

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership & Merit System Accountability
Classification Appeals Program

Atlanta Field Services Group
75 Spring Street, SW., Suite 1018
Atlanta, GA 30303-3109

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

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Security Clerk (OA)
GS-086-4

Organization: [organization] Office
[organization] Department
Chief of Staff
Marine Corps Air Station
United States Marine Corps
Department of the Navy
[location]

OPM decision: Security Clerk (OA)
GS-086-4

OPM decision number: C-086-04-01

/s/ Marta Brito Pérez _____
Marta Brito Pérez
Associate Director
Human Capital Leadership
and Merit System Accountability

May 18, 2005 _____
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]
[address]
[location]

[name]
Human Resources Officer
United States Marine Corps
Civilian Human Resources Office-East
[address]
[location]

Chief, Classification Appeals
Adjudication Section
Department of Defense
Civilian Personnel Management Service
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

Director, Civilian Human Resources Office
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps
2 Navy Annex
Code HRHB, Room 1213
Washington, DC 20380-1775

Director, Office of Civilian Human Resources
Department of the Navy
ATTN: Code 00
614 Sicard Street, SE., Suite 100
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5072

Introduction

On September 14, 2004, the Atlanta Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant]. He works in a Security Clerk (OA), GS-086-4, position in the [organization] Office, [organization] Department, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), United States Marines Corps, Department of the Navy (Navy), [location]. The appellant requests that his position be upgraded to GS-5. We received the complete appeal administrative report on January 21, 2005. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

The appellant makes various statements about his agency's evaluation of his position and the difficulties he has experienced in having his position re-evaluated and the position description (PD) updated. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Because our decision sets aside all previous agency actions and decisions on the appellant's position, the appellant's concerns regarding his agency's classification review process are not germane to this decision.

The appellant also raises issues concerning the increase in his workload as the result of changes in his organization's mission and the added responsibility for screening contractors and issuing identification cards (ID), and scanning and encoding flight line access to all Marines and civilians. He believes that the increased workload should be considered in the classification of his position. However, volume of work cannot be considered in determining the grade of a position (*The Classifier's Handbook*, chapter 5).

A large part of the appellant's rationale is based on his comparison of his PD to other higher graded PDs. Since the comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others, which may or may not be classified correctly, as a basis for deciding the appeal. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

The appellant compares his position to a Department of the Air Force (AF) standard PD for a Security Assistant, GS-086-5. However, the AF PD provided in support of his rationale contains duties that are substantially different from those assigned to the appellant. For example, the PD includes responsibility for processing requests for personnel security investigations, performing substantive reviews of security clearance applications, and establishing, processing and maintaining security information files. Additionally, the appellant compares his position to Navy Security Assistant, GS-086-5, positions located at the MCAS and Navy job announcements for GS-5 positions which he believes are similar to his own, but do not involve the variety of duties which he performs. Our review of the Navy PDs does not establish that the duties and responsibilities of those positions and the appellant's position are the same.

Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. However, the agency also has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant considers his position so similar to others in his agency that they all warrant the same classification, he may pursue the matter by writing to his agency's human resources headquarters. In doing so, he should specify the precise organizational location, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the positions in question. If the positions are found to be basically the same as his, the agency must correct their classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain the differences between his position and the others.

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and the agency, including the interviews with the appellant and the supervisor. The appellant is assigned to PD number [#]. The supervisor and the appellant certified the accuracy of the PD. We find the PD of record contains the major duties assigned to and performed by the appellant and we incorporate it by reference into this decision.

Position information

The appellant serves as a security clerk for the MCAS and is responsible for registering vehicles and weapons for entrance to the installation by issuing permanent decals, temporary passes, commercial passes, and other special passes to the appropriate individual, and fingerprinting all military and civilian personnel as requested. He maintains records and files on all issuances, e.g., visitation authorization letters, vehicle registration decals, fingerprint cards, and flightline access control rosters. He modifies, inputs, deletes and prints information relating to the Department of the Defense (DoD) vehicle decal registration. He takes pictures and makes ID cards for military and civil service employees and contractors, and issues vehicle passes for vendors and guests for special events.

