

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:** Administrative Support Assistant (OA)  
GS-303-5

**Organization:** Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)  
[name] Services  
Deputy Commander for Clinical Services  
[name] Army Medical  
Center  
U.S. Department of the Army  
[location]

**OPM decision:** Title at the agency's discretion  
GS-303-3

**OPM decision number:** C-0303-03-04

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

March 9, 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).

Since this decision lowers the grade of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the sixth pay period after the date of this decision, as permitted by 5 CFR 511.702. The applicable provisions of parts 351, 432, 536, and 752 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, must be followed in implementing the decision. If the appellant is entitled to grade retention, the two-year retention period begins on the date this decision is implemented. Since position descriptions must meet the standard of adequacy in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, section III.E, the appellant's position description must also be revised, as discussed in this decision. 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:**

PERSONAL

[appellant]

[name] Army

Medical Center

Department of the Army

[address]

[address]

[location]

[name]

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## **Introduction**

On August, 3, 2004, the Atlanta Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [appellant]. He occupies an Administrative Support Assistant (OA), GS-303-5, position in the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), [name] Services, [name] Army Medical Center [acronym], U.S. Department of the Army, [location]. The appellant requests that his position be classified as Medical Records Technician, GS-675-7. We received the complete administrative report from the agency on August 27, 2004. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112 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 treatment he has received in seeking the reevaluation of his position. He believes that the increased volume of his workload should be a consideration in the classification of his position. Volume of work cannot be considered in determining the grade of a position (*The Classifiers Handbook*, Chapter 5).

The appellant states that he has seen position descriptions (PDs) for GS-7 positions similar to his but those PDs do not include regional responsibility duties. 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). Since the comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others 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.

Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. Section 511.612 of 5 CFR requires that agencies review their own classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to insure consistency with OPM certificates. Thus, the agency has the primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant considers his position so similar to warrant the same classification, he may pursue the matter by writing to his agency headquarters human resources office. 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, 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 information obtained from telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor, an on-site desk audit of the appellant's position, and the PD of record.

## Position information

The appellant is assigned to PD number [#]. The appellant's supervisor certified to the accuracy of the PD. The appellant did not certify the PD's accuracy and stated the PD is too generic and does not state, list, or reflect the duties, responsibilities, and magnitude of performance expected of the position. The appellant notes that he has assumed many of the duties previously performed by the organization's secretary position, which was abolished in April 2004.

A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position by a responsible management official; i.e., a person with authority to assign work to a position. A position is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by an employee. Classification appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a position and decide an appeal on the basis of the duties assigned by management and performed by the employee. We classify a real operating position, and not simply the PD.

Our fact finding revealed that many of the duties in the abolished secretary position overlapped with duties already in the appellant's PD. However, we found that the appellant is not performing all of the duties identified in his PD of record and the duties that he does perform do not impose the level of difficulty and responsibility indicated in the PD. For example, the appellant does not serve as the mail control officer, does not make extensive travel arrangements, does not schedule patients, and does not resolve a variety of non-recurring problems or perform new or unusual assignments requiring atypical procedures. Additionally, the appellant's work does not require exercise of extensive knowledge of the ASAP to perform one of a kind assignments requiring determination of necessary procedures. Rather, the appellant performs recurring and repetitive procedural duties which do not require extensive program knowledge.

Although the appellant's PD identifies the need for a qualified typist (40 words per minute), the record does not support this requirement. The appellant's duties and responsibilities involve the use of automation software in the preparation of informal correspondence, such as e-mail and notes, meeting reports, data entry, and pertinent information for form letters. However, the appeal record, which includes performance standards, reviewed by the supervisor and appellant in January 2004, and discussion with the supervisor, does not reflect that a fully qualified typist is required for the performance of the office automation work.

Since PDs must meet the standard of adequacy in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, the appellant's agency must revise his PD to meet that standard.

