



## United States Office of Personnel Management

**Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness**  
*Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions*  
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**Standard:** [Job Grading Standard for Supervisors](#) (WS) (December 1992)  
**Factor:** Factor II, Level of Work Supervised  
**Issue:** Level of Work Supervised for Second Level Supervisors of Mixed Work

### **Identification of the Classification Issue**

The issue arose in an OPM oversight division's adjudication of a job grading appeal. A second level supervisor claimed, even though the majority of his staff was lower graded, the higher grade work carried out in several components of his organization was representative of the work he directed and should be credited as the Level of Work Supervised under Factor II. His organization employed about 46 people engaged in the maintenance and repair of aircraft systems and components. The organization consisted of three sections: Avionics, Accessory, and Propulsion, with each section having its own specialized shops. The staff consisted of about 7 supervisors, 6 small shop chiefs, 3 Grade 13 employees, 6 Grade 12 employees, and 24 Grade 10 employees. When adjusted for excluded work, the end result was that about 20 percent of the organization's work properly included under Factor II, consisting of seven electronics related jobs, was above the Grade 10 level.

### **Resolution**

The Job Grading Standard for Supervisors functions as a pay setting instrument that is intended to establish the proper pay relationship between the supervisory demands of the WS job and the work force led. The Classification Programs Division issued an advisory confirming the following standard interpretation. Factor II of the standard provides for crediting the highest grade level *representative* of the overall work operations supervised. It does not specify a minimum work load percentage for such operations, but cautions against using a single job as the basis for credit. Such caution would be demanded, for example, when grading first level supervisors who direct only a few jobs in the same occupation, any one of which might represent an equally significant

portion of a small workforce, but not necessarily the overall difficulty of work operations for which the supervisor is responsible.

The appellant's case, however, concerned work performed by seven higher graded electronics workers. The work was important and critical, but not a significant portion of the overall operations of the 35 included staff years of work. These seven workers performed functions requiring special occupational expertise and operated with a level of skill and independence *atypical* of the overall organization. This difference was reflected in their higher grades, which were exceptional within the overall organization where the highest graded work typically was Grade 10. Hence, these several jobs could only marginally affect the difficulty and responsibility of the appellant's second level supervisory duties.

Factor II credits the direction of mission related work and excludes other work. The work of seven subordinate supervisors, who spent virtually all their time directing maintenance and repair work versus personally performing that work, was excluded because it was graded based on the supervisory standard. The work of four Grade 12 employees was excluded because they performed the supporting function of calibrating and maintaining test equipment used by the appellant's organization to accomplish its main mission: the repair and maintenance of aircraft. Of the remaining work performed by approximately 35 other employees, that of the 6 small shop chiefs, who devoted a portion of their time to quasi-supervisory duties, was adjusted downward one grade level to properly reflect its nonsupervisory grade worth.

The effect of the several higher graded jobs on the level of work led was further weakened because of the diminished technical review exercised in second and higher level supervisory jobs, particularly in mixed occupation organizations like the appellant's. First level supervisors bear most of the burden of technical supervision, which mitigated the impact the seven higher graded employees' work had on the appellant's job. Even though a second level supervisor has personal knowledge of the highest level work being performed, as in the appellant's case, the second level supervisory job must be evaluated based on the requirements of the total job and not the individual qualifications of the supervisor. Therefore, a first level supervisor credited for technical oversight of an organization's highest graded but smallest function would not automatically get the same credit when promoted to a second level position over the function's umbrella organization. Crediting this marginal portion of work operations, then, as representative of the appellant's overall technical responsibility was deemed inappropriate and would have resulted in a pay disparity unintended by the standard, which does not permit interpolation of its grading criteria and which requires that every aspect of the criteria be fully met because of the richness of the supervisory pay levels.