

Introduction to the Position Classification Standards

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(Also See [The Classifier’s Handbook](#))

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SECTION I. BACKGROUND

A. Statutory Basis

The classification standards program for positions in the General Schedule was established by the Classification Act of 1949, which has been codified in chapter 51 of title 5, United States Code. The statute:

- Establishes the principle of providing equal pay for substantially equal work.
- Provides a definition of each grade in the General Schedule.
- Directs the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), after consulting with Federal agencies, to prepare standards for agencies to use in placing positions in their proper classes and grades.
- States that standards issued by OPM shall:
 - Define the various classes of positions in terms of duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements.
 - Establish official class titles.
 - Set forth the grades in which the classes of positions have been placed.

Based on this statutory guidance, OPM has developed an occupational structure and classification system for positions included in the General Schedule.

B. Classification Standards Issuances

This *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards* provides background information and guidance regarding the classification standards for General Schedule work. It describes the fundamental policies which Federal managers, supervisors, and personnel specialists need to understand in using classification standards to determine the series, titles, and grades of positions.

The full set of OPM guidance for General Schedule classification standards includes the following:

1. Basic definitions and policies as set forth in this *Introduction*.
2. Position classification standards, which include:
 - a. Classification standards for individual occupations, which should be filed in numerical order by series code.

- b. Classification guides which cover work typically found in a number of series.

In addition, there are several other sources of information on position classification and related subjects with which users should be familiar. OPM's guidance related to classification standards is designed to help the user classify work and make decisions on the proper occupational series and grade of a position.

1. [The Classifier's Handbook](#), which provides general classification guidance on many different subjects also covered in this *Introduction*.
2. [Handbook of Occupational Groups and Families](#), which provides the full occupational structure established by OPM for the General Schedule. It lists and defines each occupational group and series in the classification system.
3. [Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions](#), which is issued periodically. It contains summaries of recent OPM decisions and opinions which may have Governmentwide impact.
4. [Qualification standards](#), which set forth the minimum experience or education that individuals must have to qualify for a position.

SECTION II. STRUCTURE AND USE OF CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

A. Explanation of Terms

Following are definitions of basic terms relating to position classification standards.

1. *General Schedule* — The broadest subdivision of the classification system covered by title 5. It includes a range of levels of difficulty and responsibility for covered positions from grades GS-1 to GS-15. It is designated by "GS" for supervisory and nonsupervisory positions at all of these grade levels. (Most positions above grade GS-15 are included in the Senior Executive Service (SES) which is outside the General Schedule.)
2. *Occupational Group* — A major subdivision of the General Schedule, embracing a group of associated or related occupations; e.g., the Accounting and Budget Group, GS-500; the Engineering and Architecture Group, GS-800; the General Administrative, Clerical, and Office Services Group, GS-300).
3. *Series* — A subdivision of an occupational group consisting of positions similar as to specialized line of work and qualification requirements. Series are designated by a title

and number such as the Accounting Series, GS-510; the Secretary Series, GS-318; the Microbiology Series, GS-403.

4. *Grade* — The numerical designation, GS-1 through GS-15, which identifies the range of difficulty and responsibility, and level of qualification requirements of positions included in the General Schedule.
5. *Class of Positions* — All positions that are classified to the same schedule, series, and grade (e.g., GS-510 –12) and are sufficiently alike to warrant like treatment in personnel processes such as testing, selection, transfer, and promotion.
6. *Position* — The duties and responsibilities which make up the work performed by an employee.
7. *Position Description* — The official description of management's assignment of duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships to a position.
8. *Classification Standard* — Issued by OPM to relate the grade level definitions in title 5 to specific work situations and thereby provide the basis for assigning each position the appropriate title, series, and grade.

B. Form and Content of Standards

The majority of position classification standards are developed by OPM and are applicable to occupations common to many or all Federal agencies. Standards for positions existing in one or a few agencies may be developed by OPM, or by a lead agency, under the guidance of OPM. All position classification standards are formally issued by OPM and distributed by the Government Printing Office, through subscription, to Federal agencies and other subscribers. Published standards remain in effect until they are abolished or replaced by OPM.

Classification standards usually include a definition of the kind of work covered by the standard; background information, such as descriptions of typical kinds of assignments found in the occupation(s) covered and definitions of terms; official titles; and criteria for determining proper grade levels. Some standards, usually referred to as *series coverage standards*, do not contain specific grade level criteria and refer the user to other standards or guides for grading guidance. Some broad standards are issued as grade level guides, which provide criteria for determining the proper grade level of work in a number of occupational series.

There are a number of possible ways of presenting, for purposes of analysis and classification, the essential characteristics of work. For this reason, classification standards and guides have different formats and include a variety of evaluation elements. The most common formats of classification standards are:

- *Narrative* — Standards describing the nature of work and level of responsibility for each grade covered by the standard. This requires the user to look at work as a whole and select the most appropriate overall grade.
- *Narrative factor* — Standards describing covered work in terms of individual factors essential to determining the difficulty of assigned work. This requires the user to select the proper level for each factor to determine the overall grade.
- *Point factor* — Standards describing work in terms of individual evaluation factors, which are assigned points for different levels. This requires the user to select the proper level for each factor, add up the total points assigned, and refer to a point-grade conversion table to determine the overall grade. Many point factor standards are in Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, which uses factors with established point values. Some FES standards include benchmark position descriptions to illustrate typical combinations of factor levels at different grade levels.

From time to time, other formats and evaluation elements may be used in classification standards. Regardless of style or variations in the way criteria are presented, classification standards deal one way or another with essential characteristics that are common to all work. These include such things as the kinds of knowledge and skills required, the degree of difficulty involved, the kind of supervision received, the nature of personal judgment required, the level and purpose of contacts with others, and the impact of the work environment or inherent risks and hazards involved in the work.

Most standards deal only with the classification of nonsupervisory duties and responsibilities, although a few include criteria for program management and supervisory work. Most positions involving supervisory duties are classified using broad guides covering supervisory work across occupational lines. (See discussion on [Classifying Supervisory Work](#) later in this *Introduction*.)

C. Using Classification Standards

Position classification standards encourage uniformity and equity in the classification of positions by providing an established standard for common reference and use in different organizations, locations, or agencies. This “sorting out” and recording of like duties and responsibilities provides a basis for managing essential Federal personnel management programs, such as those for recruiting, placing, compensating, training, reassigning, promoting, and separating employees.

Position classification standards are descriptive of work as it exists and is performed throughout the Federal service. While they indicate the proper series, titles, and grades of positions, they do not alter the authority of agency managers and supervisors to organize programs and work processes; to establish, modify, and abolish positions; to assign duties and responsibilities to employees; and to direct and supervise the accomplishment of their assigned missions. The

classification system should be a guide to judgment and supportive of each agency's efforts to manage its workforce.

Classification standards which have grade level criteria normally describe typical grades for the work covered. This does not preclude agencies from properly classifying positions at levels above or below the grade range specifically described in the standard. Such grades are determined by extending the criteria as needed to meet specific job situations.

To aid in the classification of specific positions, agencies are encouraged to develop and use internal classification guides. These guides may be useful in assuring consistent treatment of an important occupational area in an agency. While such agency guides do not require OPM review or approval, they must result in classification findings that are consistent with published OPM standards for similar or related kinds of work.

SECTION III. PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES OF POSITION CLASSIFICATION

This Section highlights the basic principles and policies which govern the classification system.

A. Authorities and Responsibilities for Classification

Both OPM and Federal agencies bear responsibility for carrying out the General Schedule classification system in accordance with the principles set forth in law. While OPM has overall responsibility for establishing the basic policies and guidance governing the classification system, each agency has the general authority and responsibility for properly classifying all of its positions covered by the General Schedule.

1. OPM Authority and Responsibility

a. Developing position classification standards.

Title 5 U.S.C. directs OPM to prepare and publish position classification standards as a means of implementing the classification system. The criteria in these standards must be based on the principles and concepts outlined in the law. OPM has final authority over standards.

b. Developing and issuing classification policies for the Federal personnel system.

c. Monitoring agency classification programs.

The law requires OPM to evaluate agency operations to determine whether agencies are classifying positions in a manner which is consistent with published standards.

- d. Providing assistance to agencies on classification matters.

OPM responds to agency requests for interpretations of classification issues and advisory opinions on the classification of work.

- e. Providing final decisions on classification appeals filed by agencies and Federal employees.
- f. Responding to questions on whether specific kinds of work are covered by or exempt from the General Schedule according to provisions of the law.
- g. Revoking and restoring agency classification authority.

Whenever OPM finds that an agency is not classifying its positions in conformance with published standards, it may revoke or suspend the agency's authority in whole or in part.

2. Agency Authority and Responsibility

- a. Carrying out a program for creating, changing, or abolishing positions and assigning or reassigning duties and responsibilities to employees.

Under the law, each agency has the authority to administer the General Schedule classification system for its own positions, including the authority to organize and assign work.

- b. Exercising and redelegating classification authority.

While the head of an agency remains responsible for insuring compliance with the law and with published classification standards, this authority is usually redelegated to agency managers and personnelists.

- c. Emphasizing sound position management.

Federal managers have the responsibility to organize work to accomplish the agency's mission in the most efficient and economical manner. The policy of the Federal Government is to assign work in a way that will make optimum use of available resources. (See further discussion on [Position Management](#) in Section III D. later in this *Introduction*.)

- d. Participating in OPM's development of classification standards.

Agencies recommend standards, projects, and factfinding sites; provide background information; and comment on draft standards during the development process.

- e. Developing agency classification guidance.

An agency may develop internal agency guides used in the classification of positions to assure uniform treatment of work in that agency.

- f. Ensuring consistency in the classification of positions within the agency.

Each agency should have sufficient instructions and oversight to assure that delegated classification authority is exercised consistently throughout the agency.

B. Judgment in Applying Standards

Position classification standards are intended to be a guide to judgment, not a substitute for it. Standards are prepared on the assumption that the people using them are either skilled personnel management specialists or managers who are highly knowledgeable about the occupations which are basic to their organizational units.

In the development of occupational standards, OPM has no intention of establishing a rigid framework for putting jobs in categories. The standards program has been oriented toward a broad concept of job structure that aims to: (1) broaden the range of backgrounds for initial entry into occupations; (2) remove artificial barriers between related occupations; (3) increase responsiveness to needs of management and of career patterns; (4) facilitate coordination or integration of classification and qualification practices; and (5) improve and encourage greater use of different methods for evaluating the impact of individual contributions to the job. The objective is to provide a classification system which permits agency managers to develop and use employee talents as fully as possible.

Standards are to be considered and interpreted as guides to judgments made under the classification authority delegated to agencies by title 5 U.S.C. Jobs within an occupation frequently vary so extensively throughout the government that it is not possible to reflect in a standard all the possible combinations and permutations of duties and responsibilities. Proper application of standards, therefore, requires the use of judgment rather than just a mechanical matching of specific words or phrases in standards. Regardless of the format of the standard being used, it should be viewed in terms of its overall intent, and considerable judgment is needed in determining where work being classified fits into the continuum of duties and responsibilities described by the standard.

C. Work Covered by the General Schedule

Occupational series in the General Schedule are normally divided into two categories – those covering one-grade interval work, and those covering two-grade interval work. A list of series for which the two-grade interval pattern is normal is provided as an appendix to this *Introduction*.

Two-grade interval series follow a two-grade interval pattern up to GS-11; i.e., GS-5, 7, 9, 11. From GS-11 through GS-15, such series follow a one-grade pattern. Grade GS-9 normally

represents the first full performance level for two-grade interval work although this may vary with some occupations. (The use of grades GS-6, GS-8, and GS-10 is not prohibited in two-grade interval series. Such grades are unusual, however, and would ordinarily not be in keeping with the normal grade pattern for such work.)

One-grade interval series have a grade level pattern which increases by one grade increments; i.e., GS-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. The typical grade range for one-grade interval occupations is GS-2 through GS-8, although jobs in some occupations may be at higher grades.

The material below summarizes the general characteristics of work classifiable under the General Schedule. (The general categories of work described are not reflective of the multitude of position titles in General Schedule occupations. Basic titles such as *specialist, analyst, investigator, examiner, technician, assistant, operator, clerk, or aid* are used in series for administrative, technical, or clerical work. The titles of professional positions usually reflect the field concerned; e.g., *engineer, chemist, or accountant.*)

1. Professional Work

Professional work requires knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's or higher degree with major study in or pertinent to the specialized field, as distinguished from general education.

Work is professional when it requires the exercise of discretion, judgment, and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations, and to improve data, materials, and methods.

There are situations in which an employee meets the formal education requirements for a particular professional field but does not perform professional work. This may be due to a lack of professional work to be done, or it may be because the organization and structure of the assignment does not require a professionally qualified employee. In such situations, the position is classified in an appropriate nonprofessional series, based on the duties and responsibilities assigned and the qualifications required to do the work.

Professional occupational series follow a two-grade interval pattern and are identified as professional in the series definitions. If a series definition does not state that the work covered is professional, it should not be considered professional for classification purposes.

2. Administrative Work

Administrative work involves the exercise of analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and personal responsibility, and the application of a substantial body of knowledge of principles, concepts, and practices applicable to one or more fields of administration or management. While these positions do not require specialized education, they do involve

the type of skills (analytical, research, writing, judgment) typically gained through a college level education, or through progressively responsible experience.

