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

San Francisco Field Services Group
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94105-0001

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

Appellant:	[Name of appellant]
Agency classification:	Information Technology Specialist GS-2210-11
Organization:	[Appellant's organization/location] U.S. Army Medical Command Department of Defense
OPM decision:	Information Technology Specialist (Applications Software), GS-2210-11
OPM decision number:	C-2210-11-03

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Michael J. Wilkin
Deputy Associate Director
Center for Merit System Compliance

August 22, 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 changes the classification of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of this decision (5 CFR 511.702). The servicing human resources 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.

As indicated in this decision, our findings show that the appellant's official position description does not meet the standard of adequacy described on pages 10-11 of the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*. Since position descriptions must meet the standard of adequacy, the agency must revise the appellant's position description. The servicing human resources office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected position description to the San Francisco Field Services Group as part of the compliance report.

Decision sent to:

[Name and address of appellant]
[Address of appellant's servicing human resources office]

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Introduction

On March 10, 2005, the San Francisco Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [name of appellant]. On April 13, 2005, we received the agency's administrative report. The appellant's position is currently classified as Information Technology Specialist, GS-2210-11, with no parenthetical title. However, he believes it should be graded at the GS-12 level or higher with a parenthetical title of Data Management/Applications Software (APSW) or Data Management/Internet (INET). The appellant works in [appellant's organization/location], U.S. Army Medical Command, Department of Defense (DoD). We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

This appeal decision is based on a careful review of all information furnished by the appellant and his agency. In addition, to help decide the appeal we conducted separate telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor.

General issues

The appellant does not believe that his current official position description (PD) [number] is completely accurate; however, his supervisor has certified to its accuracy. A PD is the official record of the major duties and responsibilities assigned to a position by an official with the authority to assign work. A position is the duties and responsibilities that make up the work performed by the employee. Classification appeal regulations permit OPM to investigate or audit a position and decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities currently assigned by management and performed by the employee. An OPM appeal decision classifies a real operating position, and not simply a PD. This decision is based on the work currently assigned to and performed by the appellant.

Our fact-finding disclosed that the appellant's PD is not completely accurate and does not meet the standard of adequacy addressed on pages 10 and 11 of the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*. The demands of the appellant's assignments described under Factors 3, 4, and 5 and the types of contacts described under Factor 6 in the PD do not reflect our findings addressed later in this decision. Therefore, the PD must be revised to reflect our evaluation.

The appellant makes various statements about the classification review process conducted by his agency and compares his work to a higher-graded position in his division. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM position classification standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others as a basis for deciding his appeal. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. Because our decision sets aside any previous agency decision, the classification practices used by the appellant's agency in classifying his position are not germane to the classification appeal process.

The appellant's agency 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 division that they all warrant the same classification, he may pursue the matter by writing to his servicing human resources office. In doing so, he should specify the precise organizational location, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the positions in question in his division. If the positions are found to be basically the same as his, the agency must correct the classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain to him the differences between his position and the others.

Position information

The appellant writes software applications and interfaces with local and DoD systems, including designing and implementing interfaces between information systems and medical test systems, and developing applications to extract data from database repositories for presentation to users. He develops, creates, changes and implements applications software on client server technology projects that access database structures and are Internet accessible. The appellant conducts fact-finding meetings addressing automation requirements with health care staff. The work is performed in accordance with applicable regulations, guidelines and technical and business functions. The appellant's work products are directly related to patient care and employee recordkeeping in the clinical and administrative areas.

The results of our interviews and other material of record furnish more information about the appellant's duties and responsibilities and how they are performed. Although not completely accurate, we incorporate the appellant's PD by reference into this decision.

Series and standard determination

The appellant's agency has classified his position in the Information Technology Management Series, GS-2210, which is covered by the Job Family Position Classification Standard (JFS) for Administrative Work in the Information Technology Group, GS-2200. Neither the appellant nor the agency disagrees, and we concur with the agency's series determination. The GS-2200 JFS contains appropriate grading criteria for positions in the GS-2210 series that must be applied to determine the grade level of such positions.

