

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

DoD Decision:	Administrative Officer, GS-341-09
Initial classification:	Administrative Officer, GS-341-09
Organization:	Department of Air Force Civilian Personnel School
Date:	August 4, 1998

BACKGROUND

On April 14, 1998, the Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service, Field Advisory Services Division, accepted a classification appeal from , who is currently classified as an Administrative Officer, GS-0341-09. The appellant appealed the grade level of her position, requesting that her position be reclassified to Administrative Officer, GS-341-11.

This decision is the final administrative decision of the Department of Defense.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Information contained in appeal file submitted by the appellant
- Information contained in administrative report submitted by servicing personnel office
- On-site position audit with appellant
- Telephone interview with first level supervisor

POSITION INFORMATION

The appellant is the Administrative Officer for the Civilian Personnel School, which is affiliated with the Human Resource Management School. The School provides component-wide education and training for civilian and military personnel engaged in civilian personnel management. The School is staffed by a Director, six full-time faculty members, two faculty members on temporary assignment, a systems administrator, and two support positions (supervised by the appellant). The appellant is responsible for all administrative support functions of the school, including budget development and execution, facilities management, communications, and office and support services. Duties include formulation and execution of the School's budget, which includes approximately \$1.5 million for operations and maintenance, \$600K for student support, as well as money from various component sources designated for specific purposes (facility upgrades, course development, etc.). As the cost center manager, the appellant is responsible for analyzing the financial requirements of the school and developing an annual financial plan, or budget request, which is approved by the supervisor (Director of the school) and submitted to the University for final approval. The appellant oversees the execution of the budget, monitoring and tracking all expenditures, ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed, in accordance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. The appellant also maintains all statistical data on the budget, and provides justification for proposed allocations and expenditures, advising the Director in all matters relating to the financial operations of the School.

In addition to the budgetary responsibilities, the appellant is responsible for the administrative support services at the Civilian Personnel School. This involves a variety of functions, to include procurement of supplies and course-related materials used for instruction; facility management (effective space utilization, acquisition of new classroom furniture and equipment, repairs and modification to the building and grounds, etc.); supervision of support staff (one GS-6 Editorial Assistant, one GS-5 Office Automation Assistant, one prison inmate); and coordination of services for students and other visitors (arranging for quarters, transportation, travel, etc.).

The appellant also participates in the administrative management of the School, and is a member of the "Quality Management Team" (along with the faculty and Director, who acts as team chairman). These responsibilities include developing and distributing an annual "needs

assessment" survey throughout the major commands, analyzing the results of the survey (taking into account budget, facilities, schedules), and making recommendations regarding courses to be offered, class-size, and other related matters. Once a decision is made by the Team, the appellant prepares the course schedule, which is usually made up of fourteen to seventeen courses per year, as well as other events (conferences, seminars, etc.). The appellant also acts as the school's registrar, ensuring that class spaces are allocated equitably among the MAJCOM's, and that students who are signed up for courses meet the qualification requirements for those courses (career field, prerequisites, etc.).

STANDARD(S) REFERENCED

- OPM Position Classification Standard for Administrative Officer Series, GS-341
- OPM Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide

SERIES AND TITLE DETERMINATION

The appellant's position is currently classified in the GS-341 Administrative Officer Series, and she does not dispute this allocation. The GS-341 series covers positions responsible for providing or obtaining a variety of management services essential to the direction and operation of an organization, including management analysis, procurement, contract administration, property management, space management, etc.. Work covered by the GS-341 series requires knowledge and understanding of management principles, practices, techniques and methods, and skill in integrating management services with the general management of the organization. This accurately describes the nature of the appellant's position. The appellant is properly classified into the GS-341 series. In accordance with the titling instructions in the GS-341 standard, the position is titled Administrative Officer.

GRADE DETERMINATION

Because of the variety and the possible combinations of job functions typical of Administrative Officer positions, OPM has not developed grade level criteria for the GS-341 series. However, the standard suggests several standards that may be appropriate to evaluate

major aspects of the positions, including the GS-560 Budget Analysis Series, GS-505 Financial Management Series, and the GS-343 Management Analysis Series, which refers to the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide (AAGEG) for grade level determinations. The local personnel office used the AAGEG as the basis for its grade level assignment. The AAGEG is used to grade two-grade interval, staff administrative analytical, planning, and evaluative work at grade GS-9 and above, requiring a high degree of qualitative and/or quantitative analytical skills, the ability to research problems and issues, written and oral communication skills, and the application of mature judgment in problem solving.