Administrative work may be performed as a part of the principal mission or program of an agency or subcomponent, or it can be performed as a service function which supports the agency's mission or program. Employees engaged in administrative work are concerned with analyzing, evaluating, modifying, and developing the basic programs, policies, and procedures which facilitate the work of Federal agencies and their programs. They apply a knowledge of administrative analysis, theory, and principles in adapting practice to the unique requirements of a particular program.

Administrative occupational series typically follow a two-grade interval pattern.

3. Technical Work

Technical work is typically associated with and supportive of a professional or administrative field. It involves extensive practical knowledge, gained through experience and/or specific training less than that represented by college graduation. Work in these occupations may involve substantial elements of the work of the professional or administrative field, but requires less than full knowledge of the field involved.

Technical employees carry out tasks, methods, procedures, and/or computations that are laid out either in published or oral instructions and covered by established precedents or guidelines. Depending upon the level of difficulty of the work, these procedures often require a high degree of technical skill, care, and precision.

Some technical work may appear similar to that performed by employees doing beginning professional or administrative work in the same general occupational field. Technical work, however, typically follows a one-grade interval pattern and does not require the application of knowledge and skills equivalent to those required for two-grade interval work. Classification decisions are based on duties and responsibilities, qualifications required, career patterns, management's intent in designing the position, the purpose of the work, and recruiting sources.

4. Clerical Work

Clerical occupations involve structured work in support of office, business, or fiscal operations. Clerical work is performed in accordance with established policies, procedures, or techniques; and requires training, experience, or working knowledge related to the tasks to be performed. Clerical occupational series follow a one-grade interval pattern.

Clerical work typically involves general office or program support duties such as preparing, receiving, reviewing, and verifying documents; processing transactions; maintaining office records; locating and compiling data or information from files;

keeping a calendar and informing others of deadlines and other important dates; and using keyboards to prepare typewritten material or to store or manipulate information for data processing use. The work requires a knowledge of an organization's rules, some degree of subject matter knowledge, and skill in carrying out clerical processes and procedures.

5. Other Kinds of Work

There are some occupations in the General Schedule which do not clearly fit into one of the above groupings. Included among these are series such as the Fire Protection and Prevention Series, GS-081, and Police Series, GS-083. The series definition or classification standard should indicate whether the series is one- or two-grade interval.

D. Position Management

The law which governs the classification system clearly places upon agencies the authority and responsibility to establish, classify, and manage their own positions. The need to achieve an economical and effective position structure is critical to the proper and responsible use of limited financial and personnel resources.

Good position management can be defined as a carefully designed position structure which blends the skills and assignments of employees with the goal of successfully carrying out the organization's mission or program. Sound position management reflects a logical balance between employees needed to carry out the major functions of the organization and those needed to provide adequate support; between professional employees and technicians; between fully trained employees and trainees; and between supervisors and subordinates.

Good position management also requires consideration of grade levels for the positions involved. Grades should be commensurate with the work performed to accomplish the organization's mission and should not exceed those grades needed to perform the work of the unit. A carefully designed position structure will result in reasonable and supportable grade levels.

Since supervisors and managers play major roles in the management and classification of subordinate positions, they are responsible for assuring a sound position structure in the organizations they lead. The Federal classification system allows considerable freedom and flexibility for Federal managers to establish an organizational structure that is not only efficient but also cost conscious.

E. Use of Position Descriptions

A position description is a statement of the major duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships of a given position. The description of each position must be kept up to date and include information about the job which is significant to its classification.

For a nonsupervisory position, the description should include enough information so that proper classification can be made when the description is supplemented by other information about the organization's structure, mission, and procedures. The position description should define clearly the major duties assigned and the nature and extent of responsibility for carrying out those duties. Qualification requirements should be evident from reading the description, and specialized requirements not readily apparent from the description should be specifically mentioned and supported by the described duties.

For a supervisory position, the description should identify the information necessary to evaluate the position by the appropriate supervisory criteria. The scope and degree of supervisory responsibility are of primary importance. The description of a supervisory position need not include a detailed discussion of the work performed by subordinate employees. It is important, however, that there be consistency between a supervisor's and subordinates' position descriptions concerning supervision given and received.

All position descriptions must include a statement signed by the immediate supervisor certifying to the accuracy of the position description. (For a more detailed discussion of the development, maintenance, and use of position descriptions, see [The Classifier's Handbook](#).)

F. Determining Duties To Be Classified

An important step in evaluating a position is identifying the factors of the total position that are significant. The following discussion provides guidance on determining the duties of a position which influence the overall classification. In most positions, certain duties are performed from time to time that do not affect the position's title, series, or grade.

1. Major vs. Minor Duties

Major duties are those that represent the primary reason for the position's existence, and which govern the qualification requirements. Typically, they occupy most of the employee's time. Minor duties generally occupy a small portion of time, are not the primary purpose for which the position was established, and do not determine qualification requirements.

Because the final classification of most positions is based on an evaluation of the major duties, small parts of the job could be overlooked as relatively insignificant to the position's classification. These small parts, however, can sometimes have a major influence on series and grade level determinations and the qualifications required, and must be considered when classifying the position. (See discussion on classifying [Mixed Grade Positions](#) in Section III J. later in this *Introduction* and in [The Classifier's Handbook](#).)

2. Regular vs. One-Time Only and Temporary Duties

Regular and recurring duties are the foundation of most positions. They may be performed in a continuous, uninterrupted manner, or they may be performed at recurring intervals. Within reason, the time intervals between the performance of recurring duties

is not as important as the fact that the duties recur with a somewhat anticipated frequency.

One-time only or temporary duties generally do not affect the series or grade level. Such duties cannot be ignored, however, when they become a regular part of a job. The position should be reevaluated if the duties extend over a long period of time (e.g., several months) and it is reasonable to assume that the duties will continue to recur, even if not in a precisely predictable pattern.

3. Projected Duties

As a rule, a position is classified on the basis of the duties actually performed. In some cases, such as classifying a new position for recruitment, proposed duties rather than an established assignment must be evaluated. If it is necessary to base a grade and series on duties of this type, the position should be reviewed within a reasonable time; i.e., six months or so, after the work concerned is being performed.

4. Trainee Duties

Duties assigned to trainee positions are recognizably different from duties performed by experienced employees in the same occupation. Trainee assignments are purposely designed to:

- Provide orientation, training, and familiarization with the work processes of the occupational field and specific job.
- Reinforce and supplement previous experience and education.
- Allow the trainee to carry out progressively more difficult and responsible tasks.

Generally these positions are subject to close supervision and review.

The classification of trainee positions must take into account their developmental nature, and judgment should be applied when comparing the assignment to classification criteria.

G. Selecting the Occupational Series

The duties and responsibilities assigned to most positions are covered by one occupational series, and the series determination is clear. For these positions, the series represents the primary work of the position, the highest level of work performed, and the paramount qualifications required.

Some positions, however, are a mix of duties and responsibilities covered by two or more occupational series and classified by more than one standard or guide. Often the appropriate series for these positions is a general series for the occupational group covering the type of work performed.

For positions whose duties fall in more than one occupational group, the most appropriate series for the position depends on consideration of a number of factors. For many of these positions the grade controlling duties will determine the series. Sometimes, however, the highest level of work performed does not represent the most appropriate series, and the series can be determined only after considering the paramount qualifications required, sources of recruitment and line of progression, the reason for establishing the position, and the background knowledge required. (See also the discussion on [Interdisciplinary Professional Positions](#) in Section III L. later in this *Introduction*.)

H. Titling Positions

1. Titles Prescribed by OPM

The law (5 U.S.C. 5105) requires OPM to establish the official titles of positions in published classification standards. Accordingly, position classification standards generally prescribe the titles to be used for positions in the covered series. Only the prescribed title may be used on official documents relating to a position; e.g., position descriptions and personnel actions.

The requirement to use official titles, however, does not preclude agencies from using any unofficial title they choose for positions. Unofficial titles (such as those relating to specific agency organizations or programs) may be appropriate and helpful for internal agency use or for recruiting purposes, but are not always descriptive of the overall occupation for Governmentwide purposes.

2. Titles Prescribed by Agencies

Agencies may designate the official title of positions in occupational series for which OPM has not prescribed titles; i.e., those not specifically covered by classification standards. The title selected by the agency should not be one that has been prescribed by OPM as an official title for positions in another series. Agencies should consider the following guidance when constructing official titles of positions.

a. Nonsupervisory titles

The purpose of a position title is to communicate an immediate understanding and identification of the job. Titles should be short, meaningful, and generally descriptive of the work performed. They should also be consistent with the occupational series titles established by OPM; for example, positions in occupational series involving analytical, clerical, examining, or investigating work should be titled *analyst*, *clerk*, *examiner*, or *investigator*. Once basic titles have been established for positions in a series, those titles should be used consistently throughout the agency.

b. Supervisory titles

The duties, responsibilities, and qualifications involved in supervisory work should be recognized in the titles of positions. Therefore, when supervisory qualifications and skills are needed to perform the work, as defined in the appropriate guide or standard, the official title should be supplemented with the word *Supervisory* as a prefix or *Supervisor* as a suffix. Words such as *Officer*, *Administrator*, or *Manager* may be substituted to denote a level of responsibility which inherently includes supervision.

c. Parenthetical titles

For some occupational series OPM has prescribed certain parenthetical titles to be used as appropriate for positions in those series. Only these designations may be used. For positions in series for which OPM has not established parenthetical titles, agencies may supplement official titles with parenthetical designations determined by the agency. A parenthetical designation should be used only when it is decided that it would add materially to the understanding and identification of the position. Parenthetical titles should be used only where it would be helpful or necessary to identify further the duties and responsibilities involved, and such duties and responsibilities reflect special knowledge and skills needed to perform the work. The addition of parenthetical designations can be important for a variety of purposes, such as to indicate special skills for recruitment or to identify positions for pay purposes. In all cases where a parenthetical title is used, the position description must reflect the duties which support the parenthetical designation.

A parenthetical title of (*Typing*), (*Stenography*), (*Office Automation*), or (*Data Transcribing*), must be added to the official title of a position when the duties of the position require proficiency at or above competitive level standards for one of these skills. The parenthetical designation (*Office Automation*) may be shortened to (*OA*), if desired. When either “Stenography” or “Office Automation” is used alone in parenthesis, the “Typing” designation will not be used.

When a position is classified to a specialized clerical series and requires competitive level stenographic skill and competitive level typing skill to perform office automation work, both “Stenography” and “Office Automation” are added parenthetically to the position title, i.e., *Secretary (Stenography/Office Automation)* or *Secretary (Stenography/OA)*.

In any case where one of these parenthetical titles is used, the position description must state the skill level required to assure appropriate recruitment for the job.

This requirement does not apply to positions in the Clerk-Stenographer and Reporter Series, GS-312; the Clerk-Typist Series, GS-322; the Data Transcriber Series, GS-356; or the Office Automation Series, GS-326.

d. Student trainee titles

All positions classified to a student trainee series should be titled *Student Trainee* followed by a parenthetical title consistent with the occupational field involved; for example: Student Trainee (Human Resources Management), Student Trainee (Psychology), or Student Trainee (Civil Engineering).

I. Determining Grade Level

Selecting appropriate grade level criteria is a primary decision in determining the proper classification of work. The criteria selected as the basis for comparison should be for a kind of work as similar as possible to that of the position being evaluated.

1. Classifying Nonsupervisory Work

The selection of an appropriate guide or standard for evaluating nonsupervisory work should be accomplished as follows:

If the work assigned to a position is covered by criteria in a standard for a specific occupational series, evaluate the work by that standard. For example, secretarial work must be evaluated by the criteria in the standard for the Secretary Series, GS-318.

-OR-

If there are no specific grade level criteria for the work use an appropriate general classification guide or criteria in a standard or standards for related kinds of work. In using other standards, the criteria selected as the basis for comparison should be for a kind of work as similar as possible to the position to be evaluated with respect to:

- The kind of work processes, functions, or subject matter of work performed,
- The qualifications required to do the work,
- The level of difficulty and responsibility, and
- The combination of classification factors which have the greatest influence on the grade level.

Wherever possible, the position to be classified should be matched against classification criteria which are comparable in scope and difficulty, and which describe similar subject matter and functions. Thus, professional positions should be evaluated by standards for professional work, administrative duties by criteria for administrative occupations, technical work by standards involving similar factors and skill levels, and clerical or administrative support positions by criteria describing comparable duties and responsibilities.

For almost all positions there will be a classification guide(s) or standard(s) which applies directly or indirectly to the work. On occasion, the FES Primary Standard may be used for supplemental guidance but only in conjunction with other FES standards.

The Primary Standard may not be used alone to classify a position except when evaluating an individual FES factor which falls below the lowest or above the highest factor level described in the applicable FES standard. (For more information on using the Primary Standard, see [The Classifier's Handbook](#).)

The assigned duties which control the qualifications of the job and constitute the primary reason for establishing the position are usually grade controlling. In some cases, however, the duties and responsibilities of a position may be "mixed series" in nature and require the application of more than one classification guide or standard. It may also be appropriate to evaluate both supervisory and nonsupervisory work assigned to a position to determine which is higher graded and controls the overall grade of the position.

2. Classifying Supervisory Work

OPM's supervisory guidance is used most often to classify supervisory positions. It includes definitions of managerial and supervisory work and criteria for titling and grading supervisory positions. In addition, some other standards for specific occupational series provide criteria for classifying supervisory and program management work. Not all standards, however, which cover program management work also measure the difficulties and responsibilities of supervising people.

