

Department of Defense (DoD)
Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS)
Field Advisory Services - *FAS*
Classification Appeal Decision

DoD Decision:	Personnel Management Specialist, GS-0201-11
Initial classification:	Personnel Management Specialist, GS-0201-11
Organization:	Defense Logistics Agency <i>Primary Level Field Activity</i> Office of Human Resources Technical Services Division
Date:	December 18, 1997

INFORMATION CONSIDERED

This appeal decision is based on information from the following sources:

1. The appellant's letter with attachments.
2. The official position description for the appealed position and the evaluation statement.
3. Statements of job description accuracy signed by both the appellant and the supervisor.
4. Organizational charts and mission and function statements pertaining to the appealed position.
5. Telephone interview with the supervisor and audit with the appellant.
6. Work samples provided by the appellant.

STANDARDS REFERENCED

The United States Office of Personnel Management Position Classification Standard for Personnel Management Series, GS-201, Part II, June 1997, HRCD-3.

BACKGROUND AND POSITION INFORMATION

The appellant is assigned to the Defense Logistics Agency, *primary field level activity*, Office of Human Resources, Technical Services Division, as a Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-11. For major duties, the position is responsible for conducting continuing internal evaluation of the

Human Resources processes and functions; advising management about the extent/degree of program compliance; identifying program deficiencies (30%) and performing related special projects and studies which cross Human Resource Office (HRO) functional lines (45%). Areas of evaluation include: employee development, performance management, recruitment and placement, merit promotion, classification, employee-management relations, benefits administration, records management, labor relations, etc. The HRO services approximately 4000 personnel, which covers *two primary field level activities*.

For minor duties, the position is responsible for forecasting, adjusting and tracking the Permanent Change of Station (PCS) funds processed through the HRO; maintaining and modifying Interservice Support Agreements between the HRO and a variety of serviced organizations (15%) and providing federal benefits information to supervisors and employees, as required (10%). These duties are administrative in nature and are neither series nor grade controlling. Both the appellant and the supervisor signed a statement that certified the accuracy of the position description of record.

The appellant contends that since the position description of record indicates that the position independently performs continuing evaluation of all personnel functional areas to ensure compliance and effectiveness, the knowledges required for the position (provided by the appellant) are compatible to the GS-12 level described in the referenced standard. The appellant noted that the servicing personnel office determined the grade by comparison to the criteria covered under the program operations function/work situation instead of the program evaluation function/work situation. This would have no relevance in determining the final grade of the position. Specifically, according to the standard, "Each functional area, while reasonably distinctive, tends to merge with the others at some points, in practice. They all require the same basic skills, knowledges, and abilities if they involve work in the same personnel socialization, although there is some difference in emphasis in qualification requirements between Program Operations, Evaluation, and Development kinds of work."

We concur with the servicing personnel office that the program evaluation work situation does not cover the appealed position. The standard specifies the following definition of program evaluation: "Positions of this kind involve the review and evaluation of the work of operating personnel offices to determine the quality of the personnel management program. Such positions are found in the Civil Service Commission (OPM) and at varying organizational level of those agencies which have decentralized personnel operations below the headquarters level. Descriptions of this function in this standard do not cover the self-evaluation activity of an operating personnel officer or time of his staff." The appellant does not concur with the agency's grade level determination and believes that the position should be classified at the GS-12 level utilizing the program evaluation situation specified in the standard.

TITLE AND SERIES DETERMINATION

The appealed position conducts internal evaluations of HRO personnel programs which include staffing, classification, employee development, employee relations, labor relations and benefits administration. The appealed position does not perform continuing work in any one of these areas.

However, the personnel knowledge's required to collect, analyze and make recommendations on HRO program areas and special projects involving related program areas, are significant in supporting the appealed positions placement into the GS-201 series and not administrative series such as the Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series, GS- 301, or the Management and Program Analysis Series, GS-343. The duties involving Permanent Change of Station (PCS) tracking, maintaining and modifying Interservice Support Agreements, conducting customer satisfaction surveys, and managing records management are administrative in nature. The position fully meets the series definition of the Personnel Management Series, GS-201, whereby the appellant performs "...specialized personnel management work not covered by other series in this group." Nonsupervisory positions in this series which perform duties typical of three or more specialized series are titled Personnel Management Specialist. Consequently, the appropriate title and series of the appealed position is Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201.

GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION

The GS-201 Personnel Management Series classification standard is presented in two parts. Part I covers Personnel Officer positions and deals with personnel management in terms of broad overall program responsibilities. Part II covers nonsupervisory specialized work, like the appellant's.