In reviewing the appellant's position, it is clear that she performs work in a variety of administrative areas that fall into different occupational specialties, including budget analysis, management analysis, and support services (facility management, acquisition of supplies/equipment, general office services). The work constitutes a mixture of one-grade interval and two-grade interval work, requiring the application of both procedural knowledge as well as analytical skills. This is not uncommon in Administrative Officer positions. The GS-341 standard recognizes the heterogeneous nature of such positions, directing the user to evaluate the major aspects of the position's work using appropriate standards. In this case, the predominant aspect of the appellant's work is the provision of management advisory services in the administrative management of the School. This involves the evaluation and analysis of the School's administrative operations, identifying issues and problems, and developing alternatives and/or solutions to those problems, and making substantive recommendations and/or decisions affecting the operation of the School. This is a common element in all of the appellant's major functional areas, and provides the most appropriate basis for evaluating the position. Consequently, the Administrative Analysis Grade Evaluation Guide will be used to determine the position's grade, as it contains the most appropriate criteria.

The appellant exercises the full range of first level supervisory authority and responsibility over the administrative support staff, but these duties constitute only about ten percent of the position's duty time. In order for supervisory duties to be considered for grading purposes under the General Schedule Supervisory Guide, those duties must constitute at least twenty-five percent of the duty time.

The appellant contends that the personnel office incorrectly credited her position in *Factor 1*

(Knowledge Required), Factor 2 (Supervisory Controls), and Factor 4 (Complexity).
This evaluation will focus on those factors in contention.

Factor 1. Knowledge Required

The local personnel office credited level 1-6 for this factor. The appellant disagrees, asserting that 1-7 is the correct level.

Positions at level 1-6 require skill in applying analytical and evaluative techniques to the identification, consideration, and resolution of problems of a procedural or factual nature, along with knowledge of the theory and principles of management and organization, including administrative practices and procedures common to organizations. Work assignments at this level generally involve using qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques such as literature search, work measurement, task analysis, productivity charting, workload analysis, organization design, and space planning. Examples given by the standard include responsibility for conducting studies of clerical work processes in various organization to identify, analyze, and recommend solutions to problems in organizational structure, staffing, administrative procedures, work processes or workload distribution; and conducting position management studies of clerical, trades, technician and administrative support positions at an installation level, briefing managers on findings and recommendations. At level 1-7, positions require knowledge and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to issues or studies concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations carried out by administrative or professional personnel, or substantive administrative support functions (supply, budget, personnel, procurement) which facilitate program operations. Projects or studies at level 1-7 generally require knowledge of the major issues, program goals and objectives, work processes, and administrative operations of the organization. Illustrations of this level include analyzing and measuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of administrative and technical programs of a military command, complex multi-mission local installation or equivalent, analyzing findings and making recommendations on substantive operating programs; and using knowledge of organization, programs, missions, and functions of the parent military command to conduct detailed analysis of complex functions and work processes.

The appellant's position requires knowledge of a variety of administrative procedures, practices, rules and regulations applicable to the administrative management of the School.

This includes knowledge of the mission and programs of the Civilian Personnel School in order to ensure that administrative programs effectively support the operation of the School; knowledge of the School's policies and procedures regarding student registration, class size, distribution of class billets, etc.; knowledge of budgetary policies, procedures and techniques to develop, justify and execute the School's budget; and knowledge of various administrative procedures needed to support the operations of the School (procurement, facility management, transportation, billeting, guest services, office support, etc.). The appellant exercises this knowledge and skill in integrating those administrative programs into the overall operation of the School, ensuring that the Director, faculty members, and students receive the services needed to function properly. The knowledge and skill required to perform these duties meets level 1-6 in the standard, at which employees use accepted analytical and evaluative techniques to identify, analyze and resolve issues or problems of a procedural nature. While the appellant's position requires knowledge and skills in a wide variety of administrative areas, the work does not require the level of knowledge described at level 1-7. The appellant is not assigned projects involving the level of analysis and evaluation required at 1-7, such as assessing and recommending ways to improve program effectiveness and/or organizational productivity, or developing new or modified work methods, organizational structures, and guidelines and procedures for carrying out program operations or administrative support functions (budget, procurement, personnel, supply management, etc.). The appellant's involvement in these areas are generally limited to the procedural aspects internal to the School.