Therefore, to classify a supervisory or program management position *in any occupational series, users should:*

- Apply criteria for measuring program management work as provided in the standard for the series to which the position is classified or in related standards or guides which measure program management duties and responsibilities.

-and-

- Apply the supervisory classification guide to positions whose supervisory duties and responsibilities meet minimum requirements for coverage by the guide.

For positions covered by standards which measure program management authorities, the grade level is typically governed by program management duties and responsibilities. For positions which are primarily supervisory, the grade level will usually be determined by the supervisory classification guide. The overall grade of the position should reflect the highest level of program management or supervisory work performed.

J. Mixed Grade Positions

Some positions involve performing different kinds and levels of work which, when separately evaluated in terms of duties, responsibilities, and qualifications required, are at different grade

levels. The proper grade of such positions is determined by evaluation of the regularly assigned work which is paramount in the position.

In most instances, the highest level work assigned to and performed by the employee for the majority of time is grade-determining. When the highest level of work is a smaller portion of the job, it may be grade-controlling only if:

- The work is officially assigned to the position on a regular and continuing basis;
- It is a significant and substantial part of the overall position (i.e., occupying at least 25 percent of the employee's time); and
- The higher level knowledge and skills needed to perform the work would be required in recruiting for the position if it became vacant.

Work which is temporary or short-term, carried out only in the absence of another employee, performed under closer than normal supervision, or assigned solely for the purpose of training an employee for higher level work, cannot be considered paramount for grade level purposes.

As discussed earlier under [Position Management](#), the organization of work and the assignment of duties and responsibilities to positions are the responsibilities of agency managers and supervisors. This includes the requirement to assure that work is organized in an efficient and cost-effective manner and that the skills and abilities of employees are used to the fullest extent possible. Assignment of work that results in a higher grade based on duties performed less than a majority of time generally is not efficient or cost-effective.

K. Impact of the Person on the Job

The duties and responsibilities of a position may change over time. For the most part these changes result from reorganizations, new or revised organizational responsibilities or missions, and changes in technology. Sometimes, however, the unique capabilities, experience, or knowledge a particular employee brings to the job can also have an effect on the work performed and therefore on the classification of the position.

While it is the position which is classified, the relationship of the employee to the position can be recognized when the performance of the incumbent broadens the nature or scope and effect of the work being performed. For example, exceptional ability of the employee may lead to the attraction of especially difficult work assignments, unusual freedom from supervision, special authority to speak for and commit the agency, continuing contribution to organizational efficiency and economy, recognition as an “expert” sought out by peers, or similar considerations. Such changes affect the difficulty of work or the responsibility and authority given the employee and can be recognized in the position classification decision.

Job changes resulting from the individual impact of an employee should be recorded to distinguish the position from descriptions of other positions.

When significant changes in work occur for any of the kinds of reasons mentioned above, the classification of the position (title, series, and grade) should be reviewed and revised as needed. When a position which has been affected by the impact of an individual is vacated, it should normally revert to its original classification.

L. Interdisciplinary Professional Positions

An interdisciplinary professional position is a position involving duties and responsibilities closely related to more than one professional occupation. As a result, the position could be classifiable to two or more professional occupational series. The nature of the work is such that persons with education and experience in either of two or more professions may be considered equally well qualified to do the work. For example, the duties of a position assigned research work in the environmental responses of certain living organisms may be accomplished by an employee trained in either biology or physiology. Thus, the position could be classified to either the General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Series, GS-401, or to the Physiology Series, GS-413.

Interdisciplinary positions generally fall into one of the following two categories:

- Positions which involve a specific *combination* of knowledges characteristic of two or more professional series. Such positions involve the performance of some duties which are characteristic of one profession and other duties which are characteristic of another profession.
- Positions which involve knowledge which is characteristic of *either* of two or more professional series. These positions include work which is substantially identical to work performed in either of the professional occupations or academic disciplines involved.

The position description should show clearly that the position is interdisciplinary and indicate the various series in which the position may be classified. The final classification of the position is determined by the qualifications of the person selected to fill it.

Positions are not to be considered interdisciplinary when members of a team work cooperatively on an interdisciplinary problem or project where each team member contributes to the solution primarily in terms of a single professional discipline. Also excluded are positions which require special licensing, as in the practice of medicine, and positions which are solely and clearly classifiable to a single series but can be filled by persons from a variety of education and experience backgrounds.

NOTE: For classification purposes, each of the major academic branches of engineering, e.g., aeronautical, civil, and chemical, should be regarded as a separate occupation. Therefore, positions involving two engineering series should be classified as interdisciplinary positions rather than in the General Engineering Series, GS-801.

SECTION IV. DETERMINING COVERAGE BY THE GENERAL SCHEDULE OR THE FEDERAL WAGE SYSTEM

This section provides guidance for looking at the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements of a position to determine if it is covered by the General Schedule or the Federal Wage System.

A. General Criteria

1. 5 U.S.C. 5102 (c)(7) exempts from coverage under the General Schedule those “employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts, or in unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled manual-labor occupations, and other employees including foremen and supervisors in positions having trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge as the paramount requirement.”
2. The “paramount requirement” of a position refers to the essential, prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the primary duty or responsibility for which the position has been established. Whether particular types of positions are trades, crafts, or manual labor occupations within the meaning of title 5 depends primarily on the facts of duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements; i.e., the most important, or chief, requirement for the performance of a primary duty or responsibility for which the position exists. If a position clearly requires trades, crafts, or laboring experience and knowledge as a requirement for the performance of its primary duty, and this requirement is paramount, the position is under the Federal Wage System regardless of its organizational location or the nature of the activity in which it exists.
 - a. A position is exempt from the General Schedule if its primary duty involves the performance of physical work which requires knowledge or experience of a trade, craft, or manual-labor nature.
 - b. A position is subject to the General Schedule, even if it requires physical work, if its primary duty requires knowledge or experience of an administrative, clerical, scientific, artistic, or technical nature not related to trade, craft, or manual-labor work. (For more information on the Federal Wage System, see the [Operating Manual for the Federal Wage System](#).)

B. Borderline Positions

1. For the vast majority of positions, the determination as to coverage by the General Schedule or a prevailing rate wage system is not difficult to make. Sometimes, however, the proper pay category cannot easily be determined by direct application of the law or by OPM classification standards and guidance. In such borderline situations, it is

necessary to evaluate such factors as (a) the nature of work products or services of the organization, (b) working relationships with other positions in the organization, (c) normal lines of career progression, (d) equitable pay relationships with other positions in the immediate organization, and (e) management's intent or purpose in creating the position. This examination should not place emphasis on the organizational location or the physical environment of the position. If the weight of these factors points toward trade, craft, or manual-labor knowledge and experience as being of paramount importance in performing the primary duty of the position, it is proper to classify it under a prevailing rate system. If not, the position is subject to the General Schedule. In borderline situations, the position record should clearly state the facts and conclusions on which the pay category determination is based.

2. Some classification standards contain guidance which will be helpful in making pay category determinations. These include the following:

- Equipment Operator Series, GS-350

- Physical Science Technician Series, GS-1311

- Facility Operations Services Series, GS-1640

- Equipment Services Series, GS-1670

- Sales Store Clerical Series, GS-2091

- Introduction to the Electronic Equipment Installation and Maintenance Family, WG-2600.

3. Supervisory and managerial positions.

- (1) Any position in which the primary responsibility is supervision over trades, crafts, or manual labor work is exempted from the General Schedule, even though such supervision is exercised through intermediate supervisors. The following examples typify responsibilities appropriate to wage system positions having supervisory responsibility over workers performing trades, crafts, or manual labor work:

- Assigning work to individual workers.

- Overseeing workers on the job.

- Instructing workers on the job.

- Reviewing work in progress.

- Observing and securing worker compliance with procedures and methods.

- Keeping down spoilage and waste.
 - Maintaining work flow.
- (2) Positions which involve primarily managerial responsibility for trades, crafts, or manual labor *functions* are not exempt from the General Schedule. Following are typical examples of managerial responsibility for a function:
- Planning and revising organizational structure.
 - Planning, revising, and coordinating programs.
 - Planning general work flow and methods.
 - Deciding overall goals and standards.
 - Budgeting and exercising fiscal control.
 - Determining needs for space, personnel, equipment, etc.

Although these examples are illustrative of supervisory and managerial responsibilities, they are not all inclusive, nor do they represent a finite dividing line between Federal Wage System and General Schedule types of jobs.

- (3) Some positions may have primary responsibility for supervision over trades, crafts, or manual labor work, but participate to a limited degree in individual tasks of the type in the General Schedule examples. Limited participation of this type does not, of itself, require that a position be subject to the General Schedule.
4. Inspection and similar positions.
- (1) An inspection position is covered by the Federal Wage System when it primarily requires trades, crafts, or manual labor knowledge and experience and has as its primary purpose:
- Accepting or rejecting the product of trades, crafts, or manual labor work on the basis of discrepancies discovered through the inspection process; or
 - Determining the condition of supplies, equipment, or material as serviceable, repairable, or condemned based on comparison with established requirements; or
 - Determining the need for repairs, modifications, replacements, or reconstruction needed for compliance with specifications, blue-prints, or technical orders.

- (2) An inspection position is subject to the General Schedule when it primarily requires knowledge and experience in administrative, professional, technical, or managerial work and has as its primary purpose:
 - Advising on, performing, or directing work concerned with developing, installing, evaluating, modifying, or administering quality assurance programs, systems, or methods; or
 - Performing inspections requiring the application of established scientific or engineering principles, techniques, concepts, methods, and procedures; or
 - Performing inspection work for regulatory or law enforcement purposes.
5. Educational, informational, scientific, or technical positions and positions in the arts.
 - (1) A position involving manual work in a field of science or art is under the Federal Wage System if all of the following conditions apply:
 - The manual work is not fundamentally dependent on any professional or technical knowledge in the science or art, except that the names of things directly related to the manual tasks performed or the materials handled are associated with the science or art; and
 - The manual work is auxiliary or collateral to the science or art rather than an integral part; and
 - The manual work is not a part of training for work which is an integral part of the science or art.
 - (2) A similar position is covered under the General Schedule if any one of the following conditions apply:
 - The manual work requires professional or technical knowledge in the science or art; or
 - The manual work is an integral, although subordinate, part of the science or art; or
 - The manual work is a part of training for work which is an integral part of the science or art.
 - (3) In addition, a position is under the General Schedule if all of the following conditions apply:

- The manual skills are specialized to the field in which the work is done; and
- The specialized skills are not normally acquired through experience in a trades, crafts, or manual labor occupation; and
- The position primarily requires knowledge and experience in the application of specialized skills of the field in which the work is done.

6. Machine operation positions.

- (1) The operator of an office device is under the General Schedule. An office device is a machine or tool which (1) is used to facilitate clerical work, (2) substitutes machine operation for what would otherwise be clerical work, or (3) requires the application of clerical skills.
- (2) A position is covered under the Federal Wage System when it involves operation of printing equipment to accomplish such processes as hot type composition (but not cold-type, computerized, or photo typesetting), platemaking, presswork, binding, and other printing functions. Operators of duplicators (small offset printing presses) and copier/duplicator machines are covered under the General Schedule as provided in the "Pay Category Determination" section of the classification standard for the Equipment Operator Series, GS-350.
- (3) Operation of other mechanical equipment, including motor vehicles, is covered under the General Schedule when the equipment operation is incidental to performing the primary duty of the position, and the paramount qualification requirements are those of a General Schedule occupation.

7. Examiners, screeners, checkers, and other similar positions (other than inspectors).

Positions which involve determining repairs, modifications, replacements, or reconstruction needed for compliance with specifications, blueprints, or technical orders are under the Federal Wage System if they require trades, crafts, or manual labor knowledge and experience as the paramount requirement.

8. Mixed positions.

- (1) A position may have some duties which require trades, crafts, or manual labor occupation knowledge and experience, as well as duties involving other kinds of knowledge and experience. Such a position is under the Federal Wage System if it has, as the paramount requirement for the performance of its primary duty, knowledge and experience in the trades, crafts, or manual labor occupation. Whether the duties which require other knowledge or experience are more numerous or take up most of the working time is not material.

- (2) A position is under the General Schedule if it has, as the paramount requirement for the performance of its primary duty, knowledge and experience in other than a trades, crafts, or manual labor occupation. Whether the duties which require trades, crafts, or manual labor knowledge or experience are more numerous or take up most of the working time is not material.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF SERIES FOR WHICH A TWO-GRADE INTERVAL PATTERN IS NORMAL

The occupational series listed below follow a two-grade interval pattern. While two-grade interval work is normally classified to the odd grades from GS-5 to GS-11, there is nothing to preclude classification of a position to any grade level established by title 5. (For more information on the use of grades GS-6, GS-8, and GS-10 for professional and other two-grade interval positions, see [Section III C.](#) of this *Introduction* and Chapters 2 and 5 in [The Classifier's Handbook.](#))

Several of the series on the list include both one- and two-grade interval work. Agencies have the authority and responsibility to determine the proper grade intervals for work classified to series which may include both kinds of work. Those series not included on the list normally involve one-grade interval work only.