The appellant works in the ASAP Office whose mission is to provide comprehensive alcohol and drug rehabilitation treatment to installation employees, both military and civilian, and family members. The appellant provides services primarily for the outpatient treatment program. Patients in the outpatient program receive services from the program counselors (three GS-11 social workers or a contractor counselor). The appellant performs records scanning, database entry and information retrieval, and files maintenance associated with the proper administration of the program. He scans closed records onto Compact Read/Write disks using an optical reading device and transfers patient records for those who have been transferred to other locations. He performs in-processing of new patients in the outpatient clinic and tracks patient

interactions with the clinic, which primarily consists of inputting data from several forms provided from clinical counselors into agency medical databases. He selects the appropriate database based on the nature of the report (alcohol or drug) and the status of the case. The appellant is responsible for corrections for any invalid transactions involving the same type of patient record data. This requires that he search the file or the database for the missing or correct information, such as name, social security number, date of birth, and date of treatment, or request completion by the counselor of technical data. He also files documents in the patients' ASAP medical records and serves as an information point of contact for the filing of records and technical procedures for preparing records for shipment. Both the supervisor and the appellant stated that the work does not require knowledge of medical terminology.

The appellant prepares the local standard clinic reports monthly by retrieving data from the database, and along with the local report, consolidates, on a quarterly basis, the input from nine other regional ASAP clinics which fall under the purview of the ASAP Program Office for transmission to the Army Medical Command. The appellant manually records minutes for performance improvement meetings and impaired health care meetings, then types and provides them to another employee for review before they are given to the Clinic Director for review and finalization. This requires a practical understanding of the organization and activities of the clinic. The appellant prepares form letters and informal correspondence; e.g., e-mail reminders of meetings, reports requirements, or follow-up actions requested by the supervisor, responses to questions from the office staff or staff of outlying clinics on established procedures and non-technical inquiries, status information for actions within his area of assignment, etc. He prints graphic presentations, responds to non-technical inquiries and refers others to appropriate clinic personnel, orders office supplies and publications, and contacts various parties concerning office requirements and suspense items due to the office. The appellant also assists others in the office in the use of office automation equipment and is the point of contact for equipment repair. On a rotating basis with other office clerical personnel; i.e. a Medical Support Assistant, GS-679-4, and a contract employee, the appellant provides receptionist coverage for the program office, e.g., answering the telephone, greeting visitors, and other general clerical tasks related to office functions. He refers to others all questions involving inpatient treatment and operations.

The PD states that administrative/clerical support duties comprise 70 percent of the position's duties and the office automation duties the other 30 percent. However, the stated administrative/clerical support duties, e.g., completing travel orders, providing reports, maintaining reports suspense control, maintaining closed records, etc., require use of office automation equipment and the appellant actually spends more than 50 percent of his time, in records scanning, data entry, and other tasks requiring use of office automation equipment. The supervisor stated that the paramount requirement of the position is office automation, e.g. data entry, and record scanning, preparation of form letters, etc.

The supervisor, a Supervisory Social Worker, GS-135-13, reviews the appellant's work weekly, primarily for accuracy of data input. She sets his work priorities; however, routine work is performed without close oversight.

### **Series, title, and standard determination**

The appellant believes his position should be classified in the Medical Records Technician Series, GS-675. The GS-675 series includes technical support work in connection with processing and maintaining medical records for compliance with regulatory requirements in support of medical records programs. It also covers positions that review, analyze, code, abstract, and compile, or extract medical records data. The work requires a practical knowledge of medical records procedures and references, and the organization and consistency of medical records. It also requires a basic knowledge of human anatomy, physiology, and medical terminology.

While the appellant's work requires some limited or practical knowledge of medical record maintenance; i.e., the proper placement of specific forms within the files and proper completion of several standard patient forms, it does not constitute the broader knowledge of the procedures and references or the organization and consistency of medical records. The two primary forms, i.e., the in-processing forms, which he receives from the clinic counselors and is responsible for filing in the ASAP patient record, are excluded by agency regulation from the definition of medical records. Additionally, the appellant's work does not require knowledge of human anatomy, physiology or medical terminology. Therefore, the appellant's position is not covered by the GS-675 series.