Title determination

The authorized basic title for nonsupervisory positions in this series is Information Technology Specialist, and neither the appellant nor the agency disagrees. The agency has assigned no parenthetical title to this position. However, the appellant requested that the parenthetical title of his position be Data Management (DATAMGT)/Applications Software (APPSW) or Data Management (DATAMGT)/Internet (INET).

The "Applications Software" specialty covers positions that involve the design, documentation, development, modification, testing, installation, implementation, and support of new or existing applications software. The "Data Management" specialty applies to positions that involve the planning, development, implementation, and administration of systems for the acquisition,

storage, and retrieval of data. The "Internet" specialty covers positions that involve the technical planning, design, development, testing, implementation, and management of Internet, Intranet, and Extranet activities, including systems/applications development and technical management of Web sites. This specialty only includes positions that require the application of technical knowledge of Internet systems, services, and technologies.

The appellant's position meets the APPSW specialty. He primarily works on applications software (also called end-user programs) which includes database programs. Both the appellant and his supervisor indicate that up to 80 percent of the appellant's time is spent in specifying, designing, developing, and implementing interfaces between information systems and medical test systems; designing and developing software and database structures when necessary to meet interface goals; specifying designs; and developing applications to extract data from database repositories for presentation to the user on the Internet.

In performing APPSW duties, the appellant designs, writes, debugs and maintains codes, refining the directions of the project manager to develop program language codes for the applications software. The appellant tests and evaluates software programs, demonstrating them to users and making needed refinements to assure functionality for users. He designs user interfaces and writes and maintains program documentation. He also assists in evaluating new applications software technologies. The supervisor is responsible for evaluation of new applications to make decisions on their use for [the appellant's organization].

In analyzing and refining system requirements the appellant works with hospital staff on determining final program results and outlook of projects such as refining appearance of user screens. To translate system requirements into application prototypes, the appellant writes applications software interfaces and programs that count patient intravenous lines and track courses for managing staff development. The appellant works with medical and administrative personnel to refine user needs and requirements for enhancements to user software applications, such as providing the Training Event System Administrator with the ability to manage instructor and student information. In planning and designing systems architecture the appellant is involved in security and network discussions with the lead project manager.

Like functions in the APPSW specialty, the appellant's design of Web pages provides user interfaces. He documents code in the program while the project manager prepares instruction documents for operating personnel. Utilizing programming languages, software development packages, and database management systems, the appellant's duties include writing and maintaining code, enhancing, testing, and debugging new and current [the appellant's organization] software applications. He also tests his programs to assure proper performance, accuracy of data, user ease, and conformity with security and privacy guidelines.

The appellant's position does not meet the DATAMGT specialty. In the course of writing applications software and creating tables and views that pull data from databases, the appellant's programs must interact with [the appellant's organization] current databases. While the appellant understands the design and organization of vendor provided databases and consolidates data from various databases, the installation's designated database administrator is responsible for administering [the appellant's organization] database systems and performs most of the

functions listed in the GS-2200 JFS under the DATAMGT specialty. These include analyzing and defining data requirements and specifications; installing, implementing, developing backup, and recovery of databases; and evaluating and providing recommendations on new database technologies and architectures. Although the appellant is concerned with defining data requirements and specifications and must be familiar with data management methods, the database administrator has overall responsibility for data management.