Series Code	Series Title
0006	Correctional Institution Administration
0011	Bond Sales Promotion
0018	Safety and Occupational Health Management
0020	Community Planning
0023	Outdoor Recreation Planning
0025	Park Ranger *
0028	Environmental Protection Specialist
0030	Sports Specialist
0060	Chaplain
0062	Clothing Design
0072	Fingerprint Identification *
0080	Security Administration
0082	United States Marshal
0095	Foreign Law Specialist
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
0101	Social Science
0105	Social Insurance Administration
0106	Unemployment Insurance
0110	Economist
0130	Foreign Affairs
0131	International Relations
0132	Intelligence
0135	Foreign Agricultural Affairs
0136	International Cooperation
0140	Manpower Research and Analysis
0142	Manpower Development
0150	Geography
0160	Civil Rights Analysis
0170	History
0180	Psychology
0184	Sociology
0185	Social Work
0188	Recreation Specialist
0190	General Anthropology
0193	Archeology
0201	Human Resources Management
0241	Mediation
0243	Apprenticeship and Training
0244	Labor Management Relations Examining
0249	Wage and Hour Compliance
0260	Equal Employment Opportunity
0301	Miscellaneous Administration and Program
0340	Program Management
0341	Administrative Officer
0343	Management and Program Analysis
0346	Logistics Management
0360	Equal Opportunity Compliance
0391	Telecommunications
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
0401	General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences
0403	Microbiology
0405	Pharmacology
0408	Ecology
0410	Zoology
0413	Physiology
0414	Entomology
0415	Toxicology
0430	Botany
0434	Plant Pathology
0435	Plant Physiology
0437	Horticulture
0440	Genetics
0454	Rangeland Management
0457	Soil Conservation
0460	Forestry
0470	Soil Science
0471	Agronomy
0480	Fish and Wildlife Administration
0482	Fish Biology
0485	Wildlife Refuge Management
0486	Wildlife Biology
0487	Animal Science
0501	Financial Administration and Program
0505	Financial Management
0510	Accounting
0511	Auditing
0512	Internal Revenue Agent
0526	Tax Specialist
0560	Budget Analysis
0570	Financial Institution Examining
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
0601	General Health Science
0602	Medical Officer
0603	Physician's Assistant
0610	Nurse
0630	Dietitian and Nutritionist
0631	Occupational Therapist
0633	Physical Therapist
0635	Kinesiotherapy
0637	Manual Arts Therapist
0638	Recreation/Creative Arts Therapist
0639	Educational Therapist
0644	Medical Technologist
0660	Pharmacist
0662	Optometrist
0665	Speech Pathology and Audiology
0667	Orthotist and Prosthetist*
0668	Podiatrist
0669	Medical Records Administration
0670	Health System Administration
0671	Health System Specialist
0673	Hospital Housekeeping Management
0680	Dental Officer
0685	Public Health Program Specialist
0688	Sanitarian
0690	Industrial Hygiene
0696	Consumer Safety
0701	Veterinary Medical Science
0801	General Engineering
0803	Safety Engineering
0804	Fire Protection Engineering
0806	Materials Engineering
0807	Landscape Architecture
0808	Architecture
0810	Civil Engineering
0819	Environmental Engineering
0828	Construction Analyst
0830	Mechanical Engineering
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
0840	Nuclear Engineering
0850	Electrical Engineering
0854	Computer Engineering
0855	Electronics Engineering
0858	Biomedical Engineering
0861	Aerospace Engineering
0871	Naval Architecture
0880	Mining Engineering
0881	Petroleum Engineering
0890	Agricultural Engineering
0892	Ceramic Engineering
0893	Chemical Engineering
0894	Welding Engineering
0896	Industrial Engineering
0901	General Legal and Kindred Administration
0904	Law Clerk
0905	General Attorney
0920	Estate Tax Examining
0930	Hearings and Appeals
0935	Administrative Law Judge
0945	Clerk of Court
0950	Paralegal Specialist
0958	Pension Law Specialist
0962	Contact Representative*
0965	Land Law Examining
0967	Passport and Visa Examining
0987	Tax Law Specialist
0991	Workers' Compensation Claims Examining
0993	Railroad Retirement Claims Examining
0996	Veterans Claims Examining
1001	General Arts and Information*
1008	Interior Design
1010	Exhibits Specialist
1015	Museum Curator
1016	Museum Specialist and Technician*
1020	Illustrating
1035	Public Affairs
	* Series include both one and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
1040	Language Specialist
1051	Music Specialist
1054	Theater Specialist
1056	Art Specialist
1071	Audiovisual Production
1082	Writing and Editing
1083	Technical Writing and Editing
1084	Visual Information
1101	General Business and Industry*
1102	Contracting
1103	Industrial Property Management
1104	Property Disposal
1130	Public Utilities Specialist
1140	Trade Specialist
1144	Commissary Management*
1145	Agricultural Program Specialist
1146	Agricultural Marketing
1147	Agricultural Market Reporting
1150	Industrial Specialist
1160	Financial Analysis
1163	Insurance Examining
1165	Loan Specialist
1169	Internal Revenue Officer
1170	Realty
1171	Appraising
1173	Housing Management
1176	Building Management
1210	Copyright
1220	Patent Administration
1221	Patent Adviser
1222	Patent Attorney
1223	Patent Classifying
1224	Patent Examining
1226	Design Patent Examining
1301	General Physical Science
1306	Health Physics
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
1310	Physics
1313	Geophysics
1315	Hydrology
1320	Chemistry
1321	Metallurgy
1330	Astronomy and Space Science
1340	Meteorology
1350	Geology
1360	Oceanography
1361	Navigational Information
1370	Cartography
1372	Geodesy
1373	Land Surveying
1380	Forest Products Technology
1382	Food Technology
1384	Textile Technology
1386	Photographic Technology
1397	Document Analysis
1410	Librarian
1412	Technical Information Services
1420	Archivist
1421	Archives Technician*
1510	Actuarial Science
1515	Operations Research
1520	Mathematics
1529	Mathematical Statistics
1530	Statistics
1550	Computer Science
1601	Equipment, Facilities, and Services*
1630	Cemetery Administration Services
1640	Facility Operations Services
1654	Printing Services
1658	Laundry Operations Services
1667	Food Services
1670	Equipment Services
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
1701	General Education and Training
1702	Education and Training Technician*
1710	Education and Vocational Training
1712	Training Instruction
1715	Vocational Rehabilitation
1720	Education Program
1725	Public Health Educator
1730	Education Research
1740	Education Services
1750	Instructional Systems
1801	General Inspection, Investigation, and Compliance
1810	General Investigating
1811	Criminal Investigating
1812	Game Law Enforcement
1815	Air Safety Investigating
1816	Immigration Inspection
1822	Mine Safety and Health
1825	Aviation Safety
1831	Securities Compliance Examining
1850	Agricultural Commodity Warehouse Examining
1854	Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Inspection
1864	Public Health Quarantine Inspection
1884	Customs Patrol Officer
1889	Import Specialist
1890	Customs Inspection
1894	Customs Entry and Liquidating
1896	Border Patrol Agent
1910	Quality Assurance
1980	Agricultural Commodity Grading
2001	General Supply
2003	Supply Program Management
2010	Inventory Management
2030	Distribution Facilities and Storage Management
2032	Packaging
2050	Supply Cataloging
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

Series Code	Series Title
2101	Transportation Specialist
2110	Transportation Industry Analysis
2121	Railroad Safety
2123	Motor Carrier Safety
2125	Highway Safety
2130	Traffic Management
2150	Transportation Operations
2152	Air Traffic Control
2161	Marine Cargo
2181	Aircraft Operation
2183	Air Navigation
2210	Information Technology Management
	* Series include both one- and two-grade interval work.

APPENDIX 2

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION FOR SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS

The functional classification for scientists and engineers is a system for describing the kinds of work activities of employees who are scientists or engineers. These employees work in the physical, biological, mathematical, social, computer, and health sciences, and in engineering. The information is used by the National Science Foundation and others to study the composition of the workforce engaged in certain kinds of activities.

The functional classification consists of functional categories plus a miscellaneous “Other-Not Elsewhere Classified” category. The appropriate code is shown in parenthesis in the official title and series of a position immediately following the series number, e.g., Civil Engineer, 0810(21). Agencies are responsible for developing methods for determining, recording, and maintaining this code information.

<i>Series to be Coded</i>	
Number	Title
0000	<i>Miscellaneous Occupations Group</i>
0020	Community Planning
0100	<i>Social Science, Psychology, and Welfare Group</i>
0101	Social Science
0110	Economist
0140	Manpower Research and Analysis
0150	Geography
0170	History
0180	Psychology
0184	Sociology
0185	Social Work
0190	General Anthropology
0193	Archeology
0400	<i>Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group</i>
0401	General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences
0403	Microbiology
0405	Pharmacology
0408	Ecology
0410	Zoology
0413	Physiology
0414	Entomology
0430	Botany
0434	Plant Pathology
0435	Plant Physiology
0437	Horticulture
0440	Genetics
0454	Rangeland Management

<i>Number</i>	<i>Title</i>
0457	Soil Conservation
0460	Forestry
0470	Soil Science
0471	Agronomy
0480	Fish and Wildlife Administration
0482	Fish Biology
0485	Wildlife Refuge Management
0486	Wildlife Biology
0487	Animal Science
<i>0600</i>	<i>Medical, Hospital, Dental, and Public Health Group</i>
0601	General Health Science
0602	Medical Officer
0610	Nurse
0630	Dietitian and Nutritionist
0631	Occupational Therapist
0633	Physical Therapist
0635	Kinesiotherapy
0637	Manual Arts Therapist
0638	Recreation/Creative Arts Therapist
0639	Educational Therapist
0644	Medical Technologist
0660	Pharmacist
0662	Optometrist
0665	Speech Pathology and Audiology
0668	Podiatrist
0680	Dental Officer
0690	Industrial Hygiene
0696	Consumer Safety
<i>0700</i>	<i>Veterinary Medical Science Group</i>
0701	Veterinary Medical Science
<i>0800</i>	<i>Engineering and Architecture Group</i>
0801	General Engineering
0803	Safety Engineering
0804	Fire Protection Engineering
0806	Materials Engineering
0807	Landscape Architecture
0808	Architecture
0810	Civil Engineering
0819	Environmental Engineering
0830	Mechanical Engineering
0840	Nuclear Engineering
0850	Electrical Engineering
0854	Computer Engineering
0855	Electronics Engineering
0858	Biomedical Engineering
0861	Aerospace Engineering
0871	Naval Architecture
0880	Mining Engineering

<i>Number</i>	<i>Title</i>
0881	Petroleum Engineering
0890	Agricultural Engineering
0892	Ceramic Engineering
0893	Chemical Engineering
0894	Welding Engineering
0896	Industrial Engineering
<i>1200</i>	<i>Copyright, Patent, and Trademark Group</i>
1220	Patent Administration
1221	Patent Adviser
1223	Patent Classifying
1224	Patent Examining
1226	Design Patent Examining
<i>1300</i>	<i>Physical Sciences Group</i>
1301	General Physical Science
1306	Health Physics
1310	Physics
1313	Geophysics
1315	Hydrology
1320	Chemistry
1321	Metallurgy
1330	Astronomy and Space Science
1340	Meteorology
1350	Geology
1360	Oceanography
1370	Cartography
1372	Geodesy
1373	Land Surveying
1380	Forest Products Technology
1382	Food Technology
1384	Textile Technology
1386	Photographic Technology
<i>1500</i>	<i>Mathematical Sciences Group</i>
1510	Actuarial Science
1515	Operations Research
1520	Mathematics
1529	Mathematical Statistics
1530	Statistics
1550	Computer Science

<i>Category</i>	<i>Category Definition</i>	<i>Code</i>
Research	<p>Systematic, critical, intensive investigation directed toward the development of new or fuller scientific knowledge of the subject studied. It may be with or without reference to a specific application. The work involves theoretical, taxonomic, and experimental investigations or simulation of experiments and conditions to: (1) Determine the nature, magnitude, and interrelationships of natural and social phenomena and processes; (2) Create or develop theoretical or experimental means of investigating such phenomena or processes; and (3) Develop the principles, criteria, methods, and a body of data of general applicability for use by others.</p> <p>Excluded from this category is work concerned primarily with the administrative and monitoring of research contracts and research grants.</p>	11
Research contract and grant administration	The administration and monitoring of research contracts and research grants.	12
Development	<p>Systematic application of scientific knowledge directed toward the creation of new or substantially improved equipment, materials, instrumentation, devices, systems mathematical models, processes, techniques, and procedures that will perform a useful function or be suitable for a particular duty.</p> <p>The work involves such activities as: (1) Establishing requirements for technical objectives and characteristics; (2) Devising and evaluating concepts for design approaches: criteria, parameters, characteristics, and interrelationships; (3) Experimenting, investigating, and testing to produce new data, mathematical models, or methods to test concepts, formulate design criteria, and measure and predict natural and social phenomena and performance; (4) Designing and developing prototypes, breadboards, and engineering models including the direction of their fabrication as required; (5) Developing standards and test plans to assure reliability; and (6) Managing specific developments being executed in-house or under contract.</p> <p>Development, like research, advances the state of art, but it is further characterized by the creation of specific end-items in the form of equipment or equipment systems ("hardware" development) and/or methodologies, mathematical models, procedures and techniques ("software" development)..</p>	13
Testing and evaluation	<p>The testing of equipment, materials, devices, components, systems and methodologies under controlled conditions and the systematic evaluation of test data to determine the degree of compliance of the test items with predetermined criteria and requirements. This work is characterized by the development and application of test plans to be carried out in-house or under contract or grant utilizing one or more of the following kinds of tests: physical measurement techniques; controlled laboratory, shop, and field (demonstration) trials; and simulated environmental techniques.</p> <p>This category includes: (1) Development testing to determine the suitability of the test items for use in their environment; (2) Production and post-production testing to determine operational readiness; (3) Testing in regulatory programs to determine compliance with laws, regulations and standards; and (4) Testing in the social sciences using demonstration or experimental and control groups to determine the effectiveness of new methodologies or practices.</p>	14

