

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SERVICE**

Classification Appeal Decision

DoD Decision:	Audiovisual Production Specialist, GS-1071-11
Initial classification:	Audiovisual Production Specialist, GS-1071-11
Organization:	Naval Medical Center Director for Administration Information Resource Management Department Biomedical Communications Division Television Production Branch
Date:	September 30, 1997

BACKGROUND

The appellant works at the Naval Medical Center. The subject position is classified as Audiovisual Production Specialist, GS-1071-11. The appellant believes that his position should be classified as Audiovisual Production Specialist,

GS-1071-12. The appellant questions the activity's reliance on illustrations to evaluate Factor 4 - Complexity; and, states that "No supplemental materials or evaluation techniques were employed during the evaluation, i.e., Factor Evaluation System, interview, production review." The appellant also claims Agency classification inconsistency citing a position at another National Naval Medical Center, which is classified as Producer-Director, GS-1071-12.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

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

1. A letter dated August 7, 1997, from the appellant appealing the classification of his position.
2. A letter dated September 26, 1997, from the appellant providing additional information on his position.
3. The activity's letter of August 29, 1997, providing position and organizational information.
4. A telephone audit with the appellant on September 25, 1997.

POSITION CLASSIFICATION STANDARD REFERENCED:

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Position Classification Standard (PCS) for Audiovisual Production Series GS-1071, TS-116, July 1992

SERIES AND TITLE DETERMINATION:

The PCS for the Audiovisual Production Series states that it includes positions that involve performing work in the production of videotaped and live television programs; motion picture films; broadcast type closed circuit teleconferences; and other similar productions. The work requires the ability to plan, organize, and direct the work of writers, editors, actors, narrators, musicians, set designers, audio and lighting technicians, camera operators, and other associated technical personnel to produce, select, and arrange the actions, sounds, and visual effects required for the finished product.

The appellant performs a variety of duties associated with the operation of a television studio and production of remote television programs and which require knowledge of television production processes, procedures, and techniques and the ability to direct productions. We agree that his position is properly classified in the GS-1071 series. *Audiovisual Production Specialist* is the title prescribed for non-supervisory positions involving a variety of functions during different phases of a production to include directing, editing, script writing, camera operating, set lighting, and video electronic graphics.

The appellant's position is properly titled and coded as Audiovisual Production Specialist, GS-1071.

GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION:

The Audiovisual Production Specialist Series, GS-1071, standard is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to General Schedule positions. A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor levels. For a position factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor-level description in the standard, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets the higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

Under FES, positions which significantly exceed the highest factor level or fail to meet the lowest factor level described in a classification standard must be evaluated by reference to the Primary Standard, contained in Appendix 3 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards. The Primary Standard is the "standard for standards" for FES.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position

This factor measures the extent and nature of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work, e.g., steps, procedures, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts, and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, a knowledge must be required *and* applied. The agency credits level 1-7. The appellant does not contest that determination. We concur with the activity's evaluation and conclusion that Level 1-7 is met.

At Level 1-8, the factor level description states that employees apply knowledge derived from a mastery of the methods, techniques, and practices associated with the development of original television or motion picture

productions, and skill in applying this knowledge to the design of highly complex, large scale projects. They use this knowledge to conceptualize and design productions where there is no established format or where obstacles exist to traditional approaches and the program content and treatment of the subject are left largely to the discretion of the employee. Employees have knowledge of the most recent advancements in the fields of video or motion picture technology and of the range and level of sophistication of national or international viewing habits. This knowledge is used to develop programming technically and aesthetically comparable to that produced by the commercial television and film industry, adapted to audience characteristics and desired reactions to the product.

A review of the duties of the appellant's position revealed that projects for which he is responsible include the production of educational, demonstration and communications programs for use by 37 Navy medical and dental commands in TRICARE Region 9 which includes southern California, Arizona and Nevada. Projects are relatively small with the appellant performing most of the operations including directing, editing, writing and rewriting scripts, lighting, etc. There is no indication of any significant requirement to go outside of traditional approaches and while the appellant provides advice regarding the content and approach of productions the subject matter experts have final decision making authority on those matters. The majority of the target audience is made up of military members and their families and Navy medical personnel in the Region which is significantly narrower in breadth than the national or international audiences envisioned by the standard at the higher level. The work falls short of the technical authority role, and does not require mastery of a specialty as described in the Factor Level Definition at Level 1-8.