We also considered the Medical Support Assistant Series, GS-679. It includes one grade interval administrative support positions that supervise, lead, or perform support work in connection with the care and treatment given to patients in wards, clinics, or other such units of a medical facility. The work includes functions such as serving as a receptionist, performing record keeping duties, and providing miscellaneous support to the medical staff of the unit. This series includes work that requires a practical knowledge of computerized data entry and information processing systems, the medical facility's organization and services, basic rules and regulations governing visitors and patient treatment, and a practical knowledge of the standard procedures, medical records, and medical terminology of the unit supported.

Unlike GS-679 functions, the appellant's work primarily supports program counselors, who are social workers, rather than medical staff. The appellant's position performs some duties similar to GS-679 work, e.g., he serves on a rotating basis as a receptionist for the unit and greets patients, inputs basic patient information, e.g., patient name, social security number, date of birth, date of treatment, etc., into the computerized system, serves as the regional point of contact for filing of ASAP medical records and procedures for preparing records for shipment. However, his work does not require a practical knowledge of the facility's organization and services, such as to schedule appointments for patients with other medical services and route requests for patient activities and treatment procedures; rules and regulations on patient treatment; or a practical knowledge of medical terminology.

We considered the Social Services Aid and Assistant Series, GS-186, since this series covers nonprofessional positions in support of counseling, guidance, and related social services work in social, employment assistance, or similar programs. However, this series entails work in support of persons served by the programs and has, as a primary requirement, the skill to communicate

and deal effectively with individual members of the particular population group served. Duties range from giving practical guidance to program members on day-to-day activities to providing information and assistance on community job training or employment opportunities. The appellant's position does not have a comparable requirement to deal with persons involved in the clinic's program. Similarly, the Social Services Series, GS-187, another series identifying duties and responsibilities in support of social services work, is not appropriate for the appellant's position since it includes positions requiring specialized program knowledge and service skills in providing assistance to individuals and families served by social welfare programs.

The appellant's position is also excluded from the Office Automation Clerical and Assistance Series, GS-326, because it does require competitive level proficiency in typing. The appellant's work primarily requires a knowledge of office automation software, sufficient typing skills to prepare weekly or monthly meeting minutes (after manually taking notes), prepare e-mail messages, and enter data, and the ability to apply these skills in the performance of general office support work. The work also requires some knowledge of clinical records and the rules and regulations regarding maintenance and closure of those records, and a general familiarity with the ASAP program practices and general office needs. No specific series includes work of this nature. The appellant's position is, therefore, properly assigned to the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, which includes positions involved in performing clerical, assistant, or technician work for which no other series is appropriate. Clerical work in this series involves the processing or maintenance of records or documents representing the transactions of the organization. Since there are no titles prescribed for the GS-303 series, the position may be titled at the agency's discretion within guidelines established in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standard*.

There are no published grade level criteria in the GS-303 series standard. The standard instructs that positions classified to this series be evaluated by the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work (Guide) which is used as a source of grade level guidance for work that is not covered by more specific grade level criteria in other guides or standards. Office automation work is evaluated using the Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide (OAGEG).

## **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-3 level, work consists of many different prescribed tasks, steps, or operations. Deciding what needs to be done requires the employee to choose from among similar procedures. The work varies primarily in factual ways, such as in the sources of information or



in the kinds of forms, transactions, or entries. Work requires a good understanding of the structure of the organization served and enough knowledge of the organization's terminology and work flow to employ the correct set and sequence of tasks, steps, or operations.

A work example described by the Guide at this level is that of an office clerk who performs a variety of clerical work in an office providing services to the public. The employee carries out such tasks as taking and delivering telephone messages, answering routine inquiries, recording and filing information on specific cases, and keeping time and attendance records and coordinating their submission to the payroll office.