The appellant enters data into three types of computer applications. He uses a security system pilot program that scans and encodes control access cards and contractor flightline access cards of those authorized to access the flightline. He uses the ID Card Works application with camera to print color ID cards for contractor access and other cards as necessary. The appellant also uses the Consolidated Law Enforcement Operations Center (CLEOC) database to keep track of personnel and weapon information and issuances of decals. The CLEOC system additionally allows the appellant to cross-reference the individual's name to ensure driving privileges are not suspended or revoked. The position requires the services of a qualified typist.

The appellant's supervisor provides guidance on unusual problems and/or resolves customer complaints. The appellant works independently on standard and repetitive assignments, and uses initiative and judgment to accomplish recurring work and resolve routine problems of a recurring nature. The supervisor reviews work through spot checks of completed work, customer feedback, and direct observation.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency classified the position in the Security Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-086, and titled it Security Clerk (OA). The appellant agrees with the series and title determinations. The agency used the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work (the Guide) for evaluation of the security clerical work and the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide (OAGEG) to evaluate the position's office automation (OA) duties. We concur with the agency's series, title, and standard determinations.

Grade determination

Evaluation using the Guide

The Guide provides general criteria for use in determining the grade level of non-supervisory clerical and assistance work. The Guide describes the general characteristics of each grade level from GS-1 through GS-7 and uses two criteria for grading purposes: *Nature of assignment*, which includes the knowledge required and complexity of the work, and *Level of responsibility*, which includes supervisory controls, guidelines, and contacts.

Nature of assignment

At the GS-4 level, the work involves performing a full range of standard clerical assignments and resolving recurring problems. The work consists of related steps, processes, or methods, which require the employee to identify and recognize differences among a variety of recurring situations. Because of differences in the particular characteristics of each case or transaction, actions to be taken or responses to be made may differ in their nature and sequence. The work requires some subject-matter knowledge of an organization's programs and operations. This type of knowledge is needed to determine what is being done, why the action is being taken, and how it must be accomplished.

The work example described by the Guide at this level is that of a security clerk who performs a variety of recordkeeping, reporting, and informational duties in support of the organization's security program. The employee compiles, maintains, and updates data, lists, and reports of computer passwords, security violations, and employees and visitors authorized access to the building and/or its computer system. The employee applies knowledge of the organization's security procedures, processes, and rules governing building access, reports of physical security violations, personnel clearances and identification, and computer access authorizations.

The GS-4 level is met. Comparable to this level, the appellant carries out a full range of standard clerical functions required to support the organization's security programs, such as verifying pertinent data, updating computerized and other records, issuing passes and identification cards, preparing standard reports, and reporting individuals who appear to be in violation of rules, regulations, and laws. He maintains folders for visitation letters and flightline access rosters and several office filing systems, shreds paper requests, and receives incoming calls. As at the GS-4 level, the appellant selects the proper procedures to apply for each transaction. For example, he ensures the military/civilian employees, contractors, vendors, and visitors have the proper

documentation, such as a visitation authorization letter, valid driver's license, social security card, and an auto insurance policy that carries the appropriate liability coverage to receive a vehicle registration decal or "park only" pass. He enters the name, address, driver's license and social security numbers, and the make and model of the vehicle into the database system. He checks guest rosters to ensure a guest is listed to attend special events on MCAS.

Like the GS-4 level, the appellant's assignments primarily involve recurring problems, such as checking for suspended or revoked driving privileges, expired ID cards through the CLEOC system, and incorrect documentation. He uses available guidelines to determine that documentation is invalid or counterfeited and alerts the Military Police Investigations (MPI) Office of possible illegal aliens. The work requires basic knowledge of the functional responsibilities and the subject matter knowledge of the Security Department's programs and operations. The appellant uses this knowledge to process transactions and respond to routine inquiries from the public.

At the GS-5 level, work consists of performing a full range of standard and nonstandard clerical assignments and resolving a variety of non-recurring problems. The work includes a variety of assignments involving different and unrelated steps, processes, or methods. The employee must identify and understand the issues involved in each assignment and determine what steps and procedures are necessary and the order of their performance. Completion of each transaction typically involves selecting a course of action from a number of possibilities. The work requires extensive knowledge of an organization's rules, procedures, operations, or business practices to perform the more complex, interrelated, or one-of-a-kind clerical processing procedures.

