

**OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
ATLANTA OVERSIGHT DIVISION
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION

Under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [Appellant]

Position: Employee Development Specialist
GS-235-11

Organization: Training and Employee Development Department
Training Support Division
Human Resources Office
[Installation]
U.S. Department of the Navy

Decision: Employee Development Specialist
GS-235-11
(Appeal denied)

OPM decision number: C-0235-11-01

Kathy W. Day 11/20/96
Classification Appeals Officer

rdrive # 0235117A.atr

Background

On August 26, 1996, the Atlanta Oversight Division, Office of Personnel Management, accepted an appeal for the position of Employee Development Specialist, GS-235-11, Training and Employee Development Department, Training Support Division, Human Resources Office (HRO), [Installation], U.S. Department of the Navy. The appellant is requesting that his position be upgraded to Employee Development Specialist, GS-235-12.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

Sources of Information

This appeal decision is based on information from the following sources:

1. The appellant's letter of August 19, 1996, appealing the classification of his position.
2. The agency's letter of September 25, 1996, providing position and organizational information.
3. A telephone interview with the appellant on November 7, 1996.
4. A telephone interview with the appellant's supervisor on November 7, 1996.
5. A telephone interview with the servicing classifier on November 8, 1996.

Position Information

The appellant is assigned to Position Number [#]. The appellant and supervisor have certified to the accuracy of the position description. The servicing classifier noted some inaccuracies in the position description which will be addressed in this decision.

The appellant is the Employee Development Specialist for assigned activities within the Naval Complex, including the [activities]. He administers all functions of the employee development program for his assigned activities including conducting training needs assessments, providing a wide range of training and education programs, and evaluating training effectiveness. He provides advice and direction to managers and employees in acquisition career fields concerning certification requirements. According to the appellant, his most complex areas

of responsibility are his duties in support of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) and the Acquisition Workforce Program (AWP).

The appellant receives direction from the Supervisor of the Training Support Division, GS-235-12, who in turn reports to the Head of the Training and Employee Development Department, GS-235-13.

Standards Referenced

Employee Development Specialist, GS-235, April 1971.

Series and Title Determination

The appellant does not contest his series and title determination.

The agency has determined that the appellant's position is properly placed in the GS-235 series, and we agree. The GS-235 series covers positions that involve planning, administering, supervising, or evaluating a program designed to train and develop employees. The basic title for nonsupervisory positions in this series is *Employee Development Specialist*.

Grade Determination

The GS-235 position classification standard is written in narrative style and provides two factors, *Nature of Assignment* and *Level of Responsibility*, for grade determination.

Nature of Assignment

The Nature of Assignment factor considers the scope of assignments, the difficulty of the work, and the technical complexity of the assignments.

At the GS-11 level, assignments involve planning for and providing employee development and training for an organizational or functional segment of an operating employee development program or, in some cases, an entire operating employee development program. Typically, the positions in the workforce served by a GS-11 employee development specialist involve work processes which are relatively difficult to understand or which require fairly specialized skills, e.g., positions in technical, professional, managerial, administrative, and similar occupations or in skilled crafts which require completing an extended period of apprenticeship. The GS-11 level is the first grade level at which employee development specialists are required to prepare internal office instructions which govern the organization's employee development program; adapt guidelines, procedures, and course materials to the needs of the serviced organizations; and provide a variety of management advisory services. These management advisory

services include making planned, systematic studies to determine the immediate and long-range training needs of the installation; advising management on how to enhance employee potential through training; and helping to plan organizational or procedural changes by advising on the logical relationships of duties, courses and availability of needed skills, and full utilization of needed skills.

The GS-11 level is met. The appellant plans for and tracks employee development and training for specified organizational segments of an operating employee development program, as described at the GS-11 level in the position classification standard. Similar to the GS-11 level, the positions served by the appellant involve work processes which are relatively difficult to understand, or which require specialized skills, such as in technical, professional, and administrative occupations. In the appellant's position, his program responsibility is in the area of the acquisition workforce and keeping abreast of the training and certification requirements called for by the DAWIA and AWP. *(Note: According to both the HRO classifier and the appellant's supervisor, the statements in the appellant's position description that portray the appellant as the Program Manager for DAWIA are inaccurate; these duties are assigned to a billet at another organization. The position description should be revised accordingly.)* The primary occupations in [activity], the Echelon II command serviced by the appellant, are administrative, specifically GS-1740, Education Service Specialists or Guidance Counselors, and GS-1750, Instructional Systems Specialists. The [installation] contains the mix of occupations typically found at a military base support activity. According to statistics provided by HRO, the serviced workforce includes only a small number of engineers (about 20) and even fewer scientists. *(Note: This information contradicts the position description, which states that the appellant "develops solutions to plans for training needs based on mission and costs for large numbers of scientists, engineers, other professionals . . .". The position description should be revised to reflect the actual nature of the serviced workforce.)*

The appellant's responsibilities for coordinating training needs assessments with the serviced commands, serving as a member of training planning boards, tracking training accomplishments, and finding appropriate training courses and sources to meet organizational needs also compare to the GS-11 level in the standard.