The GS-3 level is met. Comparable to this level, the appellant performs a range of standard clerical assignments. The steps of the work are similar in nature, in that while there are various sources from which he is required to retrieve information for entering patient information into the program databases; retrieving information to complete the monthly and quarterly reports and consolidating the reports received from the other ASAP program offices; disassembling, scanning and shredding of closed records; following up on appointments with Unit Commanders by sending out no-show notices, they are all prescribed tasks. The appellant's work consists of tasks such as entering the patient information (Form OQ-45) data, inputting and providing the system-scored information to the counselor, and preparing travel orders and calling the contracted travel agent for reservations. The appellant corrects or supplies specific patient identification data on the form by referencing the database or other document in the patient's file having the same data or by referring the missing or incorrect data element to a counselor.

As at the GS-3 level, the appellant is required to know the organization's structure, workflow, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and processes in order to ensure that he can provide advice to other offices regarding established procedural requirements, e.g. procedures for mailing closed records and verifying data items for the quarterly report. He covers the front desk, which consists of answering the telephone, directing calls, greeting visitors and or incoming patients, responding to requests for non-clinical information about the program such as hours and location of the office. The appellant must reference per-diem allowances from an Internet Web site and prepare travel orders in an automated forms directory which requires typing in the traveler's personal information and information regarding the specific trip. The traveler provides dates and places of travel and the appellant contacts others who make the specific travel arrangements, such as flight costs, rental car arrangements. Accounting information is added to the form by other offices.

At the GS-4 level, the work consists of performing a full range of standard clerical assignments and resolving recurring problems. Work consists of related steps, processes or methods which require the employee to identify and recognize differences among a variety of recurring situations. Actions to be taken, or responses to be made differ in nature and sequence because of differences in the particular characteristics of each case or transaction.

In addition to knowledge of how to carry out procedures, the work requires some subject-matter knowledge of an organization's programs and operations; or of a type of business practice such as maintaining inventory records and replenishing supplies; or a body of standardized rules,

processes, or operations. These knowledges are needed to determine what is being done, why the action is being taken and how it must be accomplished.

A 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. 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 not met. The appellant's duties do not require subject-matter knowledge of the organization's programs and operations. The work does not require the appellant to determine why actions are being taken, or how they must be accomplished. The appellant's work does not require him to recognize differences among a variety of recurring situations, or to take action based on differences in the particular characteristics of each case or transaction. Unlike the GS-4 level, the actions to be taken in regard to a particular type of transaction do not vary, i.e., there are prescribed and unvarying steps to be followed for each type of record change.

This factor is credited at the GS-3 level.

#### *Level of responsibility*

At the GS-3 level, work is assigned in terms of what is to be accomplished and how to accomplish it. The supervisor is available if the daily routine should be disrupted and complications arise. Familiar situations or requests for information are handled independently. Guidelines are normally specific and the requirements for performing the day-to-day work are memorized, but judgment is required in referring some callers to the appropriate personnel or in providing information. Contacts are to assist coworkers and to provide information to callers and users of the services.

The GS-3 level is met. The appellant's work is recurring and procedures on how to accomplish it are established. The appellant independently handles those transactions that are within the confines of his assignment. Problems encountered are referred to the supervisor or other staff. The appellant only processes a few types of transactions and each of these involves only a few steps to input information, prepare standardized correspondence, coordinate travel request and complete travel order form, file forms in patient records, close files, etc. As at the GS-3 level, the appellant's normal contacts are to assist coworkers and to provide information to callers and users of the services. Contacts with counterparts and other staff from regional clinics are comparable in that they are to provide information on established office procedures.

At the GS-4 level, the supervisor provides little assistance with recurring assignments. The employee uses initiative to complete work in accordance with accepted practices. Unusual situations may require the assistance of the supervisor or a higher level employee, and completed work may be reviewed more closely. Procedures for doing the work have been established and a number of specific guidelines are available. The number and similarity of guidelines and work

situations require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines, references, and procedures. The employee makes minor deviations to adapt the guidelines in specific cases. The employee has contact with co-workers and those outside the organization to exchange information, and in some cases resolve problems in connection with the immediate assignment.

