

# Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work

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## **GRADE LEVEL GUIDE FOR CLERICAL AND ASSISTANCE WORK**

This classification guide provides general criteria for use in determining the grade level of non-supervisory clerical and assistance work from GS-1 through GS-7. Administrative support work of the kind described in the guide is performed in offices, shops, laboratories, hospitals, and numerous other settings in all Federal agencies.

This guide supersedes the General Grade Evaluation Guide for Non-supervisory Clerical Positions, TS-34, January 1979.

### **COVERAGE**

This guide covers the work of processing transactions and performing various office support and miscellaneous clerical and assistance duties within a framework of procedures, precedents, or instructions. For the purpose of applying this guide, the terms "clerical" and "assistance" are defined as follows:

- Clerical: Performing work such as preparing, receiving, reviewing, and verifying documents; maintaining office records; locating and compiling data or information from files; compiling information for reports; keeping a calendar and informing others of deadlines and other important dates; and similar clerical support work within an organization. This work requires a knowledge of the clerical requirements and processes involved in maintaining the functional programs of the unit.
- Assistance: Performing technical work to support the administration or operation of the programs of an organizational unit. This work requires a working knowledge of the work processes and procedures of an administrative field (e.g., office administration, communications, and security) and the mission and operational requirements of the unit.

The guide does not cover:

- Administrative or other work which normally follows a two-grade interval pattern of progression.
- Work which requires a practical knowledge of scientific, engineering, medical, or other technical fields.
- Work requiring specialized skills; e.g., stenography or the operation of keyboards, computers, or other office machines.
- Secretarial work.

Positions which involve the performance of technical or specialized work may also include general administrative or support duties which can be evaluated by the criteria in this guide.

## USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended as a source of grade level guidance for the evaluation of clerical or assistance work, as described above, which is not covered by more specific grade level criteria in other guides or standards. Depending on the mix of work involved in a particular position, this guide may be applied alone or in conjunction with other appropriate standards to determine the grade level.

This guide should not be used to determine the series of a position. To determine the series of a position graded fully or in part by this guide, it is necessary to refer to the series guide which best covers the primary duties and responsibilities involved, the qualifications required to do the work, and the career ladder for the position. To establish official position titles, refer to the classification guidance for the series or the general titling instructions in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards.

The guide describes the general characteristics of each grade level from GS-1 through GS-7 in a three-part format:

- (1) The definition of the grade level as spelled out in the law (5 U.S.C. 5104);
- (2) A description of the grade level concept pertaining to clerical and assistance work written in narrative format in terms of two evaluation factors: Nature of Assignment (which includes the elements knowledge required and complexity of the work), and Level of Responsibility (which includes the elements of supervisory controls, guidelines, and contacts).
- (3) General work examples to illustrate each grade level.

To determine the appropriate grade, apply the total criteria (i.e., the law, the evaluation factors, and the work examples) and assign the highest level which the work being evaluated most closely matches. Consider weaknesses as well as strengths in matching work to the grade level criteria. Consider, for example, whether work is performed under the kind of supervisory controls described at that grade or is closer than normal. Supervisory control over work takes many different forms and requires careful evaluation. Routine or standardized work may appear to be performed with a high level of independence when, in fact, it is the work itself that is closely defined and prescribed. When this is the case, the employee does not have an opportunity to perform under less than general supervision. The guide does not attempt to describe all possible work situations, and any work which is the logical equivalent of that described in the total criteria for a particular grade level should be credited at that level.

NOTE: Clerical and assistance work as covered by this guide will often include the use of typewriters, word processors, computer terminals, or personal computers as tools in completing

tasks related to processing actions, records, data, or other information. In most cases, the clerical and assistance tasks represent the primary purpose of the job; and the keyboard and computer operation tasks are necessary but incidental means to carry out the work. If the keyboard or computer operation tasks appear to be of equal or greater difficulty than the clerical or assistance work, evaluate the different kinds of work separately using both this guide and the OPM standard that best covers the keyboard or computer work (e.g., Typing and Stenography Grade Evaluation Guide or the standard for the Computer Operation Series, GS-0332). If keyboard or computer operation represents the primary purpose of the job and the highest level of qualifications and responsibility, this guide is not the appropriate tool for classifying the position.