The appellant's position does not fully meet the INET specialty. The appellant's supervisor is the senior Web master for [the appellant's organization] and has initial contact with departments to design process flow of Web pages and provides direction and guidance to all development systems engineers on all developmental aspects of the Internet/Intranet-based networked systems. Applications software specialists at [the appellant's organization], including the appellant, have overall technical knowledge of Internet technologies. They perform construction aspects of applications on the Intranet by determining technical design and format of Intranet pages utilizing program languages and packages, such as XML and .NET. The senior [the appellant's organization] Web master decides technical planning aspects, such as which programming language to use, and holds the responsibility to maintain large network-based servers. He recommends standards concerning network protocol on interfacing methods of distributed Internet and Intranet information processing, network gateways, and access security mechanisms. The appellant's testing of the Intranet applications that he develops is performed in a test environment and is not tested under the full production environment. Another IT Specialist (INET) resolves Web site HTML problems, reviews troubleshooting instructions and control procedures, maintains checklist for validity and works with the [the appellant's organization] Webmaster in managing and administrating the Internet and Intranet servers. While the appellant is versed in the technical construction of the Intranet Web page creation, this does not meet the full scope of this specialty as described in the GS-2200 JFS; and, therefore, the INET parenthetical title is not assigned to this position.

For the preceding reasons, the proper title of the appellant's position is Information Technology Specialist (Applications Software).

Grade determination

The GS-2200 JFS evaluates positions in the GS-2210 series by use of the Factor Evaluation System (FES), which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor-level description in a standard 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. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level. Each factor level has a corresponding point value. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard. Our evaluation by application of the nine FES factors follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

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

principles, and concepts, and the nature and extent of the skills necessary to apply that knowledge.

Assignments at Level 1-7 require knowledge of, and skill in applying, most of the following: Information Technology (IT) concepts, principles, methods, and practices; the mission and programs of customer organizations; the organization's IT infrastructure; performance management/measurement methods, tools, and techniques; systems testing and evaluation principles, methods, and tools; IT security principles and methods; requirement analysis principles and methods; commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products and components; Internet technologies to analyze the Internet potential of systems, networks, and data; new and emerging information technologies and/or industry trends; acquisition management policies and procedures; cost-benefit analysis principles and methods; analytical methods and practices; project management principles and methods; and oral and written communication techniques. Using knowledge at Level 1-7, employees plan and carry out difficult and complex assignments, develop new methods, approaches and procedures; provide advice and guidance on a wide range and variety of complex IT issues; test and optimize the functionality of systems, networks, and data; identify and define technical requirements applied to the design, development, implementation and support of systems and networks, etc.

Work illustrations in the JFS at Level 1-7 for employees specializing in applications software include knowledge and skill in software design principles and methods; development concepts, techniques and methods; methods and procedures for integrating and optimizing components; infrastructure requirements; and applications and systems test and evaluation methods; requirements analysis methods; and new software design technologies; test and evaluation methods; and project management methods. At this level, employees specializing in applications software also apply knowledge and skill in database management principles and methodologies, including data structures, data modeling, data warehousing, and transaction processing. Employees apply Level 1-7 knowledge to design, write, test, debug, and maintain software applications that meet technical and functional requirements; design and develop efficient and effective applications through use of reusable components; ensure that applications comply with regulatory requirements; and ensure applications are consistent with the current and planned infrastructure and data environments.

Assignments at Level 1-8 require mastery of, and skill in applying, advanced IT principles, concepts, methods, standards, and practices sufficient to accomplish assignments, such as develop and interpret policies, procedures, and strategies governing the planning and delivery of services throughout the agency; make decisions or recommendations that significantly influence important agency IT policies or programs; provide expert technical advice, guidance, and recommendations to management and other technical specialists on critical IT issues; and apply new developments to previously unsolvable problems. At this level, employees have mastery of, and skill in applying, the interrelationships of multiple IT specialties; the agency's IT architecture; new IT developments and applications; emerging technologies and their applications to business processes; IT security concepts, standards, and methods; project management principles, methods, and practices including developing plans and schedules, estimating resource requirements, defining milestones and deliverables, monitoring activities, and evaluating and reporting on accomplishments; and oral and written communication

techniques. Level 1-8 knowledge is applied sufficient to accomplish assignments, such as ensure the integration of IT programs and services; develop solutions to integration/interoperability issues; design, develop, and manage systems that meet current and future business requirements; apply and extend, enhance, or optimize the existing architecture; manage assigned projects; communicate complex technical requirements to non-technical personnel; and prepare and present briefings to senior management officials on complex/controversial issues.

