



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: Factor Evaluation System (FES) standards in general
Factor: N/A
Issue: Describing a position with mixed-grade or mixed-series duties in Factor Evaluation System format

Identification of the Classification Issue

An agency wrote to the Office of Personnel Management asking for an advisory opinion on a position the agency proposed to classify as Clerk-Typist, GS-0322-5. The position was located in a word processing center in a hospital. Based on the information submitted by the agency, the Office of Personnel Management concluded that the position consisted of two distinct kinds of work:

1. typing and related general clerical work in support of the typing; and
2. other specialized clerical work that appeared to fall within the Medical Record Technician Series, GS-0675, or, possibly, the Coding Series, GS-0357.

However, the agency failed to separate the different kinds of work in the factor level descriptions in the official position description. This situation created problems in both the agency's and the Office of Personnel Management's position analysis.

Resolution

In the position analysis, the Office of Personnel Management noted that the two distinct kinds of work were not described separately within the factor characteristics in the position description, e.g., one sentence referred to the typing and related clerical duties and the next sentence referred to the specialized clerical duties, but this fact was not readily apparent. This indiscriminate mix created problems for the agency when it tried to evaluate the position using Factor Evaluation

System standards. As a result, the Office of Personnel Management found that the agency's evaluation of Factor 1, Knowledge Required By the Position, appeared to be based solely on the typing and other clerical duties, while its evaluation of Factor V, Scope and Effect, appeared to be based solely on the specialized clerical duties.

The Office of Personnel Management first separated the two kinds of work within each factor description. It then evaluated the typing and closely related clerical work using the Typing and Stenography Grade Evaluation Guide. The Office of Personnel Management concluded that such work was properly classified at the GS-4 level.

Concerning the other specialized clerical work, the Office of Personnel Management did not evaluate it since the information provided by the agency failed to distinguish the skills, knowledges, and abilities required to perform it and was otherwise insufficient.

In returning the case to the agency, the Office of Personnel Management noted that the typing and related clerical work were covered by a Factor Evaluation System position classification standard; therefore, the position description must be written in the Factor Evaluation System format. If however, the specialized clerical work were found to be classified in the Medical Record Technician Series, GS-0675, or the Coding Series, GS-0357, the controlling standard would be one written in the narrative format. The Office of Personnel Management suggested that in order to distinguish between these two kinds of work, the agency should describe the specialized clerical work in distinct paragraphs in the Factor Evaluation System format. In any case, the Office of Personnel Management concluded that the agency would have to evaluate each kind of work separately, using the appropriate Office of Personnel Management standard. The agency would have to apply the Office of Personnel Management's mixed-series instructions to determine the series for the position. If the two sets of duties were found to be properly graded at two different grade levels, the agency would have to follow the instructions for grading mixed-grade positions.