The GS-5 level is not met. The appellant typically accomplishes his work through the execution of a series of recurring and related procedural steps, processes and methods which are readily available and identifiable. Unlike work at the GS-5 level, each transaction is standard in nature and does not require selecting a course of action from a number of possibilities. The record shows that the appellant's work requires some subject-matter knowledge of the organization's programs and operations, but not the depth of knowledge of the organization's rules, procedures, or practices, typical of the GS-5 level, to perform nonstandard assignments and resolve non-recurring problems.

Therefore, this factor is credited at the GS-4 level.

Level of responsibility

At the GS-4 level, the supervisor provides little assistance with recurring assignments, and the employee uses initiative to complete work in accordance with accepted practices. Unusual situations may require the assistance of the supervisor or higher level employee, and the completed work may be reviewed more closely. Procedures for doing the work have been established and a number of specific guidelines are available. The employee uses judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines, references, and procedures. The employee has contacts with co-workers and people outside the organization to exchange information and to resolve problems in connection with the immediate assignments.

The GS-4 level is met. The appellant exercises judgment and uses instructions and applicable, standard procedures to independently carry out assignments with which he has previous experience. As at the GS-4 level, he selects appropriate guidelines for individual tasks, e.g., to modify, input, delete and print information relating to the DoD vehicle decal registration and affix car decals. He must use other applicable guidelines for duties involving issuance of ID cards for military and civil service employees and contractors, vehicle passes for vendors and guest special events, registration of weapons, entering information in three different computer databases, etc. As at the GS-4 level, the supervisor provides guidance when unusual problems or matters requiring deviating from normal procedures or policies arise, such as situations involving individuals with revoked driving privileges or contractors who are illegal aliens. The appellant also informs the supervisor and contacts the MPI Office when he examines social security cards, drivers' licenses, and passports and questions validity. Comparable to the GS-4 level, the appellant's contacts are with co-workers and people outside the organization to exchange information and respond to routine inquiries from the public.

At the GS-5 level, the supervisor assigns work by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance on assignments that do not have clear precedents. The employee works in accordance with accepted practices and completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and effectiveness in meeting goals. Extensive guides in the form of instructions, manuals, regulations, and precedents apply to the work. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines for application and adapting them according to circumstances of the specific case or transaction. A number of procedural problems may arise which also require interpretation and adaptation of established guides. Often, the employee must determine which of several alternative guidelines to use. If existing guidelines cannot be applied, the employee refers the matter to the supervisor. Contacts are with a variety of persons within and outside the agency for the purpose of receiving or providing information relating to the work or resolving operating problems in connection with recurring responsibilities.

The GS-5 level is not met. The appellant's work is performed in accordance with standard procedures, office policies, and organizational and agency instructions which are readily available and cover most situations. Guidelines relate to the entry instructions and procedures for MCAS and use of systems, but are not so extensive, as intended for the GS-5 level, that the appellant must regularly use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines for application. The appellant's position requires some judgment in screening individuals and documents, but it does not require regular and recurring interpretation or adaptation of available or established guidance and procedures to resolve problems that may be encountered. These types of problems are referred to his supervisor.

Therefore this factor is credited at the GS-4 level.

Both *Nature of assignment* and *Level of responsibility* are evaluated at the GS-4 level. Therefore, the appellant's general clerical duties are properly evaluated at the GS-4 level.

Evaluation using the OAGEG

The appellant's OA duties cannot be graded higher than his clerical and assistance duties since they do not routinely involve a wide variety of nonstandard automation problems or assignments requiring knowledge of *advanced* functions of more than one type of software, e.g., developing methods for automating complex administrative reports, including the detailed functional procedures needed to automate the data. The appellant uses a variety of standard software functions, resulting in evaluation of his OA work at a lower grade than the clerical and administrative work. Therefore, his OA work does not impact the final grade level work of the position.

Summary

The position's clerical duties are properly evaluated at the GS-4 level. The office automation duties do not affect this grade. Based on application of the mixed grade position criteria as stated in *The Classifier's Handbook*, Chapter 5, the final grade of the appellant's position is determined to be GS-4.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Security Clerk (OA), GS-086-4.