The appellant argues that the local evaluation of her position places too much emphasis on the illustration provided in the standard for level 1-7, which describes the knowledge and skill required to conduct studies, analyze findings and make recommendations on substantive operating programs and/or administrative support functions found at a complex multi-mission installation, throughout a military command, or equivalent. The appellant is correct in stating that illustrations provided in standards should not be the sole basis for assigning a particular factor level. However, those examples do serve to illustrate typical work situations found at different factor levels, and may be considered in determining the appropriate level. In this case, the local personnel office compared the appellant's organization (Civilian Personnel School) to the organizations described in the 1-7 illustration (complex multi-mission installation or military command), and found (correctly) that the appellant's assignments, and commensurate knowledge requirements, do not meet the higher level. This analysis is not based simply on comparing the size or nature of the organizations, but rather how different

organizations impact the complexity of the work assignments and the level of knowledge and skill required to perform those assignments. In this context, it is necessary to consider the size and scope of the appellant's organization, as well as the nature of the programs supported. The appellant makes the argument that the Civilian Personnel School is, in fact, comparable to those described in the 1-7 illustration, based on its uniqueness within the component and its world-wide mission to provide education and training to personnel specialists. While this may accurately describe the scope of the School's mission, its program operations and administrative support requirements do not compare with those of a complex multi-mission installation or a military command. The administrative support functions of those organizations typically present a greater degree of complexity and difficulty to those employees managing, providing, evaluating and improving those services. This is generally demonstrated by the existence of numerous organizational segments, extensive financial requirements, broad and varied program operations (multi-mission), and complex logistical requirements (facilities, supplies, equipment, etc.), which significantly complicate the provision of administrative services, and require a higher level of knowledge and skill. This level of complexity does not exist in the appellant's organization (single facility, relatively limited financial and human resources, standard support services requirements). The appellant's responsibility for managing the School's budget, and her participation as a member of the Quality Management Team (performing analysis and providing substantive recommendations on certain program-related matters affecting the School) require the highest level of knowledge and skill in the position, but that knowledge requirement does not meet level 1-7.

Level 1-6 is credited. (950 points)

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls

The local personnel office assigned level 2-3 for this factor. The appellant believes that 2-4 is the correct level.

This factor measures the nature and extent of controls, direct and indirect, exercised over the position, as demonstrated by how the work is assigned, the employee's responsibility for carrying out the work, and how the work is reviewed. Assigning the appropriate level under this factor requires examination of not only the relationship between the position's incumbent and the supervisor, but also the nature of the position's duties.

At level 2-3, the supervisor assigns work terms of specific projects or areas of responsibility, and normally sets deadlines (or other expectations) for completing the work. At this level, the supervisor generally provides assistance on controversial matters, or on issues and problems for which there are no precedents. Within that framework, the employee is expected to plan, coordinate and carry out the work assignments independently, resolving problems without reference to the supervisor, in accordance with established policies, precedents, techniques, and procedures. At level 2-3, completed work is reviewed for adherence to overall objectives and requirements, choice of appropriate methods, and practicality of recommendations. In contrast, at level 2-4, work is assigned based on a mutually accepted plan developed by the employee and the supervisor, within a framework of priorities, funding, and overall project objectives. Employees at this level independently plan, organize, and carry out their work assignments, resolving conflicts as they arise, which frequently involve definitive interpretation of regulations or procedures. They also inform their supervisor of potentially controversial issues that may have widespread impact. Completed work, at level 2-4, is reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives.

In this case, the appellant is assigned work on the basis of continuing functional responsibilities and special projects. For routine work, the appellant independently plans and carries out the steps required to accomplish the assignment, keeping the supervisor apprised of status, and referring controversial matters to the supervisor for resolution. For special projects, the supervisor provides a general framework of priorities and timeframes, and the appellant is expected to plan and carry out the work independently. Level 2-3 is easily met by the appellant's position. The position does not fully meet level 2-4, however. The appellant argues that because of the high degree of independence with which she performs her work assignments, under very general supervision, her position should be credited at level 2-4. She also states that crediting 2-3 conflicts with her supervisor's intent with regard to her position's supervisory controls. While it is clear that the appellant works with a great deal independence (as intended by the supervisor), independence is only one element to be considered in assigning a level under *Supervisory Controls*. The nature of the work itself must also be examined, specifically its impact on the appellant's opportunity to perform work under the kind of controls envisioned at level 2-4. At that level, according to the standard, work assignments involve projects or studies encompassing broad and complex administrative issues, requiring the frequent interpretation of regulation or procedures, deviation from standard procedures, and/or the application of new, unprecedented methods