<i>Category</i>	<i>Category Definition</i>	<i>Code</i>
Design	<p>The planning, synthesis, and portrayals for purposes of fabrication or construction of structures, equipment, materials, facilities, devices, and processes which will perform a useful function or be suitable for a certain duty.</p> <p>The work involves such activities as: (1) Investigating, analyzing, and determining needs and design considerations; (2) Planning, synthesizing, and proportioning the structure or mechanism so that the result is achieved with safety and economy; (3) Preparing design criteria, detailed designs, specifications, cost estimates, and operating instructions; and (4) Reviewing and evaluating design proposals and designs prepared by others including the management of architectural and engineering contracts.</p> <p>For present purposes, design in a research and development organization is the application of the known state of the art in the form of standard guidelines and references to prepare the detailed working plans and data required for fabrication, assembly, and production.</p>	21
Construction	<p>The original erection, repair, and improvement of structures that provide shelter for people and activities, support transportation systems, and control natural resources.</p> <p>The work involves surveillance and control of construction operations carried out in-house or under Federal grants, contracts, or loans through such activities as: (1) Conducting site surveys; (2) Reviewing and interpreting project plans and specifications; (3) Making cost analyses and estimates; (4) Layering out and scheduling operations; (5) Investigating materials, methods, and construction problems; (6) Negotiating with utilities, contractors, and agencies involved; and (7) Inspecting work in progress and completed work and final acceptance of completed work.</p>	22
Production	<p>The fabrication and manufacture of structures, equipment, materials, machines, and devices. The work involves surveillance and control of production operations carried out in-house or under contract through such activities as: (1) Planning, directing, controlling, inspecting, and evaluating production processes, equipment, and facilities; (2) Refining designs to adapt them to production facilities and processes; and (3) Devising, applying, and monitoring procedures to measure and assure quality.</p>	23
Installation, operations, and maintenance	<p>The installing, assembling, integrating, and assuring of the proper technical operation and functioning of systems, facilities, machinery, and equipment.</p> <p>The work involves such activities as: (1) Analyzing operating and environmental conditions in order to provide design inputs and feedbacks and modifying designs as necessary to adapt them to actual environments; (2) Developing and determining logistic requirements, documentation, technical plans, procedures, controls and instructions; (3) Equipping, supplying, and commissioning facilities; (4) Analyzing performance and cost data and developing actual performance and cost data requirements; (5) Integrating equipment installation and operating schedules; (6) Managing on site an operating facility such as a power plant, test range, mission control center, irrigation station, data acquisition station, or flight control station; and (7) Managing installation, operations, or maintenance contracts.</p>	24

<i>Category</i>	<i>Category Definition</i>	<i>Code</i>
Data collection, processing, and analysis	<p>This category includes the collection, processing, and analysis of general purpose scientific data describing natural and social phenomena. General purpose scientific data include newly gathered statistics, observations, instrument readings, measurements, specimens, and other facts obtained from such activities as statistical and field surveys, exploration, laboratory analyses, photogrammetry, and compilations of operating records for use by others.</p> <p>The work involves such activities as: (1) Determining data needs and data processing requirements; (2) Planning, directing, and evaluating collection activities performed in-house or under contract; (3) Designing overall processing plans and systems to handle, control, operate, manipulate, reduce, store, check, and retrieve data; (4) Analyzing raw and processed data for validity and subject-matter interpretation; (5) Providing analytic services such as chemical analyses; (6) Forecasting and projecting data and conditions; and (7) Summarizing and presenting data for general use.</p> <p>Excluded from this category are collection and analysis of data only for research and development projects and internal operating or administrative purposes such as policy formulation and planning.</p>	31
Scientific and technical information	<p>The processing and dissemination of published and unpublished technical documents and information on work in progress and completed work to facilitate their use. The work involves developing and implementing information systems through such activities as: (1) Providing for the selection, acquisition, compilation, exchange, and storage of scientific and technical information; (2) Cataloging, abstracting, and indexing information for retrieval and dissemination; (3) Providing reference, literature search and bibliographic services for information users; (4) Interpreting, evaluating, and briefing on the significance and relevance of information; (5) Disseminating information through briefings, technical publications, and other communications media; and (6) Classifying and declassifying technical information where use must be controlled in the national interest..</p>	32
Standards and specifications	<p>The preparation and determination of mandatory and/or voluntary standards or specifications including rules, regulations, and codes.</p> <p>These standards are for purposes of: (1) Government regulation; and (2) The assuring of the acceptability, quality, and/or standardization of products, materials, and parts as required for design, production, purchasing, logistics, and documentation.</p> <p>The work involves the development of performance criteria, test and inspection methods, and data for the application of the standards to technological products and services.</p>	41
Regulatory enforcement and licensing	<p>The application and enforcement of laws, rules, regulations, orders, and governmental agreements through inspection, investigation, surveillance, licensing, certification, and similar activities. The work includes such activities as: (1) Licensing power plants and radio stations; (2) Enforcing plant or animal disease eradication programs; (3) Examining applications for patents; (4) Inspecting operations for compliance with requirements; (5) Approving utility rates and services; (6) Investigating aircraft accidents; (7) Allocating radio frequencies; and (8) Determining compliance with engineering aspects of Federal tax laws.</p>	42

<i>Category</i>	<i>Category Definition</i>	<i>Code</i>
Natural resource operations	The development and utilization of Federally owned and trust lands and natural resources for the operations purposes of bringing current use into balance with natural processes of renewal to assure sustained yields to meet present and future public needs. Natural resources include land, air, and water and their related products or uses, such as soil, minerals, forage, wildlife's power, and recreation. The work involves implementing programs and projects to inventory, classify, utilize, improve, conserve, regulate, protect, sell, lease, exchange, or market natural resources. Resource operations as defined here are concerned with managing and conserving the land and resources in a specified geographic area.	51
Clinical practice, counseling, and ancillary medical services	The provision of direct clinical and related services to patients and clients including examining, testing, diagnosis, treatment, therapy, casework, counseling, disability evaluation, and related patient care.	81
Planning	The study and projection of present and future needs and the formulation of alternative policies and ways of meeting these needs for the utilization of: land, natural, social, industrial, material and manpower resources; physical facilities; and social and economic services and programs. The work involves: (1) Gathering, compiling, analyzing, and evaluating data; (2) Projecting needs and establishing goals; (3) Developing single or alternative plans, policies, programs, and recommendations and measures of their economic, social, and political costs, benefits, and feasibility; and (4) Reevaluating progress to assure that plan objectives are realized in putting the plans into effect. This category includes physical, economic, and social planning for land population centers and missions, policy, and program planning.	91
Management	The direction and control of scientific and engineering programs in any one or combination of functions in a line or staff capacity with responsibilities that have a direct and substantial effect on the organizations and programs managed. The work involves decisions, actions, and recommendations that establish the basic content and character of the programs directed in terms of program objectives and priorities, program initiation and content, funding, and allocation of organizational resources. This category is not intended to cover those primarily engaged in the supervision or monitoring of work carried out through contracts and grants or in contracts and grants administration. Such positions are to be coded to the appropriate function.	92
Teaching and training	The teaching of scientific and technical subjects; the education and training of scientific and technical personnel in-house and through programs consisting of fellowships, traineeships, and training grants; and the development of curricula and training materials and aids.	93
Technical assistance and consulting	The provision of scientific and technical expert assistance, consultation, and advice to other scientific personnel; foreign governments; government agencies at the Federal, State, or local level; private industry; organized groups, and individuals. The work involves advising upon and promoting application of the results of research and specialized program knowledge.	94
Other—Not elsewhere classified	This category is to be used for: (1) Positions with highly specialized activities which are not covered in any of the categories; (2) Positions of such generalized nature that a primary function cannot be identified; and (3) Trainee positions for which functional assignments have not been made.	99

APPENDIX 3

PRIMARY STANDARD

The Primary Standard serves as a “standard-for-standards” for the Factor Evaluation System (FES). Factor level descriptions for position classification standards are point rated against the Primary Standard. Thus, it serves as a basic tool for maintaining alignment across occupations.

The Primary Standard has descriptions of each of the nine FES factors and the levels within each factor as well as the point values appropriate for each level. The nine factors are:

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position

Factor 2, Supervisory Controls

Factor 3, Guidelines

Factor 4, Complexity

Factor 5, Scope and Effect

Factor 6, Personal Contacts

Factor 7, Purpose of Contacts

Factor 8, Physical Demands

Factor 9, Work Environment

Also included in the Primary Standard is a master grade conversion table showing the total point ranges (based on sets of complete factors) for grades GS–1 through GS–15.

For additional information on the Factor Evaluation System and on writing FES position descriptions, see [The Classifier’s Handbook](#).

FACTOR 1, KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Factor 1 measures the nature and extent of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work, e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts, and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, a knowledge must be required and applied.

Level 1-1 — 50 points

Knowledge of simple, routine, or repetitive tasks or operations that typically include following step-by-step instructions and require little or no previous training or experience;

OR

Skill to operate simple equipment or equipment that operates repetitively and requires little or no previous training or experience;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1-2 — 200 points

Knowledge of basic or commonly used rules, procedures, or operations that typically require some previous training or experience;

OR

Basic skill to operate equipment requiring some previous training or experience, such as keyboard equipment;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1-3 — 350 points

Knowledge of a body of standardized rules, procedures, or operations that require considerable training and experience to perform the full range of standard clerical assignments and resolve recurring problems;

OR

Skill, acquired through considerable training and experience, to operate and adjust varied equipment for purposes such as performing numerous standardized tests or operations;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1–4 — 550 points

Knowledge of an extensive body of rules, procedures, or operations that require extended training and experience to perform a wide variety of interrelated or nonstandard procedural assignments and resolve a wide range of problems;

OR

Practical knowledge of standard procedures in a technical field, requiring extended training or experience, to perform such work as adapting equipment when this requires consideration of the functioning characteristics of equipment; interpreting results of tests based on previous experience and observations (rather than directly reading instruments or other measures); or extracting information from various sources when this requires considering the applicability of information and the characteristics and quality of the sources;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1–5 — 750 points

Knowledge (such as would be acquired through a pertinent baccalaureate educational program or its equivalent in experience, training, or independent study) of basic principles, concepts, and methodology of a professional or administrative occupation, and skill in applying this knowledge in carrying out elementary assignments, operations, or procedures;

OR

In addition to the practical knowledge of standard procedures in Level 1–4, practical knowledge of technical methods to perform assignments such as carrying out limited projects that involve use of specialized complicated techniques;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1–6 — 950 points

Knowledge of the principles, concepts, and methodology of a professional or administrative occupation as described at Level 1–5 that has been either (a) supplemented by skill gained through job experience to permit independent performance of recurring assignments, or (b) supplemented by expanded professional or administrative knowledge gained through relevant graduate study or experience, that has provided skill in carrying out assignments, operations, and procedures that are significantly more difficult and complex than those covered by Level 1–5;

OR

Practical knowledge of a wide range of technical methods, principles, and practices similar to a narrow area of a professional field; and skill in applying this knowledge to such assignments as the design and planning of difficult, but well-precedented projects;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1-7 — 1250 points

Knowledge of a wide range of concepts, principles, and practices of a professional or administrative occupation, such as would be gained through extended graduate study or experience, and skill in applying this knowledge to difficult and complex work assignments;

OR

A comprehensive, intensive, practical knowledge of a technical field, and skill in applying this knowledge to the development of new methods, approaches, or procedures;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1-8 — 1550 points

Mastery of a professional or administrative field to—

- apply experimental theories and new developments to problems not susceptible to treatment by accepted methods;

OR

- make decisions or recommendations significantly changing, interpreting, or developing important public policies or programs;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

Level 1-9 — 1850 points

Mastery of a professional field to generate and develop new hypotheses and theories;

OR

Equivalent knowledge and skill.

FACTOR 2, SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

“Supervisory Controls” covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee’s responsibility, and the review of completed work. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the employee, priorities and deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. Responsibility of the employee depends upon the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives. The degree of review of completed work depends upon the nature and extent of the review, e.g., close and detailed review of each phase of the assignment, detailed review of the finished assignment, spot-check of finished work for accuracy, or review only for adherence to policy.

Level 2-1 — 25 points

For both one-of-a-kind and repetitive tasks the supervisor makes specific assignments that are accompanied by clear, detailed, and specific instructions.

The employee works as instructed and consults with the supervisor as needed on all matters not specifically covered in the original instructions or guidelines.

For all positions the work is closely controlled. For some positions, the control is through the structured nature of the work itself; for others, it may be controlled by the circumstances in which it is performed. In some situations, the supervisor maintains control through review of the work. This may include checking progress or reviewing completed work for accuracy, adequacy, and adherence to instructions and established procedures.

Level 2-2 — 125 points

The supervisor provides continuing or individual assignments by indicating generally what is to be done, limitations, quality and quantity expected, deadlines, and priority of assignments. The supervisor provides additional, specific instructions for new, difficult, or unusual assignments, including suggested work methods or advice on source material available.

