

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

Chicago Oversight Division
230 S. Dearborn Street, DPN-30-6
Chicago, IL 60604-1687

Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Management Assistant
(Office Automation)
GS-0344-07

Organization: Visual Information Systems Flight/SCVI
375 Communications Squadron
Department of the Air Force
[city and state]

OPM decision: Management Assistant
(Office Automation)
GS-0344-07

OPM decision number: C-0344-07-02

Ricardo Sims
Operations Supervisor

February 19, 2002

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:

[appellant's name]
[address city and state]

Agency:

[human resource officer]
Civilian Personnel Officer
375 MSS/DPC
[address]
[city] AFB [state]

Ms. Mary L. Keener
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Department of the Air Force
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Introduction

On October 5, 2001, the Chicago Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant]. Her position is currently classified as Management Assistant (Office Automation), GS-344-7. However, she believes the classification should be Management Analyst, GS-343-9, Internet/Data Management/Publications Management. [the appellant] works in the Visual Information Systems Flight, 375th Communications Squadron, Department of the Air Force (AF), [city] Air Force Base (AFB), [state]. On October 24, we received the administrative report from her agency. We conducted an interview with the appellant on January 16, 2002. Both the appellant and her supervisor agree that the official position description accurately depicts the appellant's duties and responsibilities.

Position information

The mission of the Publications and Forms Management section is to manage the publications and forms programs, provide a master publication reference library, and distribute publications and forms to the 375th Airlift Wing and its tenant activities. This also involves developing and implementing installation policy to manage information throughout its life cycle. The appellant is one of four members in the Publications and Forms Management section. The primary purpose of the appellant's position is responsibility for the AF Publications Program of [installation] AFB, tenant units, and geographically-separated units, assuring that publications are submitted, edited, published, maintained in a current state and/or rescinded in accordance with publications management policies. The appellant's position description and other material of record provided more information about her duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Series, title, and standard determination

We reviewed position classification standards for the GS-343, GS-344 and GS-2210 series, as well as the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide. The appellant feels that the duties of her position fall within either the GS-343 or GS-2210 series, or a mixture of both, based on the following:

- The AF Publications Management Program migrated from paper products to electronic publishing using the principles of Information Technology (IT) in 1999.
- The internet is the primary mechanism to transmit publications to internal and external audiences.
- The program uses databases to store, retrieve, and develop standards to transfer data to and from the web servers via File Transfer Protocol (FTP) software and the internet.
- The program applies customer support principles and methods.
- Her work requires knowledge of interrelationships between multiple IT disciplines.
- The Webmaster for [installation] AFB publishing website requires knowledge of data storage, software applications, development and security, and networking in order to troubleshoot and analyze malfunctions on the web site.

The GS-343 Management and Program Analysis Series includes positions which primarily serve as analysts and advisors to management on the evaluation of the effectiveness of government programs and operations or the productivity and efficiency of the management of Federal agencies or both. Management analysts may be involved with an installation's publications and forms management program. Management analysis work, however, involves developing, evaluating and advising management on the methods and policies for providing administrative or information management systems such as records, publications, mail or forms management. The appellant's position description and our interview show that she does not perform this level of work; rather, she applies clerical and technical procedures, methods and techniques to support the publications and forms program. Stated more clearly, the appellant's job is to ensure that the publications and forms program functionally operates as intended, while the management analyst is concerned with whether the program itself meets the needs of management. The appellant's position does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the GS-343 series.

The appellant's work also does not meet the occupational criteria for the GS-2210 series. The GS-2210 Information Technology Management Series includes positions which manage, supervise, lead, administer, develop, deliver, and support IT systems and services. This series covers only those positions for which the paramount requirement is knowledge of IT principles, concepts, and methods; e.g., data storage, software applications, networking. The appellant uses IT in her day-to-day work, and she must understand how it works sufficient to meet the automation needs of the publications and forms program. However, the work does not require that she have an understanding of IT principles, concepts and methods as required for inclusion in the GS-2210 series. She uses automation as a tool to integrate, record, edit, store and disseminate information. The work that she performs in the IT area is not a separate body of knowledge classifiable to any one particular series, but the grade level of the work will be determined by comparison to the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide.

The appellant's position most closely compares to the GS-344 Management and Program Clerical and Assistance Series. This series includes positions involved in supervising or performing clerical and technical work in support of management analysis and program analysis, the purposes of which are to evaluate and improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of organizations and programs. Assistant work requires a practical knowledge of the purposes, methods, and techniques of management analysis and/or program analysis and the structures, functions, processes, objectives, products, and services, and similar features of Government programs and organizations.