Work illustrations in the JFS at Level 1-8 for employees specializing in applications software include demonstrating mastery of, and skill in applying, systems engineering concepts and factors; software design concepts and methods; relationships among multiple IT disciplines; the IT infrastructure; and project management principles and methods sufficient to lead a multifunctional development project in software analysis, design, development, and implementation for a new system or major enhancement to an existing system; identify resource requirements; assign tasks to project members; ensure customer and management involvement throughout the software development process; resolve critical issues affecting the configuration of the IT infrastructure; and coordinate the demonstration of new and enhanced applications to customers and management.

The appellant's position meets Level 1-7. Like that level, the appellant's work requires knowledge of IT concepts, principles, methods, and practices; the mission and programs of customer organizations; and the organization's IT infrastructure. He applies the knowledge and ability to use programming languages, software development packages, practices and methods (i.e., Java, Struts, .NET and Object-Oriented Programming), to design and write medical and administrative applications software. The appellant's position requires an understanding of network operating system environments and interfacing programs and database management systems. He must possess knowledge of the agency's IT infrastructure including various Web server software and databases operating on IT systems, and knowledge of DoD medical center computerized applications which involve integration/interfacing of databases, local and COTS software applications and Internet technologies. His work includes developing, coding, testing and debugging locally developed programs and writing programs to interface COTS programs with [the appellant's organization] systems. He must follow testing and security principles and ensure that completed application programs comply with security access requirements and are accessible to users on the Intranet.

Similar to the work illustrations at Level 1-7, the appellant has developed design schema and designed enhancements to local programs. In applications software the appellant has knowledge of and applies user's requirements and workflow, software and database capabilities and limitations, programming languages (Java, C#, JavaScript, Visual Basic), programming frameworks (Struts), programming practices and methodologies (Object-Oriented Programming), and software development packages (JDeveloper, .NET). The appellant must use knowledge and skill in database management features by applying database management principles to tables with database applications software. He must apply knowledge of Web features and capabilities, such as graphical user interfaces in his work.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 1-8. The appellant's assignments and responsibilities are within the organization of [the appellant's organization]; he does not develop

services, make decisions or give recommendations throughout the agency on IT architecture, policies, procedures, or strategies. Although the appellant may work as the technical expert with medical and administrative personnel on projects, he does not serve as the lead or project manager on critical IT issues or serve as the technical specialist to other IT Specialists. The appellant's supervisor is responsible for applying security and project management standards, principles, and methods and mastering project management principles characteristic of Level 1-8. In contrast to Level 1-8, the appellant's work does not require or permit him to apply a mastery of the Level 1-8 skills to meet current and future business requirements and apply and extend, enhance, or optimize existing IT architecture; rather, he works on individual projects that may utilize various computer systems.

Unlike the applications software work illustrations at Level 1-8, the appellant does not apply the level of systems engineering concepts and software design found at that level, and he does not lead multifunctional development projects in software analysis and design characteristic of Level 1-8. Also unlike Level 1-8, the resource requirements, drafts of project plans, other team members, network and project management methods, cost, schedule, and performance goals are already established or pre-determined by the supervisor and project manager. The responsibility for applying systems engineering concepts and factors (such as survivability) is that of the database administrator.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1-7 and 1250 points are credited.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor measures the nature and extent of supervision exercised over the position, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

At Level 2-4, the overall objectives and available resources are outlined by the supervisor. Both the supervisor and employee discuss timeframes and scope of the assignment, including possible stages and approaches. It is the employee's responsibility to determine the appropriate principles, practices, and methods to apply in all phases of assignments, including the approach to be taken and depth of research in management advisories. Employees at Level 2-4 interpret regulations on their own initiative, apply new methods to resolve complex issues and problems, and keep the supervisor informed of progress and of potentially controversial matters. Work is reviewed for soundness of overall approach, and effectiveness in meeting requirements or producing expected results. The supervisor does not usually review methods used.

