



United States
Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
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Standard: [Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work](#) (March 1989)
Factor: N/A
Issue: Evaluation of instructor positions also engaged in course development work

Identification of the Classification Issue

The issue arose in an Office of Personnel Management region's consideration of an appeal. The appellant provided remedial reading and study skills training to military recruits, and spent most of her time delivering a 2-week reading course which she had developed. The appellant argued that application of Part I of the Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work, which covers instructor work, should result in classification at the GS-11 level because she developed and modified courses, ranging from basic to advanced, demonstrated techniques to instructors (1-day training given semiannually) and designed courses for trainees who had reading and/or learning disabilities. The appellant asserted that these courses were equivalent to the upper-division undergraduate level. The agency determined that the instructional work, evaluated by Part I, did not exceed the GS-7 grade level, but that the development of short self-contained courses to teach basic skills, evaluated by Part II (instructional specialist work), supported classification at the GS-9 level.

Resolution

The Office of Personnel Management found that the instructor duties were the primary function of the position and the paramount reason for its existence at the school. The instructional specialist duties were incidental and performed almost exclusively in support of the appellant's own courses. Thus, the position was evaluated by application of Part I of the Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work.

The Office of Personnel Management determined that the limited complexity of the course content (remedial reading) and the brevity of the courses were comparable to the short, repetitive

courses found at the GS-7 grade level, e.g., beginning typing, and operation, repair, and maintenance of uncomplicated equipment. However, because the appellant was responsible for the content and modification of the courses, those duties warranted evaluation to a higher grade level. The appellant's maintenance and development of course content, normally found at the GS-11 level, were performed for courses significantly less complex than envisioned at that level, e.g., courses covering advanced technical systems such as maintenance and repair of major aircraft systems. The course changes she developed were minor and did not entail the frequent updating of knowledge and course content found at the GS-11 level. Only 10 percent of the remedial reading students had not completed high school. Teaching these students did not present the complicated, specialized, or persistent learning difficulties for learning disabled students envisioned at the GS-11 grade level. Therefore, while the course maintenance and development duties were similar to GS-11 level work, these duties failed to meet the full intent of the standard at that level. Because of the circumscribed nature of the courses taught, the Nature of Assignment minimally met the GS-9 level.

The position's Level of Responsibility was similar to the GS-11 level, e.g., freedom from supervisory control in subject matter material selection and course modification. However, the circumscribed nature of the courses taught did not permit the depth of content analysis of subject matter material or the breadth of training and text material development envisioned at the GS-11 level. Therefore, notwithstanding the delegation of course content control to the appellant, the Level of Responsibility did not exceed the GS-9 grade level. The Office of Personnel Management concluded that the position was properly classified at the GS-9 level by application of Part I of the Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work.