Consistent with the GS-344 series, the appellant works independently to control and maintain installed administrative or information management systems (such as forms, records, mail, directives, or publication management systems). Work in this area includes assisting operating personnel in understanding and using the systems, identifying problems or deviations in system use, and making operational changes or improvements within the policy or structural limitations of the systems. In addition, most employees in this series use one or more automated systems to perform their duties. This includes word processing, spreadsheet, database, project management, graphic design, and management information systems. Employees in this series, similar to the appellant, use their knowledge of automated systems to enter, search for, edit, and extract data

and information and to create statistical diagrams, organizational and workflow charts, and other graphics.

Because an incidental task of the appellant's is to edit drafts of new and revised publications developed by installation proponents for spelling, punctuation, paragraphing and grammar, the Editorial Assistant Series, GS-1087, was reviewed for applicability. The GS-1087 series specifically excludes positions whose primary duties are classifiable to one series but whose work also includes incidental editing work. It states that such positions should be classified to the series which constitutes the primary duties. Over half of the appellant's work and the highest graded work she performs are classified to the GS-344 series. Therefore, the position is excluded from classification to the GS-1087 series.

Approximately 25% of the appellant's work involves managing the publications and forms program for [installation] AFB. The appellant is responsible for working with the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for publications they submit and ensuring conformance to Air Force and Air Mobility Command (AMC) publications requirements.

Approximately 25% of the appellant's work involves electronically storing publications and forms on the web site for use. Also, she is responsible for ensuring the documents are technically accurate and conform to the proper formats for electronic storage and retrieval.

Approximately 25% of the appellant's work is related to using various software programs to format forms and publications, insert graphics, integrate files, and send them to HQ AMC before they are placed on the local publications web site.

The appellant's other duties fall as follows. Approximately 10% of the her work involves conducting reviews of publications and the web site to ensure documents are accurate and current, and making the necessary changes. She also maintains a master set of documents and adheres to records retention and disposal schedules. Approximately 10% of the appellant's work involves composing, editing, and uploading the [installation] AFB Bulletin to the publications and forms web site.

The remaining 5% of the appellant's work involves providing assignments, updates and guidance to the other Management Assistant, GS-344-6, in her immediate organization on publication and electronic procedures. In the absence of the Section Chief, the appellant manages work schedules and assignments, attends meetings, and supervises the GS-344-6 and one military member within her organization. However, because this work does not constitute 25% of the appellant's time, we have not evaluated it any further against the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.

The prescribed title for GS-344 positions above the GS-4 level is *Management Assistant*. The parenthetical title *Office Automation (OA)* is added to the title of positions excluded from the Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-326, when such positions require *significant* knowledge of office automation systems and a fully qualified typist to perform word processing duties. Although the appellant's position description does not specifically state that a qualified typist is required, we agree with the agency's conclusion that such skills are needed to

perform the work. Therefore, the appropriate title for the appellant's position is *Management Assistant (OA)*.

Grade determination

The office automation aspect of the appellant's work is not grade controlling and, therefore, is not addressed further in our decision. The GS-344 standard is used to determine the grade of the position.

The GS-344 standard uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES), which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard or guide describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Consequently, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

The appellant's position meets and does not exceed the assigned levels for each of the nine factors in the GS-344 standard. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position

The knowledge required by the appellant's position is best evaluated at Level 1-4. Work at this level requires knowledge of an extensive body of management and/or program analysis technical rules, guidelines, regulations, and precedents. It also requires knowledge of the basic objectives and policies governing various management or program operations.

The duties of the appellant's position clearly align with an illustration contained in Level 1-4 of the GS-344 standard of an employee's control of the maintenance and development of various administrative directives using knowledge of the established content and format requirements and the purposes and functions of the organizations involved. They review proposed directives to ensure proper arrangement of material, consistency with existing directives, and proper distribution. They review existing directives to detect and eliminate conflict, overlap, and duplication and ensure only current material is retained. They devise ways to improve directives by simplifying, consolidating, or eliminating them. Employees discuss recommendations for changes with the using offices in order to gain concurrence.

The appellant's position requires knowledge of publications and forms management, policies of the AF and the AMC, mission of the various organizations at [installation] AFB, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and proper formats. She reviews existing information to detect and eliminate conflict, overlap, and duplication and ensure only current material is retained. She establishes contact with OPR and/or using offices to discuss recommendations and/or gain concurrence when proposed publications are submitted to her office.

The duties of the appellant's position is appropriately evaluated and credited at Level 1-4. Factor Level 1-4 is the highest level creditable in the GS-344 classification standard for this factor.