The employee uses initiative in carrying out recurring assignments independently without specific instructions, but refers deviations, problems, and unfamiliar situations not covered by instructions to the supervisor for decision or help.

The supervisor assures that finished work and methods used are technically accurate and in compliance with instructions or established procedures. Review of the work increases with more difficult assignments if the employee has not previously performed similar assignments.

Level 2-3 — 275 points

The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and assists the employee with unusual situations that do not have clear precedents.

The employee plans and carries out the successive steps and handles problems and deviations in the work assignments in accordance with instructions, policies, previous training, or accepted practices in the occupation.

Completed work is usually evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements. The methods used in arriving at the end results are not usually reviewed in detail.

Level 2-4 — 450 points

The supervisor sets the overall objectives and resources available. The employee and supervisor, in consultation, develop deadlines, projects, and work to be done.

The employee, having developed expertise in the line of work, is responsible for planning and carrying out the assignment, resolving most of the conflicts that arise, coordinating the work with others as necessary, and interpreting policy on own initiative in terms of established objectives. In some assignments, the employee also determines the approach to be taken and the methodology to be used. The employee keeps the supervisor informed of progress and potentially controversial matters.

Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, or effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results.

Level 2-5 — 650 points

The supervisor provides administrative direction with assignments in terms of broadly defined missions or functions.

The employee has responsibility for independently planning, designing, and carrying out programs, projects, studies, or other work.

Results of the work are considered technically authoritative and are normally accepted without significant change. If the work should be reviewed, the review concerns such matters as fulfillment of program objectives, effect of advice and influence on the overall program, or the contribution to the advancement of technology. Recommendations for new projects and alteration of objectives usually are evaluated for such considerations as availability of funds and other resources, broad program goals, or national priorities.

FACTOR 3, GUIDELINES

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. Guides used in General Schedule occupations include, for example, desk manuals, established procedures and policies, traditional practices, and reference materials, such as dictionaries, style manuals, engineering handbooks, and the pharmacopoeia.

Individual jobs in different occupations vary in the specificity, applicability, and availability of the guidelines for performance of assignments. Consequently, the constraints and judgmental demands placed upon employees also vary. For example, the existence of specific instructions, procedures, and policies may limit the employee's opportunity to make or recommend decisions or actions. However, in the absence of procedures or under broadly stated objectives, employees in some occupations may use considerable judgment in researching literature and developing new methods.

Guidelines should not be confused with the knowledge described under Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position. Guidelines either provide reference data or impose certain constraints on the use of knowledge. For example, in the field of medical technology, for a particular diagnosis there may be three or four standardized tests set forth in a technical manual. A medical technologist is expected to know these diagnostic tests. However, in a given laboratory the policy may be to use only one of the tests, or the policy may state specifically under what conditions one or the other of these tests may be used.

Level 3-1 — 25 points

Specific, detailed guidelines covering all important aspects of the assignment are provided to the employee.

The employee works in strict adherence to the guidelines; deviations must be authorized by the supervisor.

Level 3-2 — 125 points

Procedures for doing the work have been established, and a number of specific guidelines are available.

The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines, references, and procedures for application and in making minor deviations to adapt the guidelines to specific cases. The employee may also determine which of several established alternatives to use. Situations to which the existing guidelines cannot be applied or significant proposed deviations from the guidelines are referred to the supervisor.

Level 3-3 — 275 points

Guidelines are available but are not completely applicable to the work or have gaps in specificity.

The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines, such as agency policies, regulations, precedents, and work directions for application to specific cases or problems. The employee analyzes results and recommends changes.

Level 3-4 — 450 points

Administrative policies and precedents are applicable but are stated in general terms. Guidelines for performing the work are scarce or of limited use.

The employee uses initiative and resourcefulness in deviating from traditional methods or researching trends and patterns to develop new methods, criteria, or proposed new policies.

Level 3-5 — 650 points

Guidelines are broadly stated and nonspecific, e.g., broad policy statements and basic legislation that require extensive interpretation.

The employee must use judgment and ingenuity in interpreting the intent of the guides that do exist and in developing applications to specific areas of work. Frequently, the employee is recognized as a technical authority in the development and interpretation of guidelines.

FACTOR 4, COMPLEXITY

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

Level 4-1 — 25 points

The work consists of tasks that are clear-cut and directly related.

There is little or no choice to be made in deciding what needs to be done.

Actions to be taken or responses to be made are readily discernible. The work is quickly mastered.

Level 4-2 — 75 points

The work consists of duties that involve related steps, processes, or methods.

The decision regarding what needs to be done involves various choices that require the employee to recognize the existence of and differences among a few easily recognizable situations.

Actions to be taken or responses to be made differ in such things as the source of information, the kind of transactions or entries, or other differences of a factual nature.

Level 4-3 — 150 points

The work includes various duties involving different and unrelated processes and methods.

The decision regarding what needs to be done depends upon the analysis of the subject, phase, or issues involved in each assignment, and the chosen course of action may have to be selected from many alternatives.

The work involves conditions and elements that must be identified and analyzed to discern interrelationships.

Level 4-4 — 225 points

The work typically includes varied duties that require many different and unrelated processes and methods, such as those relating to well established aspects of an administrative or professional field.

Decisions regarding what needs to be done include the assessment of unusual circumstances, variations in approach, and incomplete or conflicting data.

The work requires making many decisions concerning such things as interpretation of considerable data, planning of the work, or refinement of the methods and techniques to be used.

Level 4-5 — 325 points

The work includes varied duties requiring many different and unrelated processes and methods that are applied to a broad range of activities or substantial depth of analysis, typically for an administrative or professional field.

Decisions regarding what needs to be done include major areas of uncertainty in approach, methodology, or interpretation and evaluation processes that result from such elements as continuing changes in program, technological developments, unknown phenomena, or conflicting requirements.

The work requires originating new techniques, establishing criteria, or developing new information.

Level 4-6 — 450 points

The work consists of broad functions and processes of an administrative or professional field. Assignments are characterized by breadth and intensity of effort and involve several phases pursued concurrently or sequentially with the support of others within or outside the organization.

Decisions regarding what needs to be done include largely undefined issues and elements and require extensive probing and analysis to determine the nature and scope of the problems.

The work requires continuing efforts to establish concepts, theories, or programs, or to resolve unyielding problems.

FACTOR 5, SCOPE AND EFFECT

“Scope and Effect” covers the relationship between the nature of the work, i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

In General Schedule occupations, effect measures such things as whether the work output facilitates the work of others, provides timely services of a personal nature, or impacts on the adequacy of research conclusions. The concept of effect alone does not provide sufficient information to properly understand and evaluate the impact of the position. The scope of the work completes the picture and allows consistent evaluations. Only the effect of properly performed work is to be considered.

Level 5-1 — 25 points

The work involves the performance of specific, routine operations that include a few separate tasks or procedures.

The work product or service is required to facilitate the work of others; however, it has little impact beyond the immediate organizational unit or beyond the timely provision of limited services to others.

Level 5-2 — 75 points

The work involves the execution of specific rules, regulations, or procedures and typically comprises a complete segment of an assignment or project of broader scope.

The work product or service affects the accuracy, reliability, or acceptability of further processes or services.

Level 5-3 — 150 points

The work involves treating a variety of conventional problems, questions, or situations in conformance with established criteria.

The work product or service affects the design or operation of systems, programs, or equipment; the adequacy of such activities as field investigations, testing operations, or research conclusions; or the social, physical, and economic well being of people.

Level 5-4 — 225 points

The work involves establishing criteria; formulating projects; assessing program effectiveness; or investigating or analyzing a variety of unusual conditions, problems, or questions.

The work product or service affects a wide range of agency activities, major activities or industrial concerns, or the operation of other agencies.

Level 5-5 — 325 points

The work involves isolating and defining unknown conditions, resolving critical problems, or developing new theories.

The work product or service affects the work of other experts, the development of major aspects of administrative or scientific programs or missions, or the well-being of substantial numbers of people.

Level 5-6 — 450 points

The work involves planning, developing, and carrying out vital administrative or scientific programs.

The programs are essential to the missions of the agency or affect large numbers of people on a long-term or continuing basis.

FACTOR 6, PERSONAL CONTACTS

This factor includes face-to-face contacts and telephone and radio dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. (NOTE: Personal contacts with supervisors are covered under Factor 2, Supervisory Controls.) Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contacts take place, e.g., the degree to which the employee and those contacted recognize their relative roles and authorities.

Above the lowest level, points should be credited under this factor only for contacts that are essential for successful performance of the work and that have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the work performed.

The relationship of Factors 6 and 7 presumes that the same contacts will be evaluated for both factors. Therefore, use the personal contacts that serve as the basis for the level selected for Factor 7 as the basis for selecting a level for Factor 6.

Level 6-1 — 10 points

The personal contacts are with employees within the immediate organization, office, project, or work unit, and in related or support units;

AND/OR

The contacts are with members of the general public in very highly structured situations, e.g., the purpose of the contact and the question of with whom to deal are relatively clear. Typical of contacts at this level are purchases of admission tickets at a ticket window.

Level 6-2 — 25 points

The personal contacts are with employees in the same agency but outside the immediate organization. People contacted generally are engaged in different functions, missions, and kinds of work, e.g., representatives from various levels within the agency, such as headquarters, regional, district, or field offices, or other operating offices at the immediate installation;

AND/OR

The contacts are with members of the general public, as individuals or groups, in a moderately structured setting. For example, the contacts generally are established on a routine basis, usually at the employee's work place; the exact purpose of the contact may be unclear at first to one or more of the parties; and one or more of the parties may be uninformed concerning the role and authority of other participants. Typical of contacts at this level are those with persons seeking airline reservations or with job applicants at a job information center.

Level 6-3 — 60 points

The personal contacts are with individuals or groups from outside the employing agency in a moderately unstructured setting. For example, the contacts are not established on a routine basis; the purpose and extent of each contact is different; and the role and authority of each party is identified and developed during the course of the contact. Typical of contacts at this level are those with people in their capacities as attorneys; contractors; or representatives of professional organizations, the news media, or public action groups.

Level 6-4 — 110 points

The personal contacts are with high-ranking officials from outside the employing agency at national or international levels in highly unstructured settings, e.g., contacts are characterized by problems, such as the officials may be relatively inaccessible; arrangements may have to be made for accompanying staff members; appointments may have to be made well in advance; each party may be very unclear as to the role and authority of the other; and each contact may be conducted under different ground rules. Typical of contacts at this level are those with Members of Congress, leading representatives of foreign governments, presidents of large national or international firms, nationally recognized representatives of the news media, presidents of national unions, State governors, or mayors of large cities.

FACTOR 7, PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

In General Schedule occupations, the purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives. The personal contacts that serve as the basis for the level selected for this factor must be the same as the contacts that are the basis for the level selected for Factor 6.

Level 7-1 — 20 points

The purpose is to obtain, clarify, or give facts or information regardless of the nature of those facts; i.e., the facts or information may range from easily understood to highly technical.

Level 7-2 — 50 points

The purpose is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts, or to resolve operating problems by influencing or motivating individuals or groups who are working toward mutual goals and who have basically cooperative attitudes.

Level 7-3 — 120 points

The purpose is to influence, motivate, interrogate, or control persons or groups. The persons contacted may be fearful, skeptical, uncooperative, or dangerous. Therefore, the employee must be skillful in approaching the individual or group in order to obtain the desired effect, such as gaining compliance with established policies and regulations by persuasion or negotiation, or gaining information by establishing rapport with a suspicious informant.

Level 7-4 — 220 points

The purpose is to justify, defend, negotiate, or settle matters involving significant or controversial issues. The work usually involves active participation in conferences, meetings, hearings, or presentations involving problems or issues of considerable consequence or importance. The persons contacted typically have diverse viewpoints, goals, or objectives

requiring the employee to achieve a common understanding of the problem and a satisfactory solution by convincing them, arriving at a compromise, or developing suitable alternatives.

FACTOR 8, PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The “Physical Demands” factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work assignment. This includes physical characteristics and abilities, e.g., specific agility and dexterity requirements, and the physical exertion involved in the work, e.g., climbing, lifting, pushing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, or reaching. To some extent the frequency or intensity of physical exertion must also be considered, e.g., a job requiring prolonged standing involves more physical exertion than a job requiring intermittent standing.

Level 8-1 — 5 points

The work is sedentary. Typically, the employee sits comfortably to do the work. However, there may be some walking; standing; bending; carrying of light items, such as papers, books, or small parts; or driving an automobile. No special physical demands are required to perform the work.

Level 8-2 — 20 points

The work requires some physical exertion, such as long periods of standing; walking over rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces; recurring bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, or similar activities; or recurring lifting of moderately heavy items, such as typewriters and record boxes. The work may require specific, but common, physical characteristics and abilities, such as above average agility and dexterity.

Level 8-3 — 50 points

The work requires considerable and strenuous physical exertion, such as frequent climbing of tall ladders, lifting heavy objects over 50 pounds, crouching or crawling in restricted areas, and defending oneself or others against physical attack.

FACTOR 9, WORK ENVIRONMENT

The “Work Environment” factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee’s physical surroundings, or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. Although the use of safety precautions can practically eliminate a certain danger or discomfort, such situations typically place additional demands upon the employee in carrying out safety regulations and techniques.