and techniques. Such assignments also typically involve controversial issues that have impact beyond the immediate organization, and require the employee to make substantive decisions based on the exercise of independent judgment. The appellant in this case exercises a high degree of independence in carrying out her recurring responsibilities, but her assignments generally involve procedural or routine actions that do not require the kind of decision-making and exercise of independent judgment described at level 2-4. Generally, controversial problems and issues are referred to the supervisor for resolution or final decision. Consequently, the appellant's position does not fully meet level 2-4.

Level 2-3 is credited. (275 points)

Factor 3. Guidelines

The local personnel office credited level 3-3 for this factor. The appellant does not disagree. Concur with local evaluation.

Level 3-3 is credited. (275 points)

Factor 4. Complexity

The local personnel office credited level 4-3 for this factor. The appellant contends that 4-4 is the appropriate level.

At level 4-3, work involves dealing with problems and relationships of a procedural nature rather than the substance of work operations, issues, or other subjects. Employees at this level analyze the issues in the work assignment, select and apply accepted methods and techniques to resolve procedural problems affecting the efficiency, effectiveness, or productivity of the organization. Generally, projects or assignments take place within an organization with related work functions, and involve identifying and resolving problems in workflow, methods and procedures, overall workload, and organization structure. At level 4-4, work involves gathering information, identifying and analyzing issues, and developing recommendations to resolve substantive problems of effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or program support setting. At this level, employees are required to frequently modify methods and techniques to fit different situations, and often encounter difficulty in identifying and analyzing issues because of conflicting or incomplete information

and variations in the nature of administrative processes. At level 4-4, employees exercise a high degree of originality in developing new approaches to problems and refining or revising work methods and techniques. The appellant's position involves a variety of responsibilities related to the administrative operations of the Civilian Personnel School, including budget administration, facility management, and other administrative support services. These areas of responsibility generally involve the administrative or procedural aspects of the School's operations, and are characteristic of level 4-3, as described in the standard. The position fails to meet 4-4 in that the appellant's assignments typically do not involve substantive issues or problems related to the organization's program operations (curriculum, course content, personnel policy, etc.). Rather, they involve the support functions related to the actual operations of the School (support services, budget administration, etc.). While the appellant exercises resourcefulness and initiative in resolving numerous administrative problems, the complexity of the work assignments falls short of 4-4.

Level 4-3 is credited. (150 points)

Factor 5. Scope and Effect

The local personnel office credited level 5-3 for this factor. The appellant does not disagree. Concur with local evaluation.

Level 5-3 is credited. (150 points)

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

The local personnel office assigned the combination of 6-3 and 7-b for these factors. The appellant does not disagree. Concur with local evaluation.

Level 3-b is credited. (110 points)

Factor 8. Physical Demands

The local personnel office credited level 8-1 for this factor. The appellant does not disagree. Concur with local evaluation.

Level 8-1 is credited. (5 points)

Factor 9. Work Environment

The local personnel office credited level 9-1 for this factor. The appellant does not disagree. Concur with local evaluation.

Level 9-1 is credited. (5 points)

Factor Level Summary

Factor	Level Assigned	Points
<i>1. Knowledge Required</i>	1-6	950
<i>2. Supervisory Controls</i>	2-3	275
<i>3. Guidelines</i>	3-3	275
<i>4. Complexity</i>	4-3	150
<i>5. Scope and Effect</i>	5-3	150
<i>6. Personal Contacts & 7. Purpose of Contacts</i>	3-b	110
<i>8. Physical Demands</i>	8-1	5
<i>9. Work Environment</i>	9-1	5
	<i>Total</i>	1920

Point Range: GS-09 1855-2100
GS-11 2355-2750

Based on the grade conversion chart in the standard, the total points convert to a grade of GS-09.

DECISION

The appellant's position is properly classified as Administrative Officer, GS-341-09.