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls

Supervisory controls over the appellant's position are appropriately credited at Level 2-3. At this level, the supervisor or higher-level employee defines the objectives, priorities, and deadlines for projects or assignments and assists the employee with unusual situations, problems, or studies that do not have clear precedents. The appellant works very independently on her assignments, and consults with her supervisor only when problems are encountered, or to help troubleshoot. In the GS-344 standard, the supervisor or higher-level employee evaluates reports and other completed work for technical soundness, appropriateness of conclusions or recommendations, consistency, relevance of support material, and compliance with policies and requirements. The methods used in arriving at the end results are not reviewed in detail. The Master Sergeant in charge of the branch is the appellant's immediate supervisor. The appellant's immediate supervisor reviews her final products, as well as higher levels of command, and rarely are problems identified.

The appellant's duties are appropriately evaluated and credited at Level 2-3. Factor Level 2-3 is the highest level creditable in the GS-344 classification standard for this factor.

Factor 3, Guidelines

The guidelines for the appellant's position are best evaluated at Level 3-3. As stated in the GS-344 standard, employees at this level determine whether an organization's proposed directives, publications, or functional statements are within the scope of their established delegated authority or assigned function. Because of the unique or complicating characteristics of the assignments, guidelines lack specificity, or are not completely applicable to the work requirements, circumstances or problems. There are guidelines available in the AF Instruction and from AMC, but the appellant still encounters unique or complicating circumstances, similar to those described in the standard. The appellant must use her judgment in the selection and application of the appropriate guidelines in conducting her assignments.

The position is appropriately evaluated and credited at Level 3-3. Factor Level 3-3 represents the highest factor level creditable for this factor in the standard.

Factor 4, Complexity

At Level 4-3, work consists of various duties, projects, or assignments involving different and unrelated management or program analysis technical processes and procedures. An illustration of a project or assignment at this level is reviewing various new and existing directives to determine if they conflict or can be consolidated with others that are similar in content, purpose, and distribution. Publications, bulletins, and forms the appellant reviews vary in size from one page to as large as 30-40 pages. The appellant carefully reviews each publication, bulletin, or form to determine the appropriate format, and to ensure files are integrated properly before it is made available on their website. A lengthy publication that contains graphics and different files or formats requires the appellant to determine the appropriate format, type of file(s), and

software requirements when it is sent to HQ AMC, and eventually posted on their local website to ensure it is accessible to all customers.

The complexity of the appellant's work is best evaluated at Level 4-3. Factor Level 4-3 is the highest factor level creditable in this standard.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

The scope and effect of the appellant's position is best evaluated at Level 5-3. The purpose of work at this level is to plan and carry out assignments or projects to improve the efficiency and productivity of organizations or program operations. The appellant is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the AF Publications Program at [installation] AFB and is representative of Factor Level 5-3 described in the GS-344 standard. The AF Publications Program at [installation] AFB covers all tenant units (approximately 31 units) and the appellant responds to inquiries and telephone calls from all of them, as well as contractors, and her AMC counterparts. The appellant also ensures the [installation] AFB publications web site is accurate and current for all of the organizations at [installation] AFB, as well as the AMC and AF. The appellant periodically troubleshoots the [installation] AFB publications program website if problems are reported by users; i.e., encountering access problems to the website or the inability to link to publications or forms. If the problems are with the server, or other complex systems related to the local website, the appellant can contact the Communication Squadrons technicians for assistance.

The position is appropriately evaluated and credited at Level 5-3. Level 5-3 represents the highest level creditable for this factor.

Factors 6 and 7, Personal Contacts and Purpose of contacts

The appellant's personal contacts and the purpose of her contacts meet Level 2b. The appellant regularly contacts employees and managers outside her immediate organization for the purpose of providing advice or suggestions for improvements to publications submitted for distribution, or to answer phone calls or questions from even higher levels about a particular publication. As in the standard, contacts at Level 2b are with employees in the same agency, but outside the immediate organization, to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts.

Based on the individuals and the purposes of the contacts, the appellant's duties are appropriately evaluated and credited at Level 2b.

Factor 8, Physical demands

The physical demands placed upon the appellant meet Level 8-1. The work requires no special physical demands and is primarily sedentary in nature. Daily use of computer software and hardware is required. Occasional travel may be required.

Factor 9, Work environment

The appellant's work environment is best evaluated at Level 9-1. The work is typically performed in an office environment with no unusual risk or discomfort and requires only normal safety precautions.

Summary

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

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-4	550
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	<u>5</u>
	<i>Total</i>	1,485

The appellant's positions warrants 1,485 total points. Therefore, in accordance with the grade conversion table in the GS-344 standard, the position is properly grade at GS-7.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Management Assistant (Office Automation), GS-344-7.