivery of materials; who have some difficulty or complaint with some part of the supply process; or who have some unusual or critical supply requirement. He spends approximately 35 to 40 percent of his time researching problems that cannot be handled by other supply technicians. He also manages the Zero Overpricing Program, alerting item managers when customers identify overpriced items, and tracking paperwork to ensure explanation is received or customer is recognized for identifying the discrepancy. The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines; and 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, 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 should be 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 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. We have reviewed factors 2, 7, 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 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position:**

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work, such as the steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and

concepts; and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, a knowledge must be required *and* applied. The appellant contends that this factor, which the agency rated at Level 1-3, should have been rated at Level 1-4.

At Level 1-3, the work requires knowledge of standardized supply regulations, policies, procedures, or other instructions relating to the specific functions assigned. Most positions require familiarity with one or more automated supply data bases to enter, correct, and retrieve recurring reports and to structure and retrieve specialized reports. Employees use a sound working knowledge of the structure of the local supply organization and the organizations serviced. They use this knowledge and ability to perform a range of standard clerical assignments and to resolve recurring problems. Illustrative of work at this level is the combination of tasks concerned with the receipt, storage, issue, and replenishment of a wide variety of supplies, forms, and publications. Also included are printed material for use in special programs, as well as technical equipment, office furniture, office machines, and other nonexpendable property.

At Level 1-4, the highest level described for this factor in the standard, the work requires a thorough knowledge of governing supply regulations, policies, procedures, and instructions applicable to the specific assignment. Employees use this knowledge to conduct extensive and exhaustive searches for required information; reconstruct records for complex supply transactions; and/or provide supply operations support for activities involving specialized or unique supplies, equipment, and parts such as special purpose laboratory or test equipment, prototypes or technical equipment, parts and equipment requiring unusual degrees of protection in shipment and storage, or others that are unique to the organization's mission or seldom handled. This knowledge is also used in positions performing routine aspects of supply specialist work based on practical knowledge of standard procedures, where assignments include individual case problems related to a limited segment in one of the major areas of supply management, e.g., cataloging, inventory management, excess property, property utilization, or storage management.

Similar to Level 1-3, the appellant has a thorough knowledge of and uses a number of standard supply regulations and policies to resolve customer complaints or problems such as finding out the status of requisitions and why orders are delayed, tracking supplies delivered incorrectly, and assisting in ordering correct supplies when incorrect items have been received. He must be familiar with several supply databases, as well as the organizations he services and must have a good understanding of how the various aspects of the supply process, i.e., requisitioning, receiving, delivery, etc., operate and interact. He handles a number of problems from the different flights he services, many of which are procedurally similar in nature, e.g., finding out why supplies have not arrived or if they were shipped and delivered to the wrong location, where they are presently located. In many instances, he can research automated supply records and files or use established procedures that have proven effective in tracking and resolving problems in the past. He deals with a variety of common supplies, forms, publications, aircraft and technical equipment, office machines and furniture, etc., and he must have a good working knowledge of supply/stock control procedures to be able to follow item histories and understand procurement documents, shipping invoices, and other similar records. Many of the appellant's duties are comparable to the third and fourth illustrations under Level 1-3 which describe

responsibilities such as answering recurring inquiries regarding status of requisitions, delivery of material, and other questions received from customers; checking computer listings, item histories, procurement documents, shipment invoices, or other available records and files to determine the status of supply actions or reasons for delays; investigating and reconciling routine and recurring discrepancies relating to actions such as receipt control, stock control, and inventory adjustments; and searching summaries, activity registers, and other readily available reference sources to trace actions.

