



# United States Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness  
*Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions*  
April 2002  
Article No. 28-05

**Standard:** [Grade Evaluation Guide for Positions of Managers of Operating Education Programs \(August 1974\)](#)

**Factor:** Factor 2(a), Course Range and Variety

**Issue:** Determining what constitutes a creditable course

## Identification of the Classification Issue

The appellant directed an in-residence adult vocational education facility. In applying the Grade Evaluation Guide for Positions of Managers of Operating Education Programs (Guide), the agency credited the appellant's position with 338 courses and assigned Degree D under Factor 2(a). At issue was determining what constitutes a creditable course in applying the Guide.

## Resolution

In determining the number of creditable courses, the Guide indicates that the total number of courses offered during a school or calendar year is computed under Factor 2(a). Courses that are different in subject or level are creditable, but duplicates, repeats, or slight variations or modifications of courses are not creditable. An OPM Classification Programs Division Advisory Opinion on the issue noted that entire vocational training courses in separate trades are equivalent in intensity to a "discrete" course (typically defined as a college course). However, individual topics covered in a particular vocational trades training program (e.g., a limited segment of elementary algebra) are not "courses" as envisioned in the Guide. In addition, such topics as social skills training or dealing with stress in the workplace can only match the definition of "course" if the contents meet the same degree of intensity as the clear illustrations for creditable courses (e.g., Spanish I, II) that are referenced in the Guide.

In computing the number of courses offered by the installation, the agency credited individual topics covered in vocational trades training, duplicates or slight variations of courses, and individual subelements or training modules of social skills for disadvantaged students. Based on the Advisory Opinion, OPM declined to credit them as "courses." Consequently, 27 courses were credited and Degree A was assigned for Factor 2(a).

**Link to [C-0340-13-01](#)**