Level 9-1 — 5 points

The environment involves everyday risks or discomforts that require normal safety precautions typical of such places as offices, meeting and training rooms, libraries, residences, or commercial vehicles, e.g., use of safe work practices with office equipment, avoidance of trips and falls, observance of fire regulations and traffic signals. The work area is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated.

Level 9-2 — 20 points

The work involves moderate risks or discomforts that require special safety precautions, e.g., working around moving parts, carts, or machines; exposure to contagious diseases or irritant chemicals. Employees may be required to use protective clothing or gear, such as masks, gowns, coats, boots, goggles, gloves, or shields.

Level 9-3 — 50 points

The work environment involves high risks with exposure to potentially dangerous situations or unusual environmental stress that require a range of safety and other precautions, e.g., working at great heights under extreme outdoor weather conditions, subject to possible physical attack or mob conditions, or similar situations where conditions cannot be controlled.

GRADE CONVERSION TABLE

GS Grade	Point Range
1	190-250
2	255-450
3	455-650
4	655-850
5	855-1100
6	1105-1350
7	1355-1600
8	1605-1850
9	1855-2100
10	2105-2350
11	2355-2750
12	2755-3150
13	3155-3600
14	3605-4050
15	4055-up

APPENDIX 4

POSITION CLASSIFICATION APPEALS

A. Summary

This appendix describes the procedures governing the classification appeals program and outlines the steps to be followed by agencies and employees when submitting position classification appeals to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The law and regulations governing the classification appeals program are contained in 5 U.S.C. Chapter 51 and 5 CFR Part 511.

B. Scope

This appendix applies to positions in the General Schedule (GS), except as otherwise noted. The following matters may be appealed to OPM, even if the classification decision in question was made by OPM under its evaluation authority or by the employee's agency as the result of an intra-agency classification consistency study required by OPM.

1. Inclusion in or exclusion from the General Schedule. (D-I below covers the exception.)
2. Occupational series.
3. Grade.
4. Position title, if the applicable position classification standard prescribes position titles or the title reflects a qualification requirement or authorized area of specialization. This appendix does not apply to positions in the Senior Executive Service, to Administrative Law Judge positions, nor to positions classified to grades above GS-15. Except for sections H, I, and J, it does not apply to positions paid under the Federal Wage System (FWS). Procedures governing appeals of FWS positions are covered in the [Operating Manual for the Federal Wage System](#).

C. Definitions

For the purposes of this appendix, the following terms mean:

1. *Classification action (also, position action)*. The decision classifying a position to a pay plan, occupational series, grade, and title in accordance with approved position classification standards.
2. *Personnel action*. Action taken to place an employee in a position or remove an employee from a position, e.g., by appointment, promotion, reassignment, demotion, or separation.

3. *Classification appeal.* A written request by an employee or by an agency, under 5 U.S.C. 5103 or 5112, asking OPM to review the classification of a position.
4. *Classification certificate.* A final decision issued by OPM on the classification of a position. The certificate is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the Government.
5. *Deciding officials.* The persons in OPM who are delegated authority to make final decisions on classification appeals.

D. Authority

OPM authority for position classification is derived from the Classification Act of 1949 (5 U.S.C. Chapter 51) as amended. A decision issued under any of the following authorities is a classification certificate:

1. *Pay system determinations.* Under 5 U.S.C. 5103, OPM makes the final determination as to whether a position is included in or excluded from the General Schedule, except for positions located in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.
2. *Evaluation determinations.* Under 5 U.S.C. 5110, OPM conducts periodic personnel management evaluations of executive departments and agencies. These evaluations may include a review of classification actions taken by the agency. If any of these actions are found to be incorrect, OPM will, after consultation with the agency, issue a certificate specifying the correct pay plan, occupational series, title, and grade.
3. *Appeal determinations.* OPM classification appeal certificates are issued under authority of 5 U.S.C. 5112. An appeal certificate is the Government's final administrative decision on the classification of the position, and no further appeal can be made. However, OPM may reconsider an appeal decision under certain conditions (see G.10).

E. Responsibilities

1. *Office of Personnel Management responsibility.* OPM issues final decisions as certificates of classification to:
 - (a) The head of the office that has responsibility for classifying the position(s); or
 - (b) The office that submitted the request to OPM; or
 - (c) The agency head.
2. *Agency responsibility.*
 - (a) *Adherence to OPM certificates.* Employing agencies are responsible for assuring

that a classification certified by OPM is not changed unless the job changes significantly or if the application of a newly issued OPM standard or guide would change the classification of the position. In the event that a position changes, agencies must exercise original classification authority; that is, write a new position description which reflects new responsibilities, and classify accordingly.

- (b) *Agency file of certificates.* Agencies must keep OPM classification certificates on file. They may be filed with the position descriptions to which they refer, or filed separately. If filed separately, the related position descriptions and certificates should be cross-referenced.
- (c) *Adherence to classification action directed by another party.* There are occasions when a classification action may be directed by another party, such as an arbitrator or the EEOC, under other authorities. If the agency believes the directed classification action is inconsistent with OPM classification certificates, standards, regulation, or law, it should simultaneously notify OPM and request the directing party to further review the directed classification action. It is necessary that such decisions be brought to the attention of OPM promptly so that action may be taken to resolve the inconsistency.

F. Exceptions

The following issues are among those that may not be appealed by an employee. Items 1 through 4 may be reviewed under agency administrative or negotiated grievance procedures, if applicable.

1. The accuracy of the official position description including the inclusion or exclusion of a major duty in the official position description. (See section G.4.a. for additional information on resolution of such issues.)
2. An assignment or detail outside the scope of normally performed duties outlined in the official position description.
3. The accuracy, consistency, or use of agency supplemental classification guides.
4. The title of the position unless a specific title is authorized in a published OPM classification standard or guide, or the title reflects a qualification requirement or authorized area of specialization.
5. The series, grade, pay system, or title of a position to which the employee is not officially assigned by an official personnel action.
6. An agency's proposed classification decision.
7. The series, grade, pay system, or title of a position to which the employee is detailed or promoted on a time-limited basis, except that employees serving under time-limited promotions for 2 years or more may appeal.

8. The classification of the employee's position based on position-to-position comparisons and not standards published by OPM.
9. The accuracy of grade level criteria contained in an OPM classification guide or standard.
10. A classification appeal decision previously issued by OPM unless there has been a subsequent change in the governing classification standard(s) or the major duties of the position.

G. Procedures

1. *Agency Appellate System.* Each agency should establish a system for deciding employee classification appeals, with written procedures available to all employees. These procedures should apply to all positions for which the agency has classification authority. Unless administratively impossible, the final agency appeal decision should be made at least one administrative level above the level which originally classified the position. Employees are encouraged to appeal to their agency before appealing to OPM if the agency has an established appeals system; however, they are not required to do so.
2. *Effect of filing an appeal on other appeal or grievance rights.*
 - a. The filing of a classification appeal does not affect any other rights or privileges the employee may have under other provisions of law or regulation. However, since the classification of the position may be raised as an issue in other appeals or administrative procedures, it is advisable that the employee file a classification appeal whenever the agency's classification decision becomes an issue. The filing of such an appeal will resolve the classification issue.
 - b. *Wrongful demotion.* If an agency effects a classification action resulting in actual loss of grade or pay to an employee and the employee files a timely classification appeal and that classification action is subsequently found to be in error, the employee may be entitled to retroactive corrective action. The agency must review all administrative actions taken after such a wrongful demotion. Each action must be reconstructed on the basis of the correct classification as specified in the appeal decision with full regard to the rules governing effective dates. In these cases, the employee must be given full information about the conditions warranting retroactive adjustment. NOTE: Since the Civil Service Reform Act was enacted, most employees will be entitled to saved grade/pay under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 53, subchapter VI, and will not actually be adversely affected by the classification decision. Therefore, they will not be entitled to any procedural or appeal rights under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 75, but will retain their normal classification appeal rights to OPM. In those very few instances which may occur, where there is a need to protect a right to potential retroactive corrective action, the following conditions apply:

- (1) The employee must file the classification appeal in a timely manner. To be considered timely:
 - (a) The appeal must be filed with the agency or OPM no later than 15 calendar days following receipt of written notification of a final agency administrative decision or 15 calendar days after the effective date of the agency personnel action, whichever is later; and
 - (b) If initially filed with the agency and the agency's decision is unfavorable, the subsequent appeal to OPM must be filed no later than 15 calendar days after receipt of the agency's decision.
- (2) The classification appeal decision must reverse in whole or in part a classification action which changed the position to a lower grade or resulted in loss of pay. The classification appeal decision must find that the classification action resulting in wrongful demotion was based on a classification error. The appeal decision must be based on duties and responsibilities assigned and performed at the time the wrongful demotion occurred and not on duties and responsibilities assigned later.
- (3) The employee must not be eligible for retained grade or pay.
- (4) Extension of time limits. OPM may extend the above time limits if an employee was not notified of the limits and was not otherwise aware of them, or if circumstances beyond the employee's control prevented filing an appeal within the prescribed time limit.

3. *When classification appeals may be filed:*

- a. *Employees.* Employees may file a classification appeal at any time.
- b. *Agency-directed classification actions.* The filing of a classification appeal does not automatically stop a classification action taken by an agency on its own initiative. The agency's policies govern in such cases. Agencies are encouraged not to cancel, postpone, or take alternative personnel actions solely because an employee has filed an appeal.
- c. *OPM-directed classification actions.* An employee or agency appeal of a certificate issued by OPM (under 5 U.S.C. 5103, 5110, or 5112) or a request for reconsideration of a certificate on an appeal decision does not alter the implementation date specified in the certificate unless a suspension is specifically granted.

4. *Submitting a classification appeal:*

- a. *Resolving issues of position description accuracy.* If the official position description is considered inaccurate, the employee should attempt to resolve the matter within the agency before appealing to OPM, since it is management's right to assign work. This might be done by requesting a desk audit or by using the administrative or negotiated grievance procedure. If this fails to resolve the matter, OPM will decide the appeal on the basis of the actual duties assigned by management and performed by the employee. In the absence of evidence that a reasonable attempt has been made to resolve the issue of position description accuracy, the appeal will be returned to the employee for an attempt at resolution before OPM adjudicates the appeal.
- b. *Content of classification appeals.* See section J for information to be submitted by the employee and/or agency.
- c. *Where to submit appeals.* See section H for guidance on where to submit appeals.

5. *Action to be taken during the conduct of an appeal:*

- a. *By the employee.* An employee must cooperate in the adjudication of an appeal by promptly furnishing information requested by OPM. Information requested will be forwarded within 15 calendar days from the date of the letter unless a longer period is granted by OPM.
- b. *By the Office of Personnel Management.*
 - (1) Upon acceptance of an appeal, OPM will send an acknowledgment letter to the employee or the employee's representative and to the employing agency. OPM will make any necessary inquiries to ascertain the nature and scope of the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements of the position. The employee, the employee's representative, or the agency may be asked to furnish information either orally or in writing. OPM will determine if there is a need for on-site review of the position. This determination is totally at the discretion of the deciding official.
 - (2) Upon completion of its review, OPM will issue a classification certificate specifying the decision on the appeal. Copies will be provided to the employee (or the employee's representative) and to the employing agency.

c. *By the agency.*

- (1) The employing agency will provide all information requested by OPM within 15 calendar days unless a longer time is granted by OPM. If the requested information is not received within a reasonable time, OPM may adjudicate the appeal on the basis of information contained in the record. Upon notification that an appeal has been accepted by OPM, the agency will cancel any classification appeal pending under agency procedures. If the appellant leaves the position being appealed (e.g., by reassignment, promotion, separation), the agency will notify OPM of the change.
- (2) When an appeal is directed to OPM through the agency, the agency has 60 calendar days to review the employee's request and issue an appeal decision. If the agency agrees with the classification requested by the employee, it will take appropriate corrective action and close the appeal. If the decision is unfavorable or if the agency has not completed its review within 60 days, the appeal must be forwarded to OPM. If the agency does not have authority to act on the appeal (e.g., if the appealed position is a position previously certified by OPM), it will forward the record to OPM as soon as possible. The agency will notify the employee in writing when it forwards the appeal to OPM.

6. *Employee representative:*

- a. *Choice of a representative.* An employee may select a representative of his or her choice to assist in the preparation and presentation of an appeal. An agency may disallow an employee's representative when the individual's activities would cause a conflict of interest; or when the individual cannot be released from his or her official duties because of the priority needs of the Government; or when the individual's release would give rise to unreasonable costs to the Government. The appellant's representative cannot be:
 - (1) A supervisor with line or staff authority over the position; or
 - (2) Any official having classification authority over the position, e.g., personnel officer or position classification specialist.
- b. *Designation of representative.* The appellant must notify OPM in writing of the name and address of the representative if one is selected.
- c. *Duties of the representative.* A representative has the same obligation to cooperate in processing the appeal as does the appellant. The representative should promptly relay instructions from OPM to the appellant and will be expected to provide information promptly to OPM upon request.

- d. *Participation in factfinding.* The selection of a representative does not convey a right to the representative to be present during factfinding conducted by OPM. The deciding official is responsible for determining the best method of gathering facts concerning the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements of the appealed position. However, the representative may submit information which is significant to the classification of the position.

7. *Access to appeal file:*

The employee, the employee's representative, and the agency may review the official appeal record maintained by OPM. The review may be arranged by contacting the deciding official. The deciding official will establish the date, time, and place where the file can be reviewed. Agencies will make available to the appellant or the appellant's representative copies of all information forwarded to OPM in connection with the appeal.

