

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

DoD Decision:	Secretary (Office Automation), GS-0318-05
Initial classification:	Secretary (Office Automation), GS-0318-05
Organization:	Army Medical Center Nutrition Care Center
Date:	August 05, 1997

BACKGROUND

On Xxxx, 1997, the Department of Defense, Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS), received a classification appeal from the appellant. The appellant is a Department of the Army Secretary, GS-318-05, within the Nutrition Care Center, at the Army Medical Center (herein, the Hospital).

The appellant contends the grade level of her position is GS-06, and specifically focuses on Work Situation B as a more accurate description of the duties of her position as opposed to Work Situation A.

POSITION INFORMATION

The appellant is officially assigned to a Secretary, GS-318-05 position in the Nutrition Care Center, within Army Medical Center.

The position serves as personal assistant to the Chief, Nutrition Care Division. The position serves to provide information, data and guidance to civilian and military supervisors on procedures and instructions issued by the servicing civilian personnel and equal employment opportunity offices. This position is a liaison with the Denver Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), and the Hospital's Automation Management and Resources Management Divisions for performing administrative business operations. The position also

serves to keep the Division Chief's administrative calendar, schedule conferences, meetings and other commitments.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Official personnel documents by servicing civilian personnel office (CPO).
2. Telephone discussions with appellant.
3. Telephone discussion with servicing CPO classifier.
4. Telephone discussion with appellant's immediate supervisor, Colonel

STANDARDS REFERENCED

Office of Personnel Management Position Classification Standard for Secretary Series, GS-318, January 1979.

Office of Personnel Management Position Classification Standard for Office Automation Grade Evaluation Guide, November 1990.

Office of Personnel Management Position Classification Standard Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work, December 1996.

SERIES AND TITLE DETERMINATION

The appellant does not contest the assigned position's series or title. Series and title are appropriate. Duties characteristic of these positions are to assist one individual, and in some cases the subordinate staff of that individual, by performing general office work auxiliary to the work of the organization. Incumbents of these positions serve as the principal office clerical or administrative support position in the office, operating independently of any other such position in the office.

GRADE DETERMINATION

The appellant contests the grade determination of the official position. She believes the duties of the position are at the GS-06 grade level. She is contesting Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position, and the allocation of Work Situation A to this Factor. She believes Work Situation B is a more appropriate description of the duties to which she is officially assigned. In addition to evaluating the entire PD, including the office automation duties, we focused specifically on Factor 1, and its accompanying situations.

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position Knowledge Type III, Level 1-3, 350 Points

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that the secretary must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, principles, and concepts) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply those knowledges.

Concur with CPO analysis. The appellant possesses a knowledge of various procedures involved in requesting travel, training, personnel actions, equipment needs and repairs. She also possesses a knowledge of retrieving data from a tracking system storing such information as suspense dates, time and attendance, scheduling, and various forms. Her knowledge of office filing systems and various reference and handbooks commonly used by the staff allows her to assist staff members who need to search, classify, or compile the information. She uses her organization skills to maintain the Division Chief's appointment calendar for scheduling meetings, conferences, other commitments and following up on commitments. She also possesses the knowledge to prepare recurring internal reports by summarizing information from files and documents. She coordinates the work of the office with that of other offices such as the Division's branch chiefs, civilian personnel office, DFAS, automation management, the Division's supply technician, medical clerk, cost accountant and materials handler.

The appellant possesses a skill in operating word processing equipment which has the capability of performing varied text and data processing functions. **Level 1-3 is appropriate.**

Work Situation A

Concur with CPO analysis. The Division is organized into three subordinate branches. They are the Medical Nutrition Therapy Branch, which provides medical nutrition therapy to Hospital in-patients; Nutrition Intervention and Wellness Branch, which provides medical nutrition therapy to the out-patient community and nutrition education and intervention for the military community; and the Production and Services Branch, which provides high quality nutrition meals to patients, staff and personnel authorized to subsist in the hospital. The Production and Service Branch is subdivided into four sections. The Division Chief directs her staff through intermediate supervisors in face-to-face meetings, electronic mail, procedural memoranda, and through numerous internal standard operating procedures (SOPs). These controls are related to safety, quality assurance, key control inventory and security, sanitation, food preparation and service. Some SOPs are branch specific such as daily inspections of freezers and refrigerators, and nourishment preparation and delivery.

The subordinate groups differ from each other in terms of subject matter, function, and