Part II provides grading criteria for positions involving mixtures of different specialized personnel programs (e.g., staffing, classification, employee relations, etc.) like the appellant's. The grade level portions of the standard describe separately, at each grade, the characteristics of each of three different types of positions: (1) Program Operations, (2) Program Evaluation, and (3) Program Development. The first type describes the direct performance of personnel work in an operating personnel office providing day to day servicing and located at the organizational level of any agency. The second involves review and evaluation of the work of operating personnel offices (excluding self-evaluation conducted by an operating personnel staff). The third involves the preparation of guides to be used by management officials and operation personnel offices in performance of personnel management work. In consideration of all the functions performed and the degree to which they are interrelated, the appellant's assignments are characteristic of the first type, Programs Operations.

Part II of the classification standard prescribes five factors for distinguishing among grade levels. The factors are: (1) complexity and difficulty of technical personnel problems dealt with, as reflected by organizational characteristics, job characteristics and nature of guides; (2) management advisory service functions; (3) nature of supervision received; (4) authority; and (5) personal contacts. As previously mentioned, program operations is the appropriate area to use to classify the appealed position.

Complexity and difficulty of technical personnel problems dealt with as reflected by organizational characteristics, job characteristics, and nature of guides:

The appealed position provides continuing internal evaluations in an HRO which provides the full range of personnel services to two Primary Level Field Activities. One of these activities is a world

wide geographically dispersed activity. Both activities consist of a great number of specialized administrative positions which include areas such as environmental, property disposal, supply, and logistics data/information. Guidelines used by HRO specialized program areas are locally developed and must be adapted and interpreted to meet differing organizational needs for two dissimilar activities. We concur with the agency that this factor exceeds the GS-09 level and fully meets the GS-11 level. The appealed position does not meet the GS-12 level which requires work "when done in reference to jobs and organizations which are complex, new, or dynamic in nature. The abstract nature of work processes adds materially to the difficulty of problem identification and solution, and requires a more sophisticated and mature knowledge of occupational characteristics and of personnel management than is typical at GS-11." While the assignments approach those which are defined under "more than average difficulty", the typical assignments performed, as illustrated by the appellant, deal with primarily procedural issues which are structured, well defined, specific, and clear cut. Thus, the appealed position is appropriately graded at the GS-11 level for this factor.

Management Advisory Service Functions:

The appealed position provides written program evaluation reports to management (Human Resources Officer and Division Chiefs) which addresses program compliance and effectiveness of personnel services, manpower utilization and individual functional program effectiveness. The appealed position is responsible for identifying non-compliance areas and making recommendations to correct problems. We concur with the agency that the appealed position exceeds the limited amount and type of advice provided to supervisors which is described at the GS-09 level. We found the appealed position to fully meet the GS-11 level as described in the standard by illustrations which corresponded to the appealed position's "breadth of approach and intensity of analysis" (persuasiveness, imagination, and insight) when involved in providing evaluation and special project/study reports to management.

In substantiation, specific examples of the appellant's work are as follows: guidelines referencing the Code of Federal Regulations and Title 5 in areas involving retirement, employee discipline, position classification, OPM certificates, training and union negotiation procedures; a classification and position description accuracy review (19 positions); a time and motion/productivity study; a review of details and extension of details; a review of temporary and term employment, a review of pay management; and a review of the injury compensation program.

The appealed position's work examples do not demonstrate the necessary intensity or depth of analysis characteristic of GS-12 level work. Such work requires a more substantial depth of analysis that fully experienced specialists typically employ, such as when facing novel or obscure problems or dealing with major areas of uncertainty in approach, methodology, or interpretation. At the GS-12 level, substantial analysis must underlie the advice/evaluation and assistance rendered. This goes beyond adapting guidelines and precedents to treat difficult, but conventional problems, as at the GS-11 level. Rather it typically involves researching trends and patterns to develop new methods, criteria, or proposed policies and analyzing a variety of unusual conditions or problems that affect a wide range of agency activities. The appealed position does not meet the GS-12 level which "is characterized by responsibility for resolving especially complex and difficult types of problem cases in his (her) specialized personnel field." In conclusion, the appealed position is appropriately graded at

the GS-11 level for this factor.

Nature of Supervision Received, Authority, and Personal Contacts:

The few differences between GS-11 and GS-12 Specialists on these three factors derive from the complexity of problems dealt with and the increase in responsibility associated with resolving such problems. As noted previously, the appellant's management advisory functions are comparable to GS-11, rather than GS-12, which precludes crediting these factors with a grade higher than the GS-11 level. Additionally, the GS-12 level is not met because there is no delegation of responsibility, and commensurate authority, to make final and binding decisions for the HRO in other than routine administrative matters supporting the operation of the internal evaluation function. These factors are appropriately graded at the GS-11 level.

In conclusion, we concur with the agency evaluation that the appealed position is appropriately graded at the GS-11 level.

DECISION

We have determined the appealed position is correctly classified as Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-11. This decision is a classification certificate that is binding on all administrative certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting offices within the Department of Defense.