



United States
Office of Personnel Management

Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Digest of Significant Classification Decisions and Opinions
August 1985
No. 07-03

Standard: N/A
Factor: N/A
Issue: Pay system determination

Identification of the Classification Issue

The issue, which arose in a position classification appeal decided by the Office of Personnel Management, was whether a Federal Wage System position, involving the making of plans and estimates for repair and construction projects, was subject to the General Schedule.

Resolution

Section IV, Determining Coverage by the General Schedule or the Federal Wage System, of the Introduction to Position-Classification Standards states that a position is exempt from the General Schedule if it clearly requires trades, crafts, or laboring experience and knowledge as a requirement for the performance of its primary duty or responsibility, and this requirement is paramount.

The primary responsibility of the position in question was the requirement for making plans and estimates for repair and construction projects. Discharging this responsibility involved preliminary worksite investigations; estimating costs, time, material, and manpower needed to complete projects; specifying what work was to be done, how it should be phased, and what craft would accomplish the various kinds of tasks; and providing appropriate sketches. It was recognized that trades or crafts experience and knowledge was desirable in carrying out that responsibility; however, the incumbent's experience and knowledge was limited to plumbing and steamfitting.

It was also determined that the primary responsibility of the position did not absolutely require trades or crafts experience and knowledge. There were a number of considerations supporting

this finding: (1) while the incumbent had trades and crafts experience in plumbing and steamfitting, he was responsible for making plans and estimates, not only with respect to those trades but also for other trades, including air conditioning, carpentry, and sheet metal work, in which he had little experience or training, thereby showing that a person occupying the position could accomplish the planning and estimating work without craft experience; (2) with respect to those trades or crafts in which there was a lack of experience, sources of help were available, such as engineering performance standards, manufacturers' catalogs, various guides and references, shop supervisors, and activity engineers; (3) while sketches and specifications were prepared for many projects, the planning and estimating work did not require a detailed understanding of trades and crafts operations; and (4) the projects for which plans and estimates were accomplished were of limited complexity--for example, replacing hot and cold water and return lines in various buildings.

In making the pay system determination, the need for General Schedule knowledges and abilities was recognized in the performance of the planning and estimating work. These included: (1) a knowledge of the techniques and processes involved in making optimum use of manpower materials, and other resources; (2) the ability to translate the knowledge of shop operations into plans, estimates, and operational sequences applicable to assigned projects; and (3) the ability to apply and adapt engineering performance standards and other guides and references. These knowledges and abilities were essential in carrying out the primary responsibility of the position.

Thus, the requirement for trades or crafts experience and knowledge for the performance of the primary responsibility of the position was neither absolute nor paramount; and General Schedule knowledges were representative of the work. The position was, therefore, determined to be subject to the General Schedule.