At the GS-12 level, employee development specialist assignments are carried out in reference to an organization whose mission is dynamic and rapidly changing; *and* requires providing management advisory services directly, and on a frequent basis, to top management officials of the organization (i.e., the head of the organization or the full deputy head); *and* are regarded by top management as especially critical, urgent, or of top priority to the particular organization (e.g., professional training and development at a major research and development center).

The GS-12 level is not met. The organizations serviced by the appellant have changed due to downsizing and external factors that have affected Department of Defense installations nationwide. However, the standard envisions a GS-12 specialist as servicing an organization in which there are few precedents and mission changes are frequent, thus causing changes in the organizational structure and the knowledge and skills required of employees. The basic missions of [the activities] and the other serviced organizations are not subject to dynamic and rapid change. As a result, the skills required of the workforce do not change dramatically over time. In addition, the appellant does not provide the degree of management advisory services described at this level. He does not directly and frequently interact with the top management of [the activity], i.e., the Chief of [the activity] who is a Vice Admiral or the Deputy who is a member of the Senior Executive Service. Rather, the appellant interacts with lower levels of management, i.e., department heads, on an occasional basis. The appellant attends quarterly Training Planning Board meetings with the department heads, many of whom are Navy Captains. He also has monthly sessions with training coordinators in clerical support positions. The appellant's management contacts are typical of the GS-11 level in the standard, i.e., "representing the employee development staff in conferences with representatives of the department or independent agency headquarters, and with representatives of intermediate headquarters levels."

Finally, there is no evidence that the appellant's assignments are regarded by the client organizations' top management officials as "especially critical, urgent, or of top priority." The services performed by the appellant are important to the employees whose career potential is enhanced and to the organizations that depend on the employees to carry out their assigned duties, however, this does not meet the GS-12 definition.

The GS-11 level is credited for this factor.

Level of Responsibility

This factor reflects the supervisory control over the work, the personal contacts, and the nature and scope of recommendations or decisions made.

At the GS-11 level, employee development specialists develop their own plans, procedures, and operating methods under the technical supervision of an employee development specialist of higher grade or the personnel officer. Review of completed work is for conformance to appropriate policies, procedures, and guidelines; for coordination; and for overall effectiveness. Contacts at this level are for the purpose of providing management advisory service; representing the installation's employee development staff in conferences with representatives of the department or independent agency headquarters, and with representatives of intermediate headquarters levels; helping the employee development staffs at

lower organizational levels of the department to evaluate the content, instructional methods, and techniques used in their employee development programs, and making recommendations for their improvement.

The GS-11 level is met. The appellant works independently, developing his own plans, procedures, and operating methods, although he may go to his supervisor or department head if needed, since they are located in the same building. He typically does not provide management advisory services directly to top management officials. The appellant's usual contacts are with training board members, employees, support staff who serve as training coordinators, private training vendors, college officials, and the like. The appellant stated that he has talked to someone in the Assistant Secretary of the Navy's office regarding acquisition career management programs, however, that type of contact is not routine or typical. The purpose of the appellant's contacts is to alert staff of training opportunities, advise on certification requirements, locate training sources, and provide information on training accomplishment and costs from databases he maintains. Employee development policy decisions for the most visible command serviced by the appellant, [command], are made by the staff of the HRO contingent that is physically located at [the command] headquarters. This staff consists of a GS-201-14, Associate Director of the HRO, a GS-260-12, and two GS-201-12 employees, one of whom has extensive experience in employee development.

At the GS-12 level, employee development specialists function under the technical supervision of an employee development specialist of higher grade or the installation personnel officer. Employee development specialists at this level have frequent contact with high-level representatives of outside organizations, e.g., other Federal agencies, or with top management officials of the organization served, and with management officials immediately below the top management level. Typical examples of recommendations made by GS-12 employee development specialists include establishing activities to improve the effectiveness of executives through such means as planned rotational assignments, attendance at graduate university courses; and approving, for the employee development staff, requirements for manpower, money, equipment, and facilities to operate the employee development program at several field installations.

The GS-12 level is not met. The appellant works independently much as a GS-12 employee development specialist does. However, he does not typically provide the type of management advisory services directly to top management officials of an organization whose mission is dynamic and rapidly changing, as is expected at the GS-12 level. In addition, he does not have the degree of responsibility described at this level which requires making program recommendations that impact beyond his assignment. The full intent of this level is not met.

The GS-11 level is credited for this factor.

Summary

The appellant's duties meet the GS-11 level for both *Nature of Assignment* and *Level of Responsibility*.

Decision

This position is properly classified as Employee Development Specialist, GS-235-11. This decision constitutes a classification certificate issued under the authority of section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code. This certificate is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the Government.