

U.S. Office of Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness Programs
Classification



Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242-9968

Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist
GS-647-8

Organization: [appellant's activity]
Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Department of Veterans Affairs
[geographic location]

OPM decision: Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist
GS-647-8

OPM decision number: C-0647-08-01

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon

Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

11/22/00

Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

Appellant:

[appellant's name and address]

Agency:

[servicing personnel office]

HR Links Shared Service Center
Department of Veterans Affairs
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Deputy Assistant Secretary for
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Introduction

On June 1, 2000, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [the appellant]. His position is currently classified as Diagnostic Radiologic Technician, GS-647-8. The appellant believes the current classification does not recognize his level of responsibility or the complexity of his work and the collateral duties he performs as CPR Training Coordinator and manager of the People with Disabilities Program at the Center. He believes his position should be classified at the GS-9 or GS-10 level. The appellant works in [the appellant's activity] Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Department of Veterans Affairs, [geographic location]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

To help decide the appeal, a Dallas Oversight Division representative conducted telephone interviews with the appellant, his supervisor, and the servicing classifier. The appellant and his supervisor certified that the appellant's official position description is accurate.

The appellant and his supervisor agreed that the appellant's collateral duties as People with Disabilities Program Manager do not exceed 20 percent of his time. Since his collateral duties do not represent the primary purpose of his position and demand less than a substantial amount of time (at least 25 percent), they do not affect the grade of the appellant's position. Furthermore, the appellant's supervisor stated that if the appellant's position were to become vacant, the collateral duties would not be included as part of the position.

The appellant also believes that his CPR Training Coordinator activities should be added to his position description as collateral duties. These activities are neither included in the appellant's position description nor described in an addendum to the position description. The appellant's supervisor indicated that he had not requested that the CPR activities be added to the position description because they do not constitute a primary reason for the appellant's position. During our fact-finding, we found that the CPR duties occupy a small portion of the appellant's time and, consequently, would have no effect on the position's grade.

Because the appellant's collateral activities do not require at least 25 percent of his work time, they have no effect on the grade level. Therefore, we will not address those duties further in this decision.

Position information

The appellant's primary duties are twofold: (1) performing technical radiographic examinations, and (2) monitoring patients who are undergoing examinations. Although it is not evident in the organizational chart, the appellant works with a partner, another Radiological Technologist, in performing his duties. The appellant performs a variety of complex radiological examinations. He receives patients, explains methods of procedure, positions patients, and sets up and adjusts equipment required for the procedures. The appellant provides radiological support and may assist the physician with insertion of arterial and venous lines, operates x-ray computer to obtain coronary arteriograms, and monitors the electrocardiogram and pressure tracings throughout catheterizations and notifies the physician immediately of any changes in cardiac rhythm or

hemodynamic status. He administers contrast material under the physician's supervision and prepares catheter flushing solutions. The appellant also loads the high pressure contract injector and programs it to interface with other computerized equipment and operates all specialized equipment such as film cameras, video recorders, power injectors, cardiac output computers, oximetry machine, digital subtraction radiographic computer, and x-ray processors. Other duties include monitoring patient charts for pre-catheterization data, maintaining clinical records and documents, and assisting the Director and Charge Nurse with equipment assessment and planning.

Series, title, and standard determination

The appellant does not contest his agency's determination of the series and title for his position. We agree that the appellant's position is properly assigned to the GS-647 series and titled *Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist*. We used the grading criteria in the GS-647 classification standard to evaluate the appealed position.

Grade determination

The GS-647 standard uses the Factor Evaluation Standard (FES), which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard or guide describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

The GS-647 standard instructs that positions in this series should be evaluated on a factor-by-factor basis, using one or more of the OPM Benchmark Descriptions for Diagnostic Radiologic Technician or Technologist, as appropriate. If the factor descriptions in the benchmarks do not provide a good match with the position being classified, then the factor level descriptions should be used to determine the appropriate point values.

The appellant's duties and level of responsibility most closely match Benchmark #8-1. Our application of this benchmark, with appropriate references to the GS-647 factor level descriptions, follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the extent of information or facts that an employee must understand to do acceptable work (such as the steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts) and the nature and extent of skills necessary to apply this knowledge.

The knowledge required by the appellant's position is best evaluated at Level 1-5, as described in Benchmark #8-1 and the factor level description in the standard. Like the benchmark description, the appellant must understand the operation of the x-ray equipment; calculate technical factors to determine proper exposure, density, and contrast; interpret physician's

instructions; and position patients to achieve optimum radiographic examinations. The appellant's position meets Level 1-5.

Level 1-5 is credited for 750 points.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility for carrying out assignments, and how completed work is reviewed.