8. *Cancellation of an appeal:*

- a. OPM will cancel an employee's appeal when:
 - (1) The employee withdraws the appeal;
 - (2) The employee is no longer officially assigned to the position, unless there is a possibility of retroactive benefit (a temporary assignment to a different position will not be cause to cancel an appeal); or
 - (3) The employee fails to provide requested information or otherwise fails to cooperate in the adjudication of the appeal.
- b. An appeal canceled for noncooperation cannot be reopened unless the appellant was unable to provide requested information for reasons beyond his or her control.

9. *Appeal decisions made by OPM:*

- a. *Finality of decisions.* An appeal decision constitutes a certificate which is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the Government and is not subject to further appeal.
- b. *Content of decision.* Normally, an OPM certificate will specify the correct pay plan, occupational series, and grade of the appealed position. If the governing classification standard prescribes position titles, the certificate will also specify the title. However, if the certificate changes the pay plan (e.g., WG to GS) OPM may, at its discretion, decide only the pay plan and remand the appeal to the agency for classification within that pay plan. If dissatisfied with the agency's decision on the remand, the employee may then file a subsequent appeal with OPM.

- c. *Effective date.* The deciding official will set a date by which the certificate must be implemented in accordance with the requirements in Appendix 5. The agency must establish an effective date and implement the certificate within the time period specified.
 - d. *Compliance.* When a certificate directs a change in classification, OPM will require a compliance report from the agency indicating the nature of action taken with respect to the appellant and the position. The deciding official will determine the date the compliance report must be submitted.
 - e. *Effect on other positions.* Agencies must ensure that their classification of identical, similar, and related positions is consistent with OPM certificates. Section I provides additional information concerning internal consistency.
10. *Reconsideration of an OPM classification appeal decision:*
- a. Either the agency or the employee may request reconsideration of an OPM appeal decision. The agency request must come from or be endorsed by the headquarters' personnel office. This is to ensure that it reflects an agencywide view of the classification of the position. A decision may be reopened and reconsidered when written information is presented, within 45 calendar days of the date of the decision, that establishes reasonable doubt as to the technical accuracy of the decision or provides evidence that material facts were not considered in the initial appeal. To establish reasonable doubt, the requester should refer specifically to the decision and the classification standards to demonstrate possible error in the evaluation of the position.
 - b. *Reopening of an OPM classification appeal decision.* OPM may at its discretion reopen and reconsider any appeal decision made by itself or by an OPM region when information is presented, in writing, which establishes a reasonable doubt as to the technical accuracy of the decision or provides evidence that material facts were not considered in the initial appeal.
 - c. *Reopening by Director.* The Director of OPM may, at his or her discretion, reopen and reconsider any decision issued when written argument or evidence is submitted which tends to establish that:
 - (1) The previous decision involves an erroneous interpretation of law or regulation, or a misapplication of established policy; or
 - (2) The previous decision is of a precedential nature involving a new or unreviewed policy consideration that may have effects beyond the actual case at hand, or is otherwise of such exceptional nature as to merit the personal attention of the Director.

- d. *Resolution of questions of fact.* A decision under reconsideration may be remanded to the office with original geographic jurisdiction when extensive factfinding is required or when material information is presented which was not previously considered. Questions of fact will be resolved at that level whenever practicable.
 - e. *Effective date.* When a decision is made upon reconsideration to change the classification specified in the original decision, a new effective date will be established.
11. *Suspension of an appeal decision:*
- a. *Requesting a suspension.* Agency personnel officers are advised to weigh the consequences of implementing a certificate when they believe the decision is in error. An agency or the affected employee may request suspension of a certificate which directs a change in the classification of a position. The reopening of an appeal does not automatically suspend the required implementation of a certificate. Therefore, a request to suspend a certificate should be made when requesting a reopening and reconsideration of a classification appeal. A suspension may be granted only if the request establishes a basis for reconsideration. (See no. 10 above.) If the appeal decision required a downgrading and the employee is entitled to retained grade or pay, a suspension normally will not be granted.
 - b. *Authority to suspend.* The determination to suspend implementation may be made by the Deputy Associate Director for the Center for Merit System Accountability or a designee when the decision is made by the Deputy Associate Director for the Center for Merit System Accountability or a designee, or the Director with respect to any appeal decision.
 - c. *Effect of a suspension.* If the certificate is sustained on reconsideration, it must be implemented retroactively by the agency as of the date specified in the original certificate unless it directs a downgrading. In the case of a downgrading, a new effective date will be established in the reconsideration decision.
12. *Temporary compliance authority:*
- a. *Applicability.* Under certain limited circumstances, an agency may implement a certificate using temporary compliance authority as specified in 5 CFR 511.615. The purpose of this authority is to allow agencies to grant an appellant any immediate benefit a certificate may warrant pending final resolution of the case without requiring later adverse action if the certificate is reversed. Temporary compliance actions include temporary promotions and temporary reassignments. Temporary compliance actions must comply with applicable guidance and regulations (e.g., 5 CFR Part 335).

- b. *Conditions required.* In order to use temporary compliance authority, the following conditions must be met:
 - (1) The position has been certified by OPM under 5 U.S.C. 5103, 5110, or 5112;
 - (2) OPM has not suspended the certificate; and
 - (3) Either the agency or the employee has requested reconsideration of the decision.
- c. Temporary compliance authority will not be used if the certificate directs a downgrade and the employee is entitled to retained grade or pay.

H. Where To Submit Appeals

Information on where to submit classification appeals may be found at <http://www.opm.gov/classapp/>.

I. Report of Intra-Agency Classification Consistency

1. *Equal pay for equal work.* A prime concern of OPM is that agencies classify their positions consistent with published classification standards and in accordance with the principle of equal pay for substantially equal work. One way of achieving this is to ensure that agency classification decisions are consistent with OPM certificates.
2. *Intra-agency consistency reports.* OPM may require a consistency report when in the adjudication of a classification appeal it finds reason to believe that identical, similar, or related positions may be classified inconsistent with the appealed position. For this purpose, related positions are those whose classification is dependent on the classification of the certified position, e.g., supervisor and leader positions. Similar positions are positions whose duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements are so closely related that identical classification is required.

The intra-agency consistency report is intended to provide OPM with information to insure that agencies are complying with statutory requirements. The deciding official will determine whether to require a consistency report.

The agency's report will contain a copy of the OPM certificate and a copy of the position description to which it is applicable. In addition, it will contain either:

- a. A statement from the personnel director indicating that all identical, similar, or related positions within the agency are classified consistent with the OPM certificate; or

- b. If the agency identifies positions which need to be reviewed to determine whether they are classified inconsistent with the OPM certificate, it must submit a plan for reviewing these positions. The plan will outline:
 - (1) A systematic review program including tentative identification and location of all inconsistently classified positions;
 - (2) A timetable for completing the review; and
 - (3) A schedule for the periodic reporting of accomplishments.

Upon completion of the review, the agency will submit a final report outlining the number of positions reviewed and the number of position actions taken, by type (e.g., number of positions upgraded, downgraded, abolished, series changes, etc.). The agency will move promptly to correct misclassifications identified in the review.

3. *Extent of review.* The agency's review of classification allocations of identical, similar, or related positions should be restricted to positions performing the same grade-controlling duties as those outlined in the certificate. For example, if the certificate applied to a supply clerk involved in property management and accountability, the agency would review only those supply clerks performing the same kind of duties and functions. It would not be necessary to review all supply clerk positions.

On the other hand, if the certificate covered a regional program-oriented position and the agency had similar positions located in other regional offices, the agency would have to review the scope and complexity of each regional program to determine if equal classification treatment is required.

If the certified position was classified on the basis of the impact of the employee on the position, the agency need only review its choice of standards to insure consistency.

4. *Submission of report.* The statement from the personnel director or the plan for reviewing positions is due to OPM 90 days from the date of the letter requesting the intra-agency consistency report.

The review plan and final report will be sent to:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

J. Content of Position Classification Appeals

1. *Employee appeals.* Employee appeals must be in writing and should include:
 - a. The employee's name, mailing address, and office telephone number.

- b. Employing department or agency and the location within the agency (installation name, mailing address).
 - c. Exact location of the employee's position within the agency (e.g., bureau, division, branch, section, unit).
 - d. Employee's current position title, pay plan, occupational series, and grade.
 - e. Requested pay plan, position title, occupational series, and grade.
 - f. A copy of the official position description, if available, along with a statement concerning its accuracy. If the employee believes the position description is not accurate, the employee must provide his or her own description of the work currently being performed and show what steps have been taken to have the official description changed.
 - g. Reasons why the employee believes the position is erroneously classified. The employee should refer to position classification standards which support the appeal and should state specific points of disagreement with the agency's evaluation statement. The employee may also include a statement of facts that he or she thinks may affect the final classification decision.
 - h. Name, address, and business telephone number of the employee's representative, if any.
2. *Agency administrative report.* When an agency forwards an employee's appeal to OPM, it should ensure that the record contains all of the information listed above. The agency should also forward an administrative report containing:
- a. Complete identification of the appealed position including a copy of the official position description and evaluation statement. In addition, if the appealed position is supervisory, provide copies of subordinates' position descriptions (with evaluation statements) which are used to determine base level. If subordinate positions include military or local national employees, show equivalent GS/WG grade levels.
 - b. The exact location of the position within the agency including organization charts with positions shown in detail. Mission and functional statements should be included, if available.
 - c. A current (not older than 90 days) signed statement from the immediate supervisor or higher management official certifying that the official position description is complete and accurate.

- d. A copy of the employee's latest SF 50 which shows the position to which the employee is permanently assigned and the Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) Organization Identification (see the [Guide to Personnel Data Standards](#)).
 - e. Copies of any previously issued agency or OPM appeal or review decisions which address the classification of the position or similar positions within the agency.
 - f. A copy of the official position description, along with a statement concerning its accuracy. If the employee believes the position description is not accurate, the employee must provide his or her own description of the work currently being performed and show what steps have been taken to have the official description changed.
 - g. The agency's response to any classification issues presented in the employee's appeal.
 - h. Any supplementary information bearing on the duties and responsibilities of the position including a complete analysis of any point on which the agency disagrees with the employee's description of the work.
 - i. A copy of the official position description and evaluation statement of the employee's immediate supervisor.
 - j. Performance standards for the position (not the performance evaluation of the employee).
 - k. Name and telephone number of a point of contact within the agency.
3. *Agency appeals.* An agency appeal should contain all the information required in an employee appeal. In addition, the agency should submit a copy of the OPM classification certificate concerning the position.

APPENDIX 5

EFFECTIVE DATES OF POSITION CLASSIFICATION ACTIONS

A. Summary

This appendix provides instructions for determining the effective date for implementing personnel actions. For purposes of this appendix, the terms classification action and personnel action have the same meanings as defined in Appendix 4.

B. Agency Classification Actions

1. An agency position classification action resulting from an OPM classification appeal decision takes effect on the date an agency official with delegated authority approves the pay system, title, occupational series, and grade determination. This is normally the date the official recertifies or revises the official position description. If the position is occupied, the classification action must be implemented by a subsequent personnel action, i.e., the issuance of a Notification of Personnel Action, SF 50 (or equivalent), within a reasonable period of time. The Comptroller General has found that four pay periods is a reasonable period of time within which to issue the SF 50 after the position is classified. If the agency cannot effect the personnel action within this timeframe, permission for an extension of the deadline must be obtained from OPM. OPM may authorize a delay. The agency may not make a classification action effective retroactively.
2. In determining when an employee's pay entitlements begin, it is the effective date of the personnel action (SF 50) that appoints or assigns the employee to the reclassified position, and not the date of the classification action, that is determining. In accordance with Comptroller General Decisions (see B-180144, September 1974):

It has long been the rule of this office that a personnel action may not be made effective retroactively so as to increase the right of an employee to compensation. It is also an established rule that employees of the Federal Government are entitled only to the salaries of the positions to which they are actually appointed regardless of the duties they perform. When an employee performs duties at a grade level higher than that in which his position is classified and is successful in obtaining reclassification of his/her position and promotion, no entitlement exists for compensation at the higher grade level prior to the date the necessary administrative actions are taken to effect the promotion.

3. Whenever an agency takes a classification action that reduces the grade of a position or will result in a lower rate of basic pay, it must promptly notify all affected employees of the decision and the reasons for the reclassification. This includes employees who are entitled to retained grade or pay. The notice must be in writing and must advise the employees of any appeal rights within the agency as well as the right to appeal to OPM. It must specify the time limits that must be observed in order to establish or preserve any right to retroactive adjustment. (See Appendix 4, section G.2.b.) It must notify the employee of any other appeal or grievance rights under law, rule, regulation, or negotiated agreement.

C. Implementation of OPM Certificates

1. OPM certificates. A certificate issued by OPM under 5 U.S.C. 5103, 5110, or 5112, is effective no earlier than the date of the certificate and no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period which begins after that date, unless a later date is specified in the decision.
2. Retroactive effective date for correction of wrongful demotion.
 - (a) Conditions required. An appeal decision which corrects a wrongful demotion is effected retroactive to the date of the demotion if the conditions in Appendix 4, section G.2.b. are met.
 - (b) Decision resulting in higher grade. When an appeal decision places a position in a higher grade than that which existed before the downgrading occurred, the grade of the position immediately before the downgrading is to be restored retroactively if conditions in Appendix 4, section G.2.b. are met. The effective date of the remainder of the upgrading required by the appeal decision is governed by section C.1. above.