



United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
November 1992
No. 17-02

Standard: N/A
Factor: N/A
Issue: Classifying deputy or assistant chief duties

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in the adjudication of an appeal in which the appellant requested a higher grade and contended that the agency had not considered the complete scope of his duties and responsibilities in evaluating his position. The primary duties of the appellant's position involved serving as chief of the Management-Employee Relations Branch of a personnel office; in this role, he supervised a small number of employees in one- and two-grade interval positions. As a secondary duty, he spent about 30 percent of his time functioning as deputy to the personnel officer by sharing many of the personnel officer's duties and acting in his absence. The appellant's request for a higher grade was based, in part, on his duties as deputy to the personnel officer.

Resolution

The Office of Personnel Management first evaluated the duties of chief of the Management-Employee Relations Branch by application of the Pilot Supervisory Guide (now superseded) for Department of Defense positions. These supervisory duties were evaluated at the GS-12 level.

Part I of the classification standard for the Personnel Management Series, GS-0201, and the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide both require that the grade of a deputy or assistant chief position be determined by first establishing the grade of the chief position. Guidance in the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide provides that a deputy position is to be evaluated one grade lower than that of the chief when the deputy is a full assistant to the chief, occupies a position in the direct supervisory line, and shares in and assists the chief with respect to all phases of the work of the organization. This principle is recognized in several other classification standards, in

addition to those cited above, including GS-0105, GS-0505, GS-0673, and GS-1630, and is discussed in issues numbers 3 and 15 of the Digest. The crucial determination in this case was whether the appellant could be considered a full assistant to the personnel officer.

The Office of Personnel Management determined that, except in the absence of the personnel officer, the appellant did not function in a direct supervisory line over the personnel office. In addition, while the appellant shared many of the personnel officer's duties when he was present (e.g., attending meetings, signing documents such as training forms, coordinating and managing special projects, and providing input to personnel management decisions affecting other branch chiefs), the appellant did not normally participate, to a significant degree, in the direction and supervision of all phases of the work performed by the other branches in the personnel office.

The Office of Personnel Management concluded that the appellant's role was best characterized as that of a limited assistant to the personnel officer, and that the guidance in Part I of the classification standard for the GS-0201 series was applicable. That guidance provides that the position of a limited assistant is typically evaluated two grades below the grade of the personnel officer. The Office of Personnel Management concluded that the correct grade of the appellant's assistant duties was GS-12, the same grade as his supervisory duties.