Supervisory controls over the appellant's position are properly credited at Level 2-3. At this level, a supervisor's assignments cover operating policies, priorities, and work schedules. Instructions are limited to such things as medical abnormalities; and the technologist is expected to plan, lay out, and perform work in accordance with previous training and accepted practices in the occupation. In addition, work products are reviewed on the basis of accomplishing work schedules and overall acceptability of films produced. Similar to supervisory characteristics at Level 2-3, the appellant's supervisor is responsible for determining the appellant's work schedule, the appellant receives oral guidance from cardiologists in the case of unusual and complex procedures, and the appellant is generally expected to handle all problems and deviations in accordance with his training and the accepted practices of his occupation. In addition, the appellant's work is evaluated on the basis of accomplishing objectives. The appellant's responsibility is comparable to the description for Level 2-3 and the illustration in Benchmark #8-1.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines used and the judgment needed to apply them.

The guidelines for the appellant's position are best evaluated at Level 3-3. At this level, guidelines often are not directly applicable due to rapidly evolving technology or the complexity of the patient's illness and physical condition. The technologist must use judgment to modify standard procedures and settings to compensate for the patient's illness, injuries, or physical disabilities or to adopt new or unusual approaches. At this level, the technologist must use initiative to learn of new developments in the field and recommend adoption to improve standard procedures. Similarly, variations because of patient conditions require the appellant to deviate from standard procedures and utilize his own initiative and judgment to complete examinations. He is expected to maintain up-to-date knowledge of all computer-enhanced imaging and other special procedures in order to recommend new techniques and guidelines. The guidelines and judgment required for the appellant's position meet, and do not exceed, the description at Level 3-3 and in Benchmark #8-1.

Level 3-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed and the degree to which the technologist must vary procedures, discern interrelationships and deviations, or develop new techniques.

The complexity of the appellant's position is best evaluated at Level 4-4. Work at this level involves the assessment of unusual circumstances such as seriousness of illness or injury or mental or physical incapacity of the patient, which prevent the patient from cooperating in the procedure and prohibit the use of standard procedures and normal alternatives. In these situations, the technologist is required to devise variations of positioning or equipment setup. Level 4-4 is met in that the appellant's work is frequently made more complex because of the patient's serious illness or injury, mental or physical incapacity of the patient, or similar condition. Under these circumstances, the appellant must devise nonstandard positioning or equipment setup.

Work at Level 4-4 also requires the interpretation of a broad range of information on medical conditions and requirements, equipment capabilities, and examination processes. Likewise, the appellant must be able to interpret a broad range of information during the patient monitoring process. For instance, the appellant must monitor the patient's condition and vital signs before, during, and after examinations. He must also be able to recognize risks associated with examinations in order to assure that all staff involved in doing procedures are aware of implications in terms of contrast selection, equipment selection, and other consideration. The appellant's position meets, but does not exceed, Level 4-4.

Level 4-4 is credited for 225 points.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, as measured by the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

The scope and effect of the appellant's position is best evaluated at Level 5-2. The purpose of work at this level is to provide x-ray studies for doctors to use in diagnosis and treatment of various accident traumas and a wide variety of defects and diseases. Also, work at this level directly affects the accuracy and reliability of the physician's diagnosis and treatment. The appellant's work meets Level 5-2 in that the appellant provides x-ray examinations for diagnosis and treatment of cardiac disease and malfunctions. The results of the examinations are used by cardiologists and/or cardiovascular surgeons in order to provide treatments that will ultimately improve the quality of patients' lives.

Level 5-2 is credited for 75 points.

Factor 6, Personal contacts

This factor measures face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. The appellant's position meets Level 6-2. As described at this level, the appellant's contacts are primarily with patients, fellow employees in the [appellant's section], and other technologists and professional personnel.

Level 6-2 is credited for 25 points.

Factor 7, Purpose of contact

The purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchange of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives. The personal contacts that serve 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.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts is a near match for the description in Benchmark #8-1 where Level 7-2 is assigned. As described at that level, contacts with fellow workers are to resolve problems and exchange information, and contacts with patients are to explain procedures to be performed. Likewise, the appellant's contacts with co-workers are to exchange information, schedule patients, coordinate the work of other technologists, and resolve problems with equipment. The appellant's contacts with patients are to explain such things as the proper directions for moving, breathing, and positioning.

Level 7-2 is credited for 50 points.

Factor 8, Physical demands

The physical demands placed upon the appellant are best evaluated at level 8-2. Work at this level requires long periods of standing and walking, some bending and carrying of moderately heavy articles, and assisting patients to achieve proper positioning. The appellant's position matches this description. The appellant is required to stand and work in awkward positions for long periods of time, and he is required to position physically disabled and critically ill patients.

Level 8-2 is credited for 20 points.

Factor 9, Work environment

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings, and the safety precautions required. The appellant's work environment is best evaluated at Level 9-2 where the work area is well lighted, heated, and ventilated. At this level, special safety precautions are used to reduce exposure to x-rays. The appellant's work environment is a match for Level 9-2.

Level 9-2 is credited for 20 points.

Summary

In sum, we have evaluated the appellant's position as follows:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-5	750
2. Supervisory controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and effect	5-2	75
6. Personal contacts	6-2	25
7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-2	20
Total		1715

The appellant's position warrants 1715 total points. Therefore, in accordance with the grade conversion table in the GS-647 standard, the position is properly graded at GS-8.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist, GS-647-8.