At Level 2-5, the supervisor provides only administrative and policy direction in terms of broadly defined missions or functions of the agency. The employee is responsible for a significant agency or equivalent level IT program or function, defining objectives, interpreting policies promulgated by authorities senior to the immediate supervisor and determining their effect on program needs. Employees at this level independently plan, design, and carry out their work and are technical authorities. Work is reviewed for potential impact on broad agency policy objectives and program goals, is considered technically correct, and accepted without significant change.

The appellant's position meets Level 2-4. Similar to that level, the supervisor specifies the overall objectives and resources for assignments, as well as timeframes and milestones. The appellant plans the appropriate technical coding methods and direction of his work. He determines and writes user interface design and decides on the proper method of achieving the project objective. The supervisor or project manager is briefed on work progress and meeting of timeframes. The supervisor reviews completed work for achievement of results and producing expected results but does not review the methods used.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 2-5. Unlike that level, the supervisor or project manager assigns work with more specific instructions than just administrative and policy direction. The appellant does not define objectives; rather, the objectives of the work are defined by the nature of the assignments and projects received. The appellant is not responsible for a significant IT program or function and does not define any IT program objectives. Those responsibilities are held by the supervisor and higher management officials. As a software development IT Specialist, the appellant designs and carries out the software development aspect of the work to be done on projects or sections of large projects, but his work does not require or permit him to interpret the impact of policies on overall program needs. Unlike Level 2-5, the supervisor reviews completed work products more closely than just for its impact on broad agency policy objectives and program goals.

This factor is evaluated at Level 2-4 and 450 points are assigned.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines used and the judgment needed to apply them.

At Level 3-3, employees use a wide variety of guidelines, but they are not always directly applicable to issues and problems or have gaps in specificity. Precedents are available outlining the preferred approach to more general problems or issues. The employee uses judgment in researching, choosing, interpreting, modifying, and applying available guidelines for adaptation to specific problems or issues.

At Level 3-4, the employee uses guidelines and precedents that are very general regarding agency policy statements and objectives. Guidelines specific to assignments are often scarce, inapplicable or have gaps in specificity that require considerable interpretation and/or adaptation for application to issues and problems. The employee uses judgment, initiative, and resourcefulness in deviating from established methods to modify, adapt, and/or refine broader guidelines to resolve specific complex and/or intricate issues and problems; treat specific issues or problems; research trends and patterns; develop new methods and criteria; and/or propose new policies and practices.

The appellant's position favorably compares to Level 3-3. The guidelines available for the appellant's position include the existing system configurations and designs, software and programming language references, and the agency's privacy act and security access regulations, which he researches, interprets, and adapts as necessary. While information and guidance may be lacking in terms of specific directions to carry out his functions, the appellant has available

and uses a wide variety of IT guidance, including reference materials and technical guidance, and available precedents addressing particular approaches to general IT issues. If the appellant does not have the necessary guidance to resolve particular issues, he supplements gaps in references by conferring with IT Specialists within the medical center and contacting vendors. Also, information assurance and security officers are available to provide guidance on agency security and patient and employee privacy policies.

The position does not meet Level 3-4. Although program policies and objectives may be generally stated, guidelines applicable to assignments are available and can be used to resolve IT issues and problems. Typically, the appellant's assignments involve development and improvement of software applications; and he has the freedom to interpret and adapt his work methods. However, unlike Level 3-4, his work does not require or permit him to adapt or refine broad guidelines. Additionally, he is not faced with researching trends and patterns, developing new methods, or proposing new policies and practices as noted at Level 3-4. To design and develop software, create data bases, views and tables from databases and input display data on the Intranet, he exercises judgment in adapting and applying appropriate IT solutions. However, the problems encountered are not as complex and intricate as envisioned at Level 3-4. While interpretation and modification of existing IT functions are sometimes necessary to develop and modify the appellant's software applications, typical of Level 3-3, there are references and technical guidance available to the appellant.