## SUMMARY CHART OF GRADE LEVEL CONCEPTS

The following is a summary chart of the key grade level concepts for clerical and assistance work in a one-grade interval pattern. This chart should not be used alone for classification purposes; grade level criteria follow the chart.

GRADE	NATURE OF ASSIGNMENT	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY
GS-1	Performs simple, routine, or repetitive tasks which require little or no subject-matter knowledge.	Work is closely observed, controlled and checked; few guides or instructions apply.
GS-2	Performs several related steps or tasks in varying sequence; applies knowledge of terminology and basic procedures.	Work is closely controlled and spot-checked in progress and upon completion; detailed, specific guides apply to the work.
GS-3	Performs many different tasks in processing different kinds of forms or transactions; work requires good understanding of structure and workflow in the organization served	Routine assignments are performed independently unless problems occur; supervisor gives instructions on new assignments and reviews more difficult work; a large number of procedural guides apply, some of which are memorized.

(continued)

**Summary Chart (continued)**

GRADE	NATURE OF ASSIGNMENT	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY
GS-4	Performs a full range of assignments consisting of related steps, processes or methods; responses differ in nature and sequence; requires knowledge of an organization's programs and operations, rules and processes.	Exercises initiative in completing recurring assignments; uses judgment in selecting appropriate guidelines and procedures from among a number of specific references.
GS-5	Performs standard and non-standard assignments involving different and unrelated processes or methods in varying sequence; work requires extensive knowledge of rules, operations, or business practices.	Follows accepted practices in resolving non-recurring problems and meeting deadlines; completed products are evaluated for effectiveness in meeting goals; extensive guidelines in the form of instructions, manuals, and regulations are applied.
GS-6	a. Clerical Work: Processes a wide variety of transactions subject to different sets of rules and regulations. b. Technical Work: Performs a segment of the evaluative work of an administrative function; identifies issues or problems and seeks alternative solutions consistent with applicable regulations.	a. The employee is regarded as an expert source of information on processing transactions; completed work is reviewed for conformance with policy and regulatory requirements; numerous and varied guidelines are adapted and applied. b. Works independently in completing assignments; completed work is reviewed for effectiveness in meeting goals; guidelines such as regulations, evaluation criteria, and precedents have gaps in specificity.
GS-7	Performs specialized duties in a defined functional or program area involving a wide variety of problems or situations; develops information, identifies interrelationships, and takes actions consistent with objectives of the function or program served.	Work is assigned in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines; the employee works independently in resolving most conflicts; completed work is evaluated for conformance to policy; guidelines, such as regulations, precedent cases and policy statements require considerable interpretation and adaptation.

## GRADE LEVEL CRITERIA

### GS-1

#### THE LAW

Perform, under immediate supervision, with little or no latitude for the exercise of independent judgment the simplest routine work in office, business, or fiscal operations.

#### *Nature of assignment*

Work consists of simple, routine, or repetitive tasks or operations. Procedures are few and unchanging. There is little or no choice to be made in deciding what needs to be done because work normally consists of one or two clerical steps repeated in the same sequence. No significant discretion or judgment is involved in deciding what, when, or how to do the work.

No subject-matter knowledge is required beyond that included in two or three guides and instructions.

#### *Level of Responsibility*

Work is closely controlled. In many situations, the work itself is so well defined and standardized that there is little or no need for supervisory assistance. For others, the work is closely controlled by the supervisor before, during, and after completion. Normally, the supervisor checks work in progress and reviews it upon completion for quantity, quality, and adherence to instructions.

Very few guides or instructions are applicable to the work. The guides and precedents used are detailed and specific to the work, are always available, and their applicability is obvious. Guides are often committed to memory.

Contacts are usually with coworkers who provide information on the work.