The GS-4 level is not met. While the appellant's day-to-day work is performed with little or no daily review by the supervisor, this level anticipates performance of more varied assignments than are performed by the appellant. The appellant's work is repetitive and, as such, unusual situations do not regularly arise. Unusual situations are referred to a counselor or the supervisor if they occur. Guidelines, in the form of oral instructions, standard office policies, organizational and agency instructions are available and cover all aspects of the appellant's assignment. The appeal record shows that the appellant does not routinely makes minor deviations to adapt guidelines in specific cases. When clear processes or procedures for a task do not exist, the appellant receives specific guidance from the supervisor. Unlike the GS-4 level, the appellant's contacts are not to resolve problems in connection with the immediate assignment, but rather to obtain information or provide established procedural guidance, e.g., the process for assembling statistics for quarterly reports, or personal advice based on experience for files maintenance or shipment. The appellant is responsible for calling in and following up on work orders for repairs of office automation equipment, telephone services, and public works repairs, and assisting others in the use of the equipment.

This factor is credited at the GS-3 level.

Since both the *Nature of assignment* and the *Level of responsibility* are evaluated at the GS-3 level, the appellant's general clerical duties are properly evaluated at the GS-3 level.

### ***Evaluation using the OAGEG***

The OAGEG is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Positions graded under the FES format are compared to nine factors. Levels are assigned for each factor, and the points associated with the assigned levels are totaled and converted to a grade level by application of the Grade Conversion Table. Under the FES, a factor level description in a standard describes the minimum characteristics need 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. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

The appellant compared the agency's determinations for all the OAGEG factors to the GS-675 standard's FES factors and disagreed with all of them. Because the appealed position is not properly evaluated by application of the GS-675 standard, the appellant's rationale applying that standard is not germane to the evaluation of his OA work. After careful review, we concur with all of the agency's determinations except for Factors 1, 3, and 4.

*Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position*

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts the individual must understand to do acceptable work and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply that knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, knowledge must be required and applied. The agency credited Level 1-3.

At Level 1-2, an employee's knowledge of office automation software is limited. Typing skill is supplemented by knowledge of a limited range of functions and procedures needed to perform basic office automation duties. The office automation work performed, e.g. standardized word processing, receipt or transmission of electronic mail, updating an electronic calendar, entering into a predefined spreadsheet or database, and retrieving data from specified electronic records involves a few related steps covered by specific instructions. This level includes skill in operating related equipment, such as printers and modems and knowledge of grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation and terminology commonly used in office settings.

Level 1-2 is met. The appellant uses electronic mail system communications, word processing, or text editing. He uses word processing software to make insertions or deletions or move material from one place to another; and stores, retrieves, and prints a variety of standard documents using form letters and/or standard paragraphs. He prints graphic presentations using a color printer. Comparable to Level 1-2, he enters data into and retrieves data from formatted databases, scans documents onto disks using several scanners, and checks for input errors on forms. He is required to transcribe minutes from drafts into proper format, with responsibility for correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

At Level 1-3, employees are required to apply knowledge of the variety and advanced functions of one software type, varied functions of more than one software type, or other equivalent knowledge of automated systems. Employees use this knowledge to produce a wide range of documents that often require complex formats, such as graphics or tables within text, to edit and reformat electronic drafts, and to update or revise existing databases or spreadsheets. They typically use advanced software functions, such as automatic generation of indices and tables of contents; importation of graphics or special symbols; creation of glossaries; and precise alignment of multiple columns. Some employees use several types of software for various office needs and must know the processing procedures and function keys for performing a substantial range of functions within each software type. Others use knowledge of specialized terminology to transcribe scientific or engineering reports, laboratory analyses, legal proceedings, or similar material.