relationships with other organizations. Apart from serving as the Division Chief's personal assistant, the appellant serves as the administrative point of contact for the Office of the Chief, Nutrition Care Division and its subordinate components. Her coordination responsibilities for the Division consists of using a tracking system designed to remind branch supervisors and their staffs about time sensitive issues such as appraisals, suspenses, time card submissions, etc. The appellant coordinates with other divisions within the Hospital. For example, she must coordinate with the Resources Management Division for training by providing them with appropriate documentation on Division employees. For automation concerns such as repair, replacement or malfunction of hard and software used in the Division, she must coordinate with the Automation Management Division. The appellant coordinates personnel issues such as disciplinary actions, awards, recruitment and promotions and other personnel actions with the civilian personnel office, or equal employment office. She prepares time cards for employees Division-wide under the General Schedule and Wage System pay categories. Wage system employee payroll issues often arise. The appellant coordinates with DFAS to rectify the problems. The appellant reviews Division-wide correspondence, prior to the Chief's signature, for format, content, and style. She prepares reports such as the Monthly Ration Accounting Report where she gathers necessary data from the Division's cost accountant, and branch chiefs, and consolidates the information. The appellant takes the lead on managing the monthly safety report for the Division. This report contains statistical and narrative data related to accidents occurring in the Division. She ensures supervisors prepare proper documentation related to accidents and maintains accident forms. This report also includes information on faulty fire extinguishers and other equipment reported to the appellant by employees of the Division. She briefs her supervisor on the number of accidents within a given time frame. The Division is a money generating entity that possesses a formal production reporting system in place to account for amount and type of groceries purchased, number of meals produced, and served, the number of patients served, food discarded or left over, and the dollar amount incurred from the dining facility. The Division produces a monthly report that reflects whether it has exceeded its budgetary allotment. **These are characteristics of Work Situation A. These work situations do not meet the full intent of Work Situation B.** The basic characteristic of Work Situation B is that an incumbent in such a position exercises greater depth and responsibility in providing substantive administrative support and coordination to the organization's mission and programs. Such responsibility transcends clerical requirements and processes. A Work Situation B incumbent frequently coordinates substantive details to include involvement of contacts outside the organization. Internal and external coordination by the appellant is limited to clerical requirements and processes such as typing reports and other correspondence, effecting personnel actions, processing travel orders, reviewing correspondence, etc., in support of the mission or functional programs of the Division, as opposed to substantive coordination in support of the Division's mission or functional programs. Another characteristic of Work Situation B is that the individual components of an organization possess different administrative requirements that add complexity to an incumbent's position. There is no evidence that the individual subordinate components of the

Nutrition Care Division demonstrates a need for different administrative requirements that would add complexity to the appellant's position.

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls Level 2-3, 275 Points

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the secretary's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

Concur with CPO analysis. Appellant receives telephone calls and visitors. She personally takes care of the matter or refers callers and visitors to appropriate branch personnel. She screens incoming correspondence and routes to supervisor or appropriate Division staff member. She provides Division staff members with instructions from supervisor, and collects data from subordinate staff to prepare reports for higher echelon.

Factor 3, Guidelines Level 3-2, 125 Points

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

Concur with CPO analysis. The appellant uses Army regulations, the MARKS filing system, correspondence regulations, Hospital memoranda, and Division SOPs.

Factor 4, Complexity Level 4-2, 75 Points

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.

Non-concur with CPO analysis. The appellant serves as personal assistant to the Division Chief. She also serves as the administrative point of contact to the Division's subordinate components. The appellant decides what needs to be done based on clearly recognized situations. For example, she prepares paperwork to effect certain personnel actions, travel orders for personnel traveling, reviews correspondence for format, content, grammar, spelling and attachments returning to originator for correction or clarification before Division Chief affixes signature, and refers inquiries to appropriate sources. She processes time and attendance, effects a suspense system, prepares menus, and other cyclical duties. **These are complexities found at level 4-2.** An incumbent performing complexities at level 4-3 are involved in deductive reasoning which allows a course of action involving many alternatives. The difference between level 4-2 and level 4-3 is that an incumbent at level 4-3 does not readily recognize a course of action without the need to assess the situation. **Level 4-2 is appropriate.**

Factor 5, Scope and Effect Level 5-2, 75 Points

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

Concur with CPO analysis. The appellant collects information or data from subordinate components, consolidates, and prepares for supervisor's review. She ensures clerical and administrative work of the Division conforms to the appropriate policies and procedures.

Factor 6, Personal Contacts Level 6-2, 25 Points

This factor includes face-to-face telephone contacts with people not in the supervisory chain.

Concur with CPO analysis. The appellant has contacts with people in the same organization, but also apart from the immediate Division. She has contacts with resources management, the CPO, automation division, and DFAS.

Factor 7, Purpose of Contacts Level 7-2, 50 Points

The purpose of personal contacts may range from factual exchanges of information to resolving problems affecting the efficient operation of the office.

Concur with CPO analysis. The appellant has such contacts to plan and coordinate the work of the Office of the Chief, Nutrition Care Division, and its subordinate components.

Factor 8, Physical Demands Level 8-1, 5 Points

This factor considers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment.

Concur with CPO analysis. Work is mostly sedentary. There may be some standing, walking and carrying light items.

Factor 9, Work Environment Level 9-1, 5 Points

The work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts which require normal safety precautions typical of such places as offices, meeting and training rooms.

Concur with CPO analysis. Appellant performs her duties in an office environment.

Summary

Factor 1 Level 1-3 350 Points

Factor 2 Level 2-3 275 Points

Factor 3 Level 3-2 125 Points

Factor 4 Level 4-2 75 Points

Factor 5 Level 5-2 75 Points

Factor 6 Level 6-2 25 Points

Factor 7 Level 7-2 50 Points

Factor 8 Level 8-1 5 Points

Factor 9 Level 9-1 5 Points

TOTAL POINTS: 985 Points

985 points falls in the range of GS-05 (855-1100)

FINAL DETERMINATION: Secretary (Office Automation), GS-318-05