#### **WORK EXAMPLE -- Office Aid, GS-0303-01**

#### *Nature of Assignment*

Works in an office which distributes informational materials. The employee places pamphlets and other publications in the appropriate size envelopes, affixes pre-printed address labels, and sets aside for mailing. The employee also checks the number of copies mailed to each address against a mailing list.

*Level of Responsibility*

The instructions are clear and the employee follows them exactly. There is little probability the work will vary other than in terms of the material to be enveloped, and the addressees on the mailing list. The supervisor and higher level workers are available to answer questions or provide information.

**GS-2**

## THE LAW

Perform, under immediate supervision, with limited latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, routine work in office, business, or fiscal operations ... requiring some training.

## Nature of Assignment

Work consists of several related tasks, steps, or operations. Choices regarding what needs to be done are limited because the work typically consists of a series of prescribed steps performed in the same or slightly varied sequence, such as sorting, coding, and filing documents in an established alphabetical or simple subject-matter filing system.

The work requires sufficient knowledge of the terminology and procedures of the organization to comprehend and apply guides and instructions covering the assigned tasks, or knowledge of equipment operation requiring previous training such as in the use of keyboard equipment.

*Level of Responsibility*

Work is closely controlled. In some situations, the control is through the structured nature of the work itself. In other cases, the supervisor maintains control through review of the work by spot checking progress and reviewing completed work for accuracy, completeness, and adherence to instructions and established procedures.

A number of detailed and specific guides apply to the work; for example, instructions, manuals, established practices and procedures.

The employee's judgment is limited to choosing the proper guide or instruction for each task or operation. Such choices are easily made because the assigned tasks recur and are limited in variety. Guides are often committed to memory.

The employee has contacts with coworkers to exchange information related to assignments.

**WORK EXAMPLE -- Communications Clerk, GS-0394-02***Nature of Assignment*

Works in a communications center assisting higher level employees by posting changes to routing indicators and addresses. Receives lists of routing indicator changes from a higher level employee, chooses the routing supplement to be updated, annotates whether the indicator is added, changed, or deleted, and notes the effective date. Checks for transpositions in routing indicator letters.

*Level of Responsibility*

The work is assigned with detailed instructions. The supervisor is available to assist in resolving problems that arise. A few specific guides are available and the employee uses judgment in checking the accuracy of address indicators which appear wrong. Contacts are with co-workers to exchange information necessary to do the work.

**GS-3****THE LAW**

Perform, under immediate or general supervision, somewhat difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal operations requiring:

- (i) some training or experience;
- (ii) working knowledge of a special subject matter; or
- (iii) to some extent the exercise of independent judgment in accordance with well-established policies, procedures, and techniques.

*Nature of Assignment*

Work consists of many different prescribed tasks steps or operations. Deciding what needs to be done requires the employee to choose from among similar procedures. The work varies primarily in factual ways, such as in the sources of information or in the kinds of forms, transactions, or entries.

Work requires good understanding of the structure of the organization served and enough knowledge of the organization's terminology and work flow to employ the correct set and sequence of tasks, steps, or operations.



*Level of Responsibility*

The supervisor provides individual assignments by explaining what is to be done and how to accomplish it. Routine assignments are performed independently, but problems or unfamiliar situations are referred to the supervisor. Review of the work increases with more difficult assignments.

A large number of procedural guides such as manuals and written and oral instructions apply directly to the work and are always available. Their number, however, causes problems in deciding which guide applies in some situations. Many guides are memorized, but, because of their number, the employee often refers to written guides for help.

The employee exchanges information with co-workers. Contacts outside the organization are in closely controlled or structured settings.

**WORK EXAMPLE -- Office Clerk, GS-0303-03***Nature of Assignment*

Performs a variety of clerical work in an office providing services to the public:

- Takes and delivers telephone messages for the staff and answers routine inquiries. Schedules appointments or uses judgment in referring calls to the appropriate specialist. Pages personnel when necessary and alerts personnel to unusual situations.
- Updates manuals on policies, directives and memoranda. Records and files information on specific cases, current projects, and/or studies. Maintains the bulletin board, selecting and filing deleted material for future reference.
- Monitors stock levels of a variety of office supplies. Orders common supplies as necessary and orders specific supplies requested by the staff.
- Keeps time and attendance records and coordinates their submission to the payroll office.

