



United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
November 1983
No. 03-01

Standard: [Legal Instruments Examining Series, GS-0963](#), Part II
Factor: Factor II, Other Grade-Influencing Factors: Supervision
Issue: Whether an extra grade is warranted for the factor "Supervision" alone

Identification of the Classification Issue

This issue arose in a position classification appeal decided by the Office of Personnel Management. The issue was whether the Supervision factor, which pertains to work below the supervision norm, can be used to give extra credit for work above the supervision norm.

Resolution

To facilitate discussion, the entire provisions of the pertinent factors are quoted as follows:

Supervision

Examiners in this series are typified by (a) independence of supervision during the process of examining cases, and (b) review of all recommendations by a supervisor, who retains authority to commit the agency. The above grade-level patterns have been established with these two characteristics in mind. Significant individual variations from either of these norms, therefore, will be considered to be grade-influencing.

Positions whose incumbents receive close and continuing technical supervision during all phases of the examining process (i.e., supervision typically exercised over trainee positions) are clearly less responsible than those whose incumbents are independent operators and will therefore be classified one grade *below* the above-indicated *Base Level of Work Performed*.

Authority

Examiners who are delegated authority to take *final* disposition action, *not* subject to further review, on *all* cases which they are called upon to examine, will be classified one grade above the grade they would receive *without* such delegated commitment authority.

While the discussion under Supervision refers to the grade influence of deviation from the norm, it states explicitly only that closer-than-normal supervision over the position requires the subtraction of a grade. The possibility of awarding an extra grade for less-than-normal supervision is not mentioned under Supervision; it is mentioned only under Authority. Discussion of the content of these two factors is brief; the factors are discussed together; and the factors are interrelated, composing a continuum representing level of responsibility (a broad factor found in many classification standards). If the standard intended an extra grade solely for less-than-normal supervision, it would have so stated; and such grade is not in any way implied. The Office of Personnel Management found no justification for any deviation from the explicit instructions in the standard and the literal interpretation of them.

There is another reason for concluding that an extra grade cannot be given merely for exceeding the norm for *Supervision*: doing so and then adding another extra grade for *Authority* would exaggerate the effect of these two factors relative to those factors which determine the base level. Few, if any, narrative standards award an extra grade for a high degree of freedom from supervision unless a high degree of authority is also present. For example, the General Grade Evaluation Guide for Non-supervisory Clerical Positions provides an extra grade only if "responsibility for final action is vested in the employee rather than in his supervisor or another employee."

Thus, the Office of Personnel Management concluded that to warrant one extra grade (not two), a position must exceed (or at least satisfy) the norm for *Supervision* and also warrant credit for *Authority*.