While the appellant handles some problems requiring more extensive searches and involving procedures that may deviate from the standard processes, his responsibilities do not fully meet Level 1-4. The appellant must be resourceful and persistent in his work. However, his normal activities do not require conducting exhaustive searches for required information or reconstruction of records for complex supply transactions involving specialized or unique supplies, equipment, and parts such as special purpose laboratory equipment or prototypes of technical equipment requiring unusual degrees of protection in shipment and storage. For example, stock items consist of administrative supplies and equipment and some aircraft parts and technical equipment for training which are commercially available. While the aircraft supported are specialized, they do not present the same difficulty in providing supply support as the special purpose or prototype equipment cited at Level 1-4. In addition, problems associated with the aircraft parts are normally managed by the supply managers in the flight. The appellant's research is time-consuming, requires an ability to understand the range of supply procedures from start to finish, and in some cases can be extensive; but the supplies commonly requisitioned are not of the unique or specialized nature described at Level 1-4; and therefore, do not create the complex transactions intended to credit this level.

Level 1-3 is credited for 350 points.

### Factor 3 - Guidelines:

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. The appellant contends that Level 3-3, rather than Level 3-2 which was assigned by the agency, 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 3-3 is met. The appellant's available guidelines include Federal and Air Force procurement and supply regulations, policies, and procedures, automated systems manuals, etc., that govern the bulk of the supply activity at his base. However, the appellant is responsible for solving problems which often occur because the standard procedures were not followed or some unexpected deviation in the system occurred. It is the appellant's job to analyze where the guidelines were not followed and adapt the procedures, if necessary, to resolve the problem. He does not normally consult his supervisor when deviating from guidelines and procedures but relies on his knowledge of supply policies and regulations to recognize how and when deviations can be made. He must use judgment to choose from several alternatives that he knows might solve a particular problem. According to his supervisor, he routinely recommends changes to procedures when, in the course of resolving problems, he recognizes an easier or more efficient procedure to use. There is no information in the record to support that the appellant exceeds this level.

Level 3-3 is credited for 275 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 rated this factor at Level 4-2. The appellant believes Level 4-3 to be appropriate.

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 4-3 is met. The appellant resolves a variety of problems that can relate to any aspect of the overall supply process and which other supply technicians have been unable to resolve. He must analyze each individual case, identify the problem area, and determine which course of action will most likely resolve the problem. He relies on his experience and precedent actions in many situations to determine the most probable cause of the problem and the potentially most expedient solution. His knowledge and understanding of the interrelationship of supply actions, as well as supply programs, is important in reaching a resolution to many problems. For example, he may be able to determine a probable location of missing supplies if he is aware of other flights that also order that particular supply, or he may be able to find a way to requisition supplies that the customer is having trouble getting using another process or criteria that is unfamiliar to the customer. There is no information in the record to support that the appellant exceeds this level.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 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 5-3 is met. The appellant independently resolves a variety of problems associated with the supply process. The problems can involve extensive fact finding and numerous contacts with vendors, transportation companies, manufacturers, other supply personnel, etc. The appellant must understand the entire process to determine not only where the error occurred but also what must be done to correct it and to ensure that the customer receives the item wanted when it is needed. There are a number of supply rules, regulations, and standard procedures which must be considered by the appellant, and the results of his work affect the local supply support operations. There is no information in the record to support that the appellant exceeds this level.

Level 5-3 is credited for 150 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 appellant believes Level 3 rather than Level 2 is correct for Factor 6, but does not contest the agency assignment of Level b for Factor 7.

*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, the exact purpose may be unclear at first. 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 is 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 contacts include various employees from other organizations in his agency, vendors, transportation companies, manufacturers, businesses, etc. The contacts are moderately structured in that the appellant is making the contact to gather information and makes the purpose known early in the contact. His contacts are normally at comparable levels, i.e., other supply employees, inventory managers, technical support employees working for vendors or manufacturers.

Level 3 is not met. The appellant's contacts are more structured than those found at this level, i.e., the appellant knows the role of the person he is contacting, is making the contact for the purpose of obtaining information regarding the supply process, and easily establishes his reason for the contact early in the conversation.

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.

<b>SUMMARY</b>		
<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-3	350
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 and 7. Purpose of Contacts	2b	75
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1285</b>

A total of 1285 points falls within the range for GS-6, 1105 to 1350 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-2005 standard.

### **Decision**

The position is correctly classified as Supply Technician, GS-2005-6.