



## 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:** [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#) (April 1998)  
**Factor:** Factor 3, Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised  
**Issue:** Coverage of the GSSG

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

This issue arose in an OPM oversight division's adjudication of an appeal. The appellant supervised 12 employees: 7 indirectly through a subordinate supervisor, and 3 others indirectly through a designated team leader. The appellant believed his authority met Level 3-3b for two reasons. First, as required at Level 3-3b, he exercised nearly all the responsibilities described at Level 3-2c. Second, he believed that he exercised 12 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b. For example, he claimed that he exercised *responsibility* 1 under Level 3-3b, since he used a subordinate supervisor and a team leader to direct work.

### **Resolution**

At Level 3-3b, a supervisor must exercise all or nearly all of the supervisory responsibilities described at Level 3-2c and at least 8 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b.

The oversight division determined that the appellant exercised all ten of the responsibilities described at Level 3-2c. Nevertheless, it noted that he only exercised 3 of the 15 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b. Specifically, the appellant exercised responsibilities 2, 13, and 14. For example, he carried out responsibilities 2 and 13 since, as a staff officer, he had significant responsibilities in dealing with officials of other units and in advising management officials of higher rank, and he approved expenses comparable to within-grade increases and employee travel.

However, the oversight division found that the appellant's position could not receive credit for the other 12 responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b, particularly those that involve the use of

subordinate supervisors or team leaders (or a combination thereof) to direct work and manage employees, i.e., numbers 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8, for the reasons discussed below.

*Responsibility 1* describes a supervisor who uses subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or comparable personnel to direct, coordinate, or oversee work. The appellant believed he met this criterion because he had one subordinate supervisor and a team leader in his organization. The GSSG uses the plural when speaking of subordinate supervisors and team leaders and in that respect *responsibility 1* appeared to apply to the appellant's position. However, OPM interpretive guidance in previous appeal decisions has established that Level 3-3b is intended to credit only supervisors who direct at least two or three persons who are officially recognized as subordinate supervisors, leaders, or comparable personnel. Further, the supervisor's organizational workload must be so large and its work so complex that it requires using two or more subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or comparable personnel to direct work. Absent such conditions, the mere presence of two or more supervisors or comparable personnel, by itself, is not enough to credit *responsibility 1*.

The oversight division found that although the appellant had subdivided his unit by program functions into very small sections and designated an employee to serve as a team leader over one of them, the organization's work as a whole was not sufficiently complex to justify the establishment of a quasi-supervisory team leader position. OPM noted that there were already two positions classified as supervisors (the appellant's and one other referenced above) in the appellant's unit, consisting of a total of only 11 nonsupervisory positions, thus yielding a narrow span of control of 1 supervisor to 5.5 employees. In addition, the designated team leader was assigned to oversee the work of three full performance level positions which, according to the classification standard for their occupational series, operate independently and need little or no direct supervision. The record showed that the team leader had never worked in the field he was assigned to oversee, and the agency questioned whether he would qualify for placement in a position in the series of the three positions he was assigned to lead. The oversight division pointed out that the team leader duties described in the position description of the team leader fell short of the minimum authorities and responsibilities required for coverage of Part II of the General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide. Given the current span of supervisory control, OPM was not persuaded that there was additional quasi-supervisory work present to consume a minimum of 25 percent of the work of another position. For the preceding reasons, OPM was not persuaded that the appellant's organization was sufficiently complex to use a third position to monitor and manage work. Additionally, because *responsibility 1* requires the use of more than one subordinate supervisor to direct and oversee work, the appellant's position also failed to meet that requirement.

Since the appellant's position could not receive credit for *responsibility 1*, several other responsibilities listed under Level 3-3b that involve the use of subordinate supervisors or leaders could not be credited. Because only 3 of the 15 responsibilities under Level 3-3b were awarded to the position, Factor 3 was evaluated at Level 3-2, the highest level fully met.