Level 1-3 is not met. The appellant uses word processing software primarily to produce standard letters and meeting minutes, electronic mail, and database management software to enter and retrieve limited data into an established agency database and two local databases. However, the work does not require knowledge of software functions in order to produce a wide range of documents that require use of advance functions to enhance productivity or meet the needs of complex formats. While the appellant uses several types of software for office needs, the work does not require Level 1-3 knowledge of processing procedures and function keys for performing a substantial range of functions for various software types or to update or revise existing

databases or spreadsheets. While the appellant records and types meeting minutes, these are of a nontechnical nature and do not require knowledge of specialized terminology.

Level 1-2 is credited for 200 points.

*Factor 2, Supervisory controls*

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct and indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the employee, priorities and deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. Responsibility of the employee depends upon the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives.

At Level 2-2, the supervisor provides general instructions for standard, pre-established, or continuing office automation tasks, e.g., priorities, deadlines, and/or quantity. When the work is unusual or difficult, more specific instructions are provided regarding desired format, electronic storage requirements, maintenance requirements, hardware/software selection, etc. The employee works independently in carrying out familiar assignments in accordance with previous instructions, standard procedures for creating documents or entering or retrieving data, and established use of software packages. The employee seeks further guidance when new or unusual assignments call for deviations from established procedures or otherwise require special instructions. Completed work is usually checked for compliance with office procedures or instructions, technical accuracy and appearance. When the work is unusual, it is also checked for adherence to special instructions provided.

Level 2-2 is met. The appellant performs assigned routine tasks with limited supervision. The supervisor sets priorities and deadlines for the completion of assigned work. The office has SOPs in place to provide guidance for carrying out familiar assignments. The appellant works independently to perform established tasks. Assignments of an unusual nature are referred to the supervisor for further guidance.

At Level 2-3, assignments are given with information on general administrative changes, deadlines, and priorities. For work that has not previously been automated, the supervisor defines overall objectives. The employee works independently to plan and carry out steps for completing assignments in accordance with established office instructions and practices for office automation. When current practices or deviations in an assignment cause problems, the employee uses his or her own initiative to resolve them and coordinates efforts with other employees involved or affected by the nonstandard procedures. Completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, usefulness, and conformance to with office operating requirements and needs. The methods used to produce work normally are not reviewed.

Level 2-3 is not met. The appellant is not required to automate new work and does not work with nonstandard procedures. His work does not involve coordinating problem solving efforts with other employees. He brings all situations which require deviating from established

methods, SOPs, or instructions to the attention of his supervisor for recommendations as to the appropriate means of resolving the issue. The appellant's work is reviewed for accuracy, but since the work is limited in nature, review for usefulness and conformance to requirements as provided at Level 2-3 is not pertinent to this position.

Level 2-2 is credited for 125 points.

### *Factor 3, Guidelines*

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. The agency credited Level 3-2.

At Level 3-1, detailed procedural guidelines covering all aspects of the work are available and are directly applicable to the work performed. These include locally developed equipment operating and document processing instructions or repetitively used portions of more general operating instructions and correspondence procedures. At Level 3-1, employees follow step-by-step instructions to use a word processing system. They enter text from drafts in a designated format and follow instructions for identifying and electronically storing documents and for printing hard copies.

Level 3-1 is met. The appellant primarily follows established procedures for entering into and retrieving data from three national or local databases. Most equipment operation procedures are covered by repetitively used parts of available software user manuals. The appellant exercises limited judgment in document format, data input/retrieval, or machine operation. The straightforward nature of the reports and documents produced and the need to adhere to system and equipment requirements meets Level 3-1.

At Level 3-2, guidelines include both detailed step-by-step instructions for specific office automation tasks and more general procedural guidelines in the form of manufacturers' manuals and tutorials for users, agency correspondence procedures, style manuals, technical dictionaries, sample work products, etc. Employees must select and apply detailed instructions for each office automation task or function, when available. For tasks not covered by specific guidelines, they must search more general guidelines to determine the specific steps to apply.