The standard provides two illustrations for Level 1-8. Illustrations are provided to clarify or interpret the overall intent of the factor level description. While these illustrations do not have the import of the above factor level description, they do provide specific work situations which have knowledge requirements that have been rated at that level. These situations typically represent significant numbers of positions within the occupation as a whole. The first illustration describes planning, directing and managing all production aspects of major dramatic features on a variety of cultural, technological, or historical themes, and the second describes producing and directing important public service announcements for televising nationwide. These illustrations clearly show a technical authority role requiring mastery of the area as reflected in, respectively, broad expertise in the specialization and in managing large and complex projects; and, in the second, the ability to create products which will capture the attention and effect the habits or attitudes of the public at large rather than producing relatively small projects at a regional level as is the case in the subject position. At Level 1-8, a specialist might be someone who regularly manages large productions for distribution to the general public. In addition to failing to match Level 1-8 as presented in the factor level description, the appellant's work does not compare with either of the illustrations at this level. Thus, his position is credited with Level 1-7.

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, 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 aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives. The degree of review of completed work depends upon the nature and extent of the review, e.g., close and detailed review of each phase of the assignment; detailed review of the finished assignment; spot check of finished work for accuracy, or review only for adherence to policy.

The activity credited level 2-4. The appellant does not contest that determination. We agree with the activity

determination on this factor.

Factor 3 - Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and judgment needed to apply them. Guides used in General Schedule occupations include, for example, desk manuals, established procedures and policies, traditional practices, and reference materials such as dictionaries, style manuals, engineering handbooks, and the pharmacopoeia. The activity credited Level 3-4.

At Level 3-3, the parameters of the audiovisual production are well defined in terms of the subject matter to be recorded or depicted, the way in which the subject will be presented, and the types of audio and visual elements to be incorporated. The employee is usually provided a detailed script at the onset of the assignment and can refer to similar productions done by the organization for additional guidance. The employee uses judgment in translating the script into a finished audiovisual product that achieves the desired purpose and effect. The employee is expected to recognize where precedent projects, script directions, and approaches favored by clients must be adapted for aesthetic or practical purposes, and recommend these changes.

The subject position meets Level 3-3. Productions are well defined including: educational/training films addressing medical treatment techniques and surgical procedures; informational/instructional films for patients addressing specific medical conditions such as cancer; for military members and dependents regarding sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, and proper use of condoms; demonstration of assembly of portable shelters; etc. In these cases the clients are subject matter experts and generally know how they want the subject presented and treated. The appellant develops products that meet the specific needs of his clients.

At Level 3-4, the subject matter to be depicted is presented only in conceptual terms and guidelines are limited to general agency policy governing program content. The format, style, and treatment of the topic are largely left to the discretion of the employee. The employee uses initiative and resourcefulness in researching the topics to be presented, planning the most effective means of communicating the information desired, and deviating from standard methods to achieve unusual visual or dramatic effects designed to attract and hold the attention of the audience.

Level 3-4 is not fully met. The products of the subject position are meant to instruct and inform and subject matter is relatively straight forward. While the appellant provides advice and options to clients, it is the clients who make final decisions on technical content and treatment of the subject matter. Clients serve as subject matter experts on projects, therefore, there is no significant requirement for the appellant to research topics to be presented. And, while the appellant may have significant input, in the form of recommendations to clients regarding the format and style of productions, again it is the client who makes the decisions on these matters.

Level 3-3 is credited for this factor.

Factor 4 - Complexity

This factor covers 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. The activity credited Level 4-4. The appellant believes level 4-5 is appropriate. We concur with the activity's evaluation and conclusion that Level 4-4 is met.

At level 4-5 the work involves producing a wide range of audiovisual products using many different production methods and techniques. Employees serve as project managers with responsibility for actively

participating with clients in exploring new means of presenting information in audiovisual format. Productions are usually intended for mass viewing and are required to be of the same level of technical and aesthetic quality as those produced by the large commercial production companies. In addition, the productions are typically large-scale, require many months of preplanning, and are complicated by the controversial, sensitive, or emotional nature of the subject matter. These elements impose very difficult coordination requirements in, for example, assuring that the views of all groups interested in the project have been considered or that major ideas are presented in a manner that will engender understanding, empathy or support.

The subject position does not compare favorably with the foregoing grading criteria. The appellant's projects are relatively limited in range including the development of training, demonstration, and communications related audiovisual products. Products are intended for relatively limited numbers of viewers including military members and their dependents, medical personnel at Regional hospitals, and patients (military members and dependents) in southern California, Arizona and Nevada who have specific health problems. One project per year will be intended for distribution throughout the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. At the largest, these targeted audiences fall far short of mass or nationwide as envisioned by the standard. And, projects are relatively small in scale with the appellant performing most, if not all, of the production work and the largest project taking, on average, about 6 weeks from preplanning to completion.