The employee applies a thorough knowledge of the organization's functions and procedures in performing the work and applies experience and judgment in handling situations that arise.

*Level of Responsibility*

Work is assigned in terms of what is to be accomplished and how to accomplish it. The supervisor is available if the daily routine should be disrupted and complications arise. Familiar situations or requests for information are handled independently.

Guidelines are normally specific and the requirements for performing the day-to-day work are memorized, but judgment is required in referring some callers to the appropriate personnel or in providing information.

Contacts are to assist coworkers and to provide information to callers and users of the services.

## **GS-4**

### THE LAW

Perform, under immediate or general supervision, moderately difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal operations requiring:

- (i) a moderate amount of training and minor supervisory or other experience;
- (ii) good working knowledge of a special subject matter or a limited field of office procedure and practice; and
- (iii) the exercise of independent judgment in accordance with well-established policies, procedures and techniques.

#### *Nature of Assignment*

Work consists of performing a full range of standard clerical assignments and resolving recurring problems. Work consists of related steps, processes, or methods which require the employee to identify and recognize differences among a variety of recurring situations. Actions to be taken or responses to be made differ in nature and sequence because of differences in the particular characteristics of each case or transaction.

In addition to knowledge of how to carry out procedures, the work requires some subject-matter knowledge of an organization's programs and operations; or of a type of business practice such as maintaining inventory records and replenishing supplies; or of a body of standardized rules, processes, or operations. These knowledges are needed to determine what is being done, why the action is being taken, and how it must be accomplished.

#### *Level of Responsibility*

The supervisor provides little assistance with recurring assignments. The employee uses initiative to complete work in accordance with accepted practices. Unusual situations may require the assistance of the supervisor or a higher level employee, and the completed work may be reviewed more closely.

Procedures for doing the work have been established and a number of specific guidelines are available. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to

use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines, references, and procedures. The employee makes minor deviations to adapt the guidelines in specific cases.

The employee has contact with co-workers and those outside the organization to exchange information, and in some cases to resolve problems in connection with the immediate assignment.

### **WORK EXAMPLE -- Security Clerk, GS-0086-04**

#### *Nature of Assignment*

Performs a variety of recordkeeping, reporting, and informational duties in support of the organization's security program. Compiles, maintains, and updates data, lists and reports of computer passwords, security violations, and employees and visitors authorized access to the building and/or its computer system.

Applies knowledge of the organization's security procedures, processes, and rules governing building access, reports of physical security violations, personnel clearances and identification, and computer access authorizations.

#### *Level of Responsibility*

Work is assigned in terms of methods to follow and results expected. The employee works independently in carrying out assignments of a continuing nature (e.g., preparing recurring reports and maintaining lists of computer passwords and persons to be admitted to buildings). Completed work is reviewed for accuracy and compliance with oral and written instructions.

Guidelines include agency administrative procedures, security handbooks, and specific instructions. The employee memorizes most guidelines, selects and interprets from a few others to fit specific situations, and exercises judgment in determining when deviations are appropriate, or when situations are not covered directly by guidelines or instructions and should be referred to the supervisor. Contacts with management personnel and their representatives at the worksite are for the purpose of obtaining and/or providing information necessary to maintain and update building and computer access lists and to prepare reports.

## **GS-5**

### **THE LAW**

Perform, under general supervision, difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal administration requiring:

- (i) considerable training and supervisory or other experience;

- (ii) broad working knowledge of a special subject matter or of office procedure and practice; and
- (iii) the exercise of independent judgment in a limited field.

### *Nature of Assignment*

Work consists of performing a full range of standard and non-standard clerical assignments and resolving a variety of non-recurring problems. Work includes a variety of assignments involving different and unrelated steps, processes, or methods. The employee must identify and understand the issues involved in each assignment and determine what steps and procedures are necessary and the order of their performance. Completion of each transaction typically involves selecting a course of action from a number of possibilities.