This factor is evaluated at Level 3-3 and 275 points are credited.

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor measures the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-3, work consists of various duties that involve applying a series of different and unrelated processes and methods. The employee decides what needs to be done based on analyses of the subjects and issues related to the assignment; and selects appropriate courses of action from many acceptable alternatives. The employee identifies and analyzes important factors and conditions in order to recognize and apply an understanding of interrelationships among different IT functions and activities.

Illustrative assignments in the JFS at Level 4-3 for specialists engaged in applications software consist of building applications software. Employees at Level 4-3 perform work from requirements approved by a more experienced specialist; generate code for multiple applications; translate, compile, link, test, and debug programs; prepare instructions for operating personnel; and maintain complete records of program development and revisions.

At Level 4-4, the work consists of a variety of duties that involve many different and unrelated processes and methods pertinent to the IT field. Employees at Level 4-4 decide what needs to be done by evaluating unusual circumstances, considering different approaches, and dealing with

incomplete and conflicting data. The employee interprets data, plans the work, and refines the methods and techniques being used.

Illustrative assignments in the JFS at Level 4-4 for specialists engaged in applications software include performing the full range of applications development activities for major software projects. Applications software specialists at this level identify system objectives, functions, and customer requirements; evaluate hardware and software alternatives and systems design strategies based on need and availability; analyze existing systems capabilities, compatibility, and interoperability; prepare technical specifications; monitor development; design and monitor testing; and conduct post-installation evaluation. Major software projects usually involve balancing competing requirements, integrating multiple technologies, and coordinating with network, security, and data management specialists to ensure security, privacy, and interoperability of applications under development.

The appellant's position meets Level 4-3. Like that level, the appellant applies a series of different and unrelated processes and methods to his assignments, deciding what needs to be done based on analysis of the issues at hand. For example, he writes applications software, interfaces DoD, COTS, and local software systems; develops applications to extract data from database repositories; develops presentation formats, such as Web pages and reports for users; and meets with staff to refine customer needs and requirements. Based on the goals of the assignment, the appellant must decide how coding will be written and ensures efficient syntax and logic and selects which servers and databases to access. He selects the appropriate courses of coding from equivalent and acceptable methods, identifies the programming language and applications software tools, and determines their interface with existing IT systems and operating requirements.

The appellant's position is similar to the illustrative work assignment at Level 4-3. Work requirements and objectives are outlined and approved by a more experienced specialist, the supervisor, or project manager. The appellant builds applications software. That work requires writing code to develop new applications software, enhance current programs or to interface COTS with existing systems. The work performed includes using programming languages and packages to develop software to perform functions, such as extracting and displaying data from existing databases and displaying Web-based information for hospital and administrative programs. The appellant writes applications software in various languages, including Java, Javascript, and HTML, and must translate, compile, link, test, and debug his programs prior to overall implementation. He demonstrates programs to users and makes refinements to assure usability for users in the initial test stage. In later stages, after production level testing and implementation of the program, the appellant may be called upon to provide further debugging or refinements in coding of software.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 4-4. Unlike that level, the appellant's work does not consist of a variety of duties that involve many different and unrelated processes and methods pertinent to the IT field. While his duties require applying a series of different procedures and methods, he is not faced with evaluating unusual circumstances (e.g., interfacing a new program system with several databases each with different protocols) or dealing with incomplete data as described at Level 4-4. The appellant's position is not comparable to the

illustrative work assignment at Level 4-4. Unlike that level, his position is not required to conduct the full range of applications development for major software projects, encompassing the related duties mentioned in the work illustration. The appellant's applications software assignments are limited to supporting the enhancement of existing programs (e.g., Training Event System), and he participates as a team member in the development of software assignments (such as the Hazardous Waste Disposal system and Employee Database) that are led by a project manager.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-3 and 150 points are assigned.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, as measured by the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignments, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-3, work involves a variety of common problems, questions, or situations that are dealt with in accordance with established criteria and affects the design, implementation, operation, or support of IT systems or the quality and reliability of services.