Level 3-2 is not met. This level is characterized by the need to exercise judgment because of the number and similarity of guidelines or the availability of alternative procedures for accomplishing a function. The appellant's work does not require the degree of judgment described at this level, e.g., selecting from a number of alternative procedures when deciding how to accomplish the task at hand. While the appellant assists others in equipment operation, e.g., staff members who are unable to locate an electronic file, these duties are not a significant and substantial part of the overall position so as to occupy 25 percent or more of the appellant's time and warrant Level 3-2 credit. Similarly, the appellant's occasional preparation of an ad hoc report or one-time development of an operating procedure for one of the older scanners he uses does not constitute a recurring and substantial part of his assignment within the meaning of the position classification process. SOPs, equipment user manuals, and Army regulations are usually available for reference when needed. The guidance for accomplishing most of the

appellant's office automation assignments and tasks is detailed, specific, and generally covers all facets of the work that he performs.

Level 3-1 is credited for 25 points.

#### *Factor 4, Complexity*

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or the 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 Level 4-2.

At Level 4-1, the work consists of clear-cut repetitive tasks such as entering a few items of information to produce standard documents, retrieving specified items of information from an existing data management system, or acknowledging receipt of and printing electronic mail. The sequence of steps and the function keys used to activate the equipment and to perform the processing functions are prescribed in detailed instructions.

Level 4-1 is met. The appellant completes form letters, prepares and receives e-mail, enters or corrects repetitive data from several forms, scans documents, and prepares standardized, recurring monthly and quarterly reports. The appellant's office automation assignment is standardized and specific in nature. SOPs and Army instructions, e.g., data entry and retrieval and the scanning and transmittal of records, are delineated and clear.

At Level 4-2, the documents, formats, and specific processing functions involved require a varying number and sequence of steps and use of different functions from one assignment to another. Some assignments at this level involve using one type of software to create or edit a variety of standard documents requiring differing procedures and functions, or to process lengthy documents with a variety of format changes within each document. Other assignments at this level involve using two or more types of software, for example, word processing and database management, to process different types of documents, paragraphs, tables, and reports that can be combined in a number of ways and that require extensive entry of data from drafts. In deciding how to proceed, the employee must recognize differences in existing procedures and applications and make choices from among established alternatives. Such choices regard, for example, the specific software package to use, the specific format for different types of documents or for different sections within the same document, or the best printer type. Processing steps and procedures required to complete assignments are varied and numerous. These steps and procedures differ in terms of the type of software used, the type of document or specific report to be produced or edited, the specific formatting required for a document, the existence of prerecorded formats, and other differences of a factual nature. In addition, employees at this level are expected to recognize discrepancies and correct or question originators in such matters as improper formatting; errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation; missing information; or discrepancies between the nature of the material and the processing instructions cited.

Level 4-2 is not met. The processing steps and procedures required to complete the appellant's office automation assignment are more limited than intended at Level 4-2. Program guidance and system requirements dictate data entry, standard report formats and requirements, and

records scanning processes. Unlike this level, the appellant is not routinely required to create or edit a variety of standard documents requiring differing procedures and functions, or to process lengthy documents with a variety of format changes within each document. While the appellant prepares some ad hoc reports, e.g., military post population for the region and program participants by fiscal year, requiring him to consider data requirements and format, these are occasional and do not constitute a substantial portion of his work within the meaning of the position classification process. The appellant does ensure that spelling and grammar are correct in work products, as is typical of Level 4-2, but the overall complexity and variety of work also anticipated at this level is not present. His assignments do not regularly require him to use two or more types of software, for example, word processing and database management, to process different types of documents, paragraphs, tables, and reports that can be combined in a number of ways and that require extensive entry of data from drafts. Nor do they require, as at Level 4-2, choices on the specific software package to use, the specific format for different types of documents or for different sections within the same document, or the best printer type.

Level 4-1 and is credited for 25 points.

*Factor 5, Scope and effect*

This factor covers the relationships between the nature of the work; i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment; and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-1, the purpose of the work is to perform specific, recurring tasks required to maintain electronic records, and/or to produce various items in draft or final form. Production usually includes steps such as: selecting and adhering to the proper format; determining the spacing and arrangement of material; making entries to and retrieving data from electronic records; and checking references, distribution requirements, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The services performed facilitate the work of the originators of the documents or the users of the data maintained.

