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: General Schedule Supervisory Guide (April 1993)
Factor: Factor 3, Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised
Issue: Crediting Level 3-3b

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in an Office of Personnel Management oversight division's adjudication of an appeal. The appellant supervised 11 employees: five directly and five others indirectly through a subordinate supervisor. The appellant believed his authority met Level 3-3b for two reasons. First, as required at Level 3-3b, he exercised nearly all the responsibilities described at Level 3-2c. Second, he believed that he exercised all 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b. For instance, the appellant claimed he exercised responsibility 1 under Level 3-3b, since he used a subordinate supervisor to direct work.

Resolution

At Level 3-3b, a supervisor must exercise all or nearly all of the supervisory responsibilities described at Level 3-2c, plus at least 8 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b.

The oversight division agreed that the appellant exercised nearly all 10 responsibilities described at Level 3-2c. He also exercised 7 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b. Specifically, he exercised responsibilities 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 15. For instance, he carried out responsibilities 7 and 9, since he approved selections for subordinate nonsupervisory positions, and heard and resolved group grievances and serious employee complaints.

However, the oversight division found that the appellant's position could not receive credit for the other eight responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b. That is, it could not receive credit for responsibilities 1, 3 through 6, 8, 12, and 14, for reasons discussed below.

Responsibility 1 describes a supervisor who uses subordinate supervisors, leaders, or comparable personnel to direct, coordinate, or oversee work. The appellant believed his position met this criterion because he had one subordinate supervisor. However, the General Schedule Supervisory Guide uses the plural when speaking of subordinate supervisors and leaders; this is deliberate. Level 3-3b is intended to credit only supervisors who direct at least two or three persons who are officially recognized as subordinate supervisors, leaders, or comparable personnel. Further, the supervisor's subordinate organization must be so large and its work so complex that it requires using those two or more subordinate supervisors or comparable personnel. Since the appellant had only one subordinate supervisor, his position could not receive credit for this responsibility.

Under *responsibility* 3, a supervisor must assure reasonable equity among subordinate units of both performance standards and rating techniques developed by subordinates. The appellant maintained that this criterion was met because he reviewed documentation and approaches to evaluating personnel involved in various units to ensure equity and fairness. However, responsibility 3 could not be credited for two reasons. Most important, the appellant's subordinates did not develop performance standards, as required for this responsibility. Second, similar to responsibility 1, responsibility 3 envisions that these performance standards and rating techniques are developed by at least two or three subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or comparable personnel.

Responsibility 4 requires direction of a program or major program segment with significant resources (for instance, a multimillion dollar level of annual resources). The appellant held that this criterion was met because his office approved and decided claims paying many millions of dollars. However, responsibility 4 is intended to credit only positions that exercise direct control over a multimillion dollar level of annual resources. The appellant lacked direct control over the millions of dollars paid to claimants. For instance, those amounts were paid from a national trust fund, not from a fund in the appellant's office. The appellant did have control over his office's operating budget. However, this budget involved less than a million dollars annually. Since the appellant lacked direct control over a multimillion dollar level of annual resources, responsibility 4 could not be credited.

Like responsibility 1, *responsibilities 5*, 6, and 8 are intended to credit only supervisors who direct at least two or three subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or comparable personnel. Therefore, credit could not be awarded for those three responsibilities.

Under *responsibility* 12, a supervisor must determine whether contractor-performed work meets standards of adequacy needed to authorize payment. The appellant believed that this criterion was met since he was a contracting officer and had to sign off on certain forms before contractors could be paid. These contractors furnished various supplies and services, such as preprinted envelopes, answering machines, and photocopy supplies. However, responsibility 12 is intended to credit supervisors who regularly oversee the work of contract employees in a manner somewhat comparable to the way in which other supervisors direct the work of subordinate employees. As part of that regular oversight, such supervisors determine whether contractor-performed work meets standards of adequacy, much as the appellant determines whether his own subordinates' work is adequate. Since the appellant did not oversee the work of contractor employees, this responsibility could not be credited.

Responsibility 14 involves recommending awards or bonuses for nonsupervisory personnel and changes in position classification. The appellant recommended awards and bonuses. Further, he claimed that he could recommend changes in classification. However, responsibility 14 envisions crediting supervisors for making award and classification recommendations that superiors will carefully consider and that have a reasonable chance of adoption. All employees supervised by the appellant were assigned to standard nationwide position descriptions classified in headquarters that were required for use throughout the agency. Therefore, a recommendation by the appellant to change their classification would not have had a reasonable chance of adoption. Consequently, this responsibility could not be credited.

Since the appellant's position could receive credit for only 7 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b, it did not meet that level. It was therefore evaluated at Level 3-2c, the highest level met.