Illustrative assignments in the JFS at Level 5-3 for specialists engaged in applications software consist of writing applications, according to technical specifications, using a variety of applications programming languages and programming tools. The employee also participates in the planning and execution of unit and systems testing, providing support on execution problems, and modifying applications as necessary. Such work results in the development and delivery of applications that enhance the performance of customer business activities.

At Level 5-4, work involves establishing criteria, formulating projects, assessing program effectiveness, and/or investigating/analyzing a variety of unusual conditions, problems, or issues. Work affects a wide range of agency activities or the activities of other organizations.

Illustrative assignments in the JFS at Level 5-4 for specialists engaged in applications software involve analyzing and translating technical specifications into integrated applications that automate business processes. The work also involves executing the life cycle change process of applications and implementing design changes in response to changes in customer functional requirements. Such work results in the reduction of costs and improvement of the quality of a wide range of customer business processes.

The appellant's position meets Level 5-3. Like that level, his work involves a variety of common software development problems that affect the design, implementation, operation, and support of IT systems within medical and administrative business operations at [the appellant's organization]. His typical work assignments include tracking and providing data, accessing and creating databases, creating reports for users, and interfacing systems. He develops software that integrates and interfaces IT systems that support the Composite Health Care System that provides hospital and administrative staff access to information (data knowledge) on the care of patients. He also develops applications software that helps answer common problems and

improve organizational efficiency, such as tracking information and providing reports on patient care, soldier readiness, and the status of employee investigations and vaccinations.

The appellant's position is comparable to the work assignment at Level 5-3. Like that level, he develops applications and program interfaces in accordance with technical specifications and requirements prescribed by the supervisory IT Specialist or program manager. The appellant uses various programming languages, frameworks, software development packages, and database management systems to develop such applications software. He works with medical and administrative personnel to perform initial tests of applications software. The work results in applications software that improves the efficiency of business activities, such as recording staff development, documenting and providing reports on critical patients, and counting intravenous lines for patient care.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 5-4. Other IT Specialists at [the appellant's organization] including the project manager and supervisor have the responsibility to establish criteria and formulate projects with proponents/end-user customers, determine if the applications that software developers create meet project assignments and improve business processes, and investigate and evaluate unusual conditions or problems. The applications software the appellant develops can affect the business processes for the care of patients within [the appellant's organization] but, unlike Level 5-4, does not impact a wide range of agency activities or the activities of other organizations.

The appellant's position does not meet the illustrative work assignment at Level 5-4. Unlike that level, he is not involved in the initial planning stages of integrating applications for business processes. Software design and technical specifications for new software programs, or changes in response to life cycle changes of software for customer needs, are established by other IT Specialists before software developers are given assignments to write applications software. The appellant's work efforts follow the technical specifications provided resulting in his developing program code, accessing databases, and establishing reports and Web page formats.

This factor is evaluated at Level 5-3 and 150 points are assigned.

Factors 6 and 7, Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts

These factors measure the type of personal contacts that occur in the work and the purpose of those contacts. They include face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under these factors are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communication with those contacted, how well the employee and those contacted recognize their relative roles and authorities, the reason for the communication and the context or environment in which the communication takes place. These factors are interdependent. One first determines the appropriate level for each factor, and then obtains the point value for these factors from the intersection of the two levels as shown on the Point Assignment Chart in the JFS.