Level 4-4 is credited.

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 assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

The activity credited level 5-4. The appellant does not contest that determination. We concur with the assignment of Level 5-4.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts and Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts

The appellant believes that the activity erred when it credited no points under Factor 6 - Personal Contacts. The standard combines Factors 6 and 7 and provides a chart to convert levels credited to a single combined point level. As stated earlier in this decision, when a position exceeds the highest level provided for a particular factor, evaluation may be accomplished by using the FES Primary Standard in conjunction with the standard.

First measured is "Persons Contacted." This measures face-to-face contacts and telephone and radio dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. The activity credited the subject position with meeting level 3 which is the highest level provided by the Audiovisual Production Specialist standard for this factor. We concur with the activity determination that this level is met.

The next higher level for this factor in the Primary Standard is Level 6-4. This is the highest level provided for under the Factor Evaluation System format. At this level personal contacts are with high-ranking officials from outside the employing agency at national or international levels in highly unstructured settings, e.g., contacts are characterized by problems such as, the officials may be relatively inaccessible; arrangements may have to be made well in advance; each party may be very unclear as to the role and authority of the other; and each contact may be conducted under different ground rules. Typical of contacts at this level are those with Members of Congress, leading representatives of foreign governments, presidents of large national or international firms, nationally recognized representatives of the news media, presidents of national unions,

State governors, or mayors of large cities. There is no indication that the contacts of the subject position equate to or approach this level. The appellants contacts are limited to military and civilian administrators, medical staff, contractors, employees of commercial audiovisual companies, and employees of other Federal agencies. Level 6-4 is not met. Level 3 is credited.

Second measured is "Purpose of Contacts." In General Schedule occupations, the purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives. The personal contacts that serve as the basis for the level selected for this factor must be the same as the contacts that are the basis for the level selected for Personal Contacts. The activity credited level b which, again, is the highest level provided by the standard for this factor. We agree with the activity determination that Level b is appropriately assigned to the subject position.

The next higher level in the Primary Standard for this factor is 7-3. At this level, The purpose of contacts is to influence, motivate, interrogate, or control people or groups. The people contacted may be fearful, skeptical, uncooperative, or dangerous. Therefore, the employee must be skillful in approaching the individual or group in order to obtain the desired effect, such as gaining compliance with established policies and regulations by persuasion or negotiation, or gaining information by establishing rapport with a suspicious informant. This level is not met or approached. The purpose of contacts for the subject position is limited to exchanging information, coordinating work efforts, resolving technical production problems, and advising clients regarding audiovisual production processes and alternatives for accomplishment which will best meet their requirements. Level 7-3 is not met. We agree with the activity determination that

Level b is appropriately assigned to the subject position.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. This includes physical characteristics and abilities, e.g., specific agility and dexterity requirements, and the physical exertion involved in the work, e.g., climbing, lifting, pushing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling or reaching. To some extent the frequency or intensity of physical exertion must also be considered, e.g., a job requiring prolonged standing involves more physical exertion than a job requiring intermittent standing. The activity credited level 2.

At Level 8-2, the work requires some physical exertion such as long periods of standing, recurring bending or stretching, or recurring lifting of moderately heavy equipment. The appellant transports equipment and sets up scenes which requires some physical exertion, in the form of bending, standing, and lifting moderately heavy equipment, however, based on our audit it was determined that he spent 5% of his time doing this sort of work. This is not significant enough to consider as exceeding Level 8-1 where no special physical demands are required to perform the work. Therefore, Level 8-1 is credited.

Factor 9 - Work Environment

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings, or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. The activity credited level 2.

At Level 9-2, work requires moderate risks or discomforts such as working near moving machinery, and may require special safety precautions and the use of protective clothing or gear. The appellant may be required to work aboard naval vessels up to three times per year, and may be in the field with the Marines twice a year. Each field trip lasts 2-3 days which amounts to a very minimal portion of the appellant's time. In situations

where the appellant is in a radiology room, or near an operating fluoroscope, the appellant is required to wear a lead vest, again this is a very minimal portion of time. The appellant also may be required to wear surgical garb while working in surgical suites, however, such clothing is designed to ensure a sterile field which is for the protection of the patient not the wearer. There is no indication of risks or discomforts which would justify crediting above Level 9-1.

Summary of 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	4-4	225
5. Scope and Effect	5-4	225
6. Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contacts	3-b	110
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	5
Total Points	2545	

A total of 2,545 points is credited to the appellant's position which according to the grade conversion table equates to the GS-11 level (2,355 - 2,755).

DECISION: The position is properly classified as Audiovisual Production Specialist, GS-1071-11.