As at Level 5-1, the appellant performs office automation duties that involve the production of a variety of items such as correspondence, electronic mail, memoranda, and reports. He selects the proper format, determines proper arrangement of material, enters, and retrieves data from electronic records, and checks grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Data for required reports is standard while data for infrequent ad hoc report data is defined by the user and requested from the appellant. The purpose of the work is to produce usable and legible products to allow the information to be used in support of the organization's mission. The work facilitates the work of the originators and the users.

At Level 5-2, the purpose of work is to collect, select, organize, and provide information in oral or written form. The work is performed in accordance with established rules, regulations, procedures, and office automation practices. The work affects the way in which other employees document, store, receive, or transmit information, and increases the availability and usefulness of the information involved.



Level 5-2 is not met. While the work products affect the effectiveness of the program, the appellant's work does not affect the way other employees document, store, receive, or transmit information. This level is appropriate for positions that are primarily concerned with developing methods and procedures for office automation tasks and solving problems in existing methods and procedures.

Level 5-1 is credited for 25 points.

*Factor 6, Personal contacts and Factor 7, Purpose of contacts*

Factor 6 and Factor 7 are evaluated relative to each other. The nature of the contacts, credited under Factor 6, and the purpose of those contacts, credited under Factor 7, must be based on the same contacts. Credit for Factor 6 and Factor 7 is determined by reference to the chart contained in the guide.

*Personal contacts*

At Level 1, contacts are with employees within the immediate work unit or related support units such as points-of-contact and document originators. At Level 2, contacts are with employees at various levels throughout the agency who are involved in or affected by integrating or changing automated office procedures.

As at Level 1, the appellant's contacts for office automation tasks are primarily with employees in the program office. While he has some contacts with Clinic Directors and counterparts at other ASAP Offices, the human resources office and/or investigators requesting information on patients to provide services, he does not have regular and recurring contacts with employees under the settings described in Level 2.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1.

*Purpose of contacts*

At Level a, the purpose of contacts is to exchange information about the assignment or methods to be used to complete the assignment. At Level b, the purpose of contacts is to plan, coordinate, and integrate work processes or work methods for office automation between and among related work units.

As at Level a, the purpose of the appellant's contacts is to exchange information about the assignment or methods to be used to complete the assignment, e.g., to provide information on information needed to complete a task, or to discuss additions or revisions to infrequent ad hoc reports. These contacts are with request originators, with points-of-contact to receive data to update files, or with others to distribute electronic messages. The appellant does not engage in contacts that require the level of planning and coordination specified in Level b.

This factor is credited with Level a.

Factors 6 and 7 are evaluated at Level 1a and credited with 30 points.

*Factor 8, Physical demands*

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment, including the physical characteristics and abilities required.

At Level 8-1, the highest level described in the guide, the work is basically sedentary and requires no special physical demands. The physical demand of the appellant's position is comparable.

Level 8-1 is credited for 5 points.

*Factor 9, Work environment*

This factor covers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings, or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required.

At Level 9-1, the highest level described in the guide, work involves minimal risks and observance of safety precautions typical of office settings. The appellant's position functions with similar physical risks.

Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

*Summary*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-2	200
2. Supervisory controls	2-2	125
3. Guidelines	3-1	25
4. Complexity	4-1	25
5. Scope and effect	5-1	25
6. & 7. Personal contacts/Purpose of contacts	1-a	30
8. Physical demands	8-1	5
9. Work environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
<i>Total Points</i>		440

The total of 440 points falls within the GS-2 range (255-450) on the grade conversion table provided in the standard.

*Summary*

The clerical work is properly evaluated at the GS-3 level and the office automation duties are properly evaluated at the GS-2 level.

**Decision**

Based on mixed grade principles, the appellant's position is classified as GS-303-3, with a title at the agency's discretion.