



# United States Office of Personnel Management

**Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness**  
*Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions*  
May 2001  
Article No. 26-06

**Standards:** [Research Grade Evaluation Guide \(June 1964\)](#)  
[Economist, GS-110 \(April 1963\)](#)

**Factor:** N/A

**Issue:** Coverage of the Research Grade Evaluation Guide (RGEG)

## **Identification of the Classification Issue**

The appellant's position was classified as GS-110-13. The agency used the Research Grade Evaluation Guide (RGEG) to grade the position because the appellant did economic research in developing valuation procedures for natural resources. The appellant believed the agency should have used the GS-110 standard to evaluate this work.

## **Resolution**

The RGEG is intended for use in determining grade levels of basic and applied research positions in the biological, medical, agricultural, physical, or mathematical sciences, in engineering, and in psychology. It specifically *excludes* positions involving research in the social sciences, such as history, economics, or anthropology. This is because research in the social sciences does not typically involve the types of investigative processes upon which the RGEG is based, i.e., experimentation and the subsequent interpretation, documentation, and reporting of findings. The GS-110 standard evaluates economist positions based on relative differences in research and analysis, program planning and administration, and consultant and advisory services. OPM found that the appellant's economic research work was covered by the criteria in the GS-110 standard. Based on an application of the GS-110 standard, OPM sustained the grade.

**Link to [C-0110-13-01](#)**