Personal contacts

At Level 2, contacts are with employees and managers in the agency, both inside and outside the immediate office or related units, as well as employees, representatives of private concerns, and/or the general public, in moderately structured settings. Contact with employees and managers may be from various levels in the agency, such as headquarters, regions, districts, field offices, or other operating offices at the same location.

At Level 3, contacts are with individuals or groups from outside the agency, including consultants, contractors, vendors, or representatives of professional associations, the media, or public interest groups, in moderately unstructured settings. This level may also include contacts with agency officials who are several managerial levels removed from the employee when such contacts occur on an ad hoc basis. The employee must recognize or learn the role and authority of each party during the course of the meeting.

The appellant's position meets Level 2, but falls short of Level 3. Like Level 2, his primary contacts are within the agency and typically with employees and managers within the medical center in moderately structured situations where the roles, authorities and purpose of the meeting are clear to participants. Most often the appellant meets with local health care professionals to clarify their needs for the development of applications software. The appellant occasionally has contact with individuals from outside the agency, such as software vendors; but these do not occur on a regular and recurring basis and unlike Level 3 occur in a moderately structured setting.

Purpose of contacts

At Level B, the purpose of the contacts is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts, or to resolve issues or operating problems by influencing or persuading people who are working toward mutual goals and have basically cooperative attitudes. Contacts typically involve identifying options for resolving problems.

At Level C, the purpose of the contacts is to influence and persuade employees and managers to accept and implement findings and recommendations. The employee may encounter resistance as a result of issues such as organizational conflict, competing objectives, or resource problems. He/she must be skillful in approaching contacts to obtain the desired effect, e.g., gaining compliance with established policies and regulations by persuasion or negotiation.

The appellant's position matches Level B. His contacts are made to coordinate and advise on technical work efforts, resolve technical problems, and fulfill user requests having to do with such issues as user needs, security access and patient privacy. Those contacted have basically cooperative attitudes and are working toward the same goals. The appellant applies his technical expertise to help explain and resolve issues with his contacts before issues become problems.

The position does not meet Level C. Unlike that level, the purpose of the appellant's contacts is not to persuade others to accept his recommendations in situations where there are competing interests between department needs, thus creating resistance resulting from issues, such as organizational conflict or resource problems. The appellant does not need to resolve conflicts that arise due to competing objectives, differing perspectives of the project, or to prioritize limited resources. The supervisor resolves management related issues, and the supervisor and project manager resolve any conflicts, such as changes in project goals with proponents. Most often the scope of the project, project features, and IT priorities are predetermined for the appellant by the supervisor or project manager. Also, the Software Development Prioritization Tracking Committee's charter is to prioritize software initiatives based on command goals. Contacts have basically cooperative attitudes, and there is no significant need to negotiate on a regular and recurring basis to gain compliance with pertinent IT policies or regulations.

Factors 6 and 7 are assigned Level 2-B, and a total of 75 points is credited.

Factor 8, Physical demands

This factor measures the physical requirements placed on the employee by the work assignment.

The appellant's position meets but does not exceed Level 8-1, the highest level for this factor described in the JFS. Similar to that level his work is sedentary and does not require any special physical effort.

This factor is evaluated at Level 8-1 and 5 points are credited.

Factor 9, Work environment

This factor measures the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings.

The appellant's position meets but does not exceed Level 9-1, which is the highest level for this factor described in the JFS. Similar to that level, his work area is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated, requiring only normal safety precautions.

This factor is evaluated at Level 9-1 and 5 points are assigned.

Summary of FES factors

Factor	*Level*	*Points*
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-7	1250
2. Supervisory controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. and 7. Personal contacts/purpose of contacts	2-B	75
8. Physical demands	8-1	5

9. Work environment   9-1   5
    Total   2360

A total of 2360 points falls within the GS-11 range (2355-2750) on the grade conversion table in the GS-2200 JFS. Therefore, the appellant's position is graded at the GS-11 level.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Information Technology Specialist (Applications Software), GS-2210-11.