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## Classification Policy

### **Mixed positions**

USDA position classification policy requires that all GS positions, including Category 1 research supervisors, which spend a minimum of 25% percent of their normal work effort performing supervisory and managerial duties be evaluated against the OPM General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG), in addition to any other applicable OPM standards.

Positions which are composed of major duties evaluated by two or more separate standards, such as by the Research Grade Evaluation Guide (RGEG) and the GSSG, are legally designated "mixed" positions. Mixed positions are classified to the highest graded work arrived at by applying all relevant standards. This means that Category 1 positions which meet the "minimum of 25 percent" criteria—principally RL's—are mixed positions and must be evaluated by both RGEG and GSSG criteria. If the GSSG evaluation yields a higher grade than does the RGEG, a position's grade is based on the GSSG criteria, and vice versa.

### **How are the two standards applied?**

RPES panels apply the RGEG to Category 1 supervisory research positions, to determine the grade worth of the research and research leadership component of the mixed position. The GSSG is applied by the servicing Human Resources Specialist in ARS Human Resources Division. Because the GSSG is not based on impact-of-the-person-in-the-job, a one-time application is sufficient to determine the GSSG grade level, which should not change absent major changes in supervisory responsibilities.

### **How are RGEG and GSSG criteria and evaluations related?**

They are **not** related. The RGEG and GSSG are totally separate standards, grading criteria are completely different, and there is no relationship between them. Grade level determinations are arrived at independently, i.e., application of one standard in no way affects application of the other.

### **How does the “mixed position” status of Category 1 supervisors affect panel operations?**

In two ways. First, the Upgrade (UPG) panel decision option was adopted to replace the previously used Promote (PRO) option. This accommodates situations where a position's "going in" GSSG grade is higher than the grade for the research component. If the panel upgrades the research component of the position, the overall grade does not change, so promotion of the incumbent does not occur.

Second, panels must remember that the GSSG grade level of an RL position is **completely irrelevant to their deliberations**. Their decision must be based entirely on applying RGEG criteria to the research and research leadership component of the position. To facilitate this separation, RPE Staff always annotates case listings to specify both the RGEG and the GSSG grade level of supervisory positions being reviewed.