The work requires extensive knowledge of an organization's rules, procedures, operations, or business practices to perform the more complex, interrelated, or one-of-a-kind clerical processing procedures.

### *Level of Responsibility*

The supervisor assigns work by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance on assignments which do not have clear precedents. The employee works in accordance with accepted practices and completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and effectiveness in meeting goals.

Extensive guides in the form of instructions, manuals, regulations, and precedents apply to the work. The number and similarity of guidelines and work situations require the employee to use judgment in locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines for application and adapting them according to circumstances of the specific case or transaction. A number of procedural problems may arise which also require interpretation and adaptation of established guides. Often, the employee must determine which of several alternative guidelines to use. If existing guidelines cannot be applied, the employee refers the matter to the supervisor.

Contacts are with a variety of persons within and outside the agency for the purpose of receiving or providing information relating to the work or for the purpose of resolving operating problems in connection with recurring responsibilities.

### **WORK EXAMPLE -- Inspectional Aid, GS-1897-05**

#### *Nature of Assignment*

Provides specialized clerical assistance to several Customs Inspectors by controlling in-bound manifests for air and sea cargo, and inbound storage. Controls manifested cargo by posting a variety of entry permits and other clearance documents against corresponding bills of lading. Examines documents for completeness, discrepancies, sampling requirements, prohibited cargo,

and other special requirements and identifies entries that may involve fraud, smuggling, etc., based on available intelligence data.

The incumbent authorizes lay order extensions, obtains general order control numbers, resolves manifest and entry discrepancies, and prepares official and office workload reports for the inspection facility. Maintains office files, inventories nonexpendable equipment, prepares supply requisitions, accepts cash, and prepares daily cash transmittals.

Applies a knowledge of pertinent sections of the Tariff Act, the Inspectors Manual, and other guides and a substantial knowledge of the functions of other divisions and branches within the Customs district to accomplish the procedural and processing functions necessary to import cargo. Applies a knowledge of data in the Treasury Enforcement Computer System (TECS) and reasoned judgment to discern entries requiring further analysis by inspectors because of possible fraud, controlled substances, and prohibited cargo.

#### *Level of Responsibility*

Work is assigned in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee independently plans and carries out successive steps according to the specific requirements of each case. Customs Inspectors are informed of unusual situations and help with unusual problems. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness.

Guidelines covering processing procedures are specific, but some guidelines such as the Tariff Act and the TECS system require judgment to select and use effectively. The employee uses judgment in discovering problems for referral to the Customs Inspectors, in authorizing lay order extensions and in answering substantive questions from importers.

Contacts with co-workers and the importing public are to exchange information and resolve problems in meeting the importing requirements of the Tariff Act.

## **GS-6**

### **THE LAW**

Perform, under general supervision, difficult and responsible work in office, business, or fiscal administration requiring:

- (i) considerable training and supervisory or other experience;
- (ii) broad working knowledge of a special and complex subject matter, procedure, or practice; and
- (iii) to a considerable extent the exercise of independent judgment.

## **CLERICAL WORK**

### *Nature of Assignment*

Work typically entails processing a wide variety of transactions for more than one type of assigned activity or functional specialization. Assignments are subject to different sets of rules, regulations, and procedures. Such issues must be examined that a course of action has substantive impact on the outcome of the assignment.

Work requires comprehensive knowledge of rules, regulations, and other guidelines relating to completing assignments in the program area assigned. This knowledge is usually attained through extensive, increasingly difficult, and practical experience and training in the subject matter field. The work also requires ability to interpret and apply regulatory and procedural requirements to process unusually difficult and complicated transactions.

### *Level of Responsibility*

At this level, the supervisor reviews completed work for conformance with policy and requirements. The clerical employee is recognized as an authority on processing transactions or completing assignments within a complicated framework of established procedures and guidelines, often when there are no clear precedents. This recognition typically extends beyond the immediate office or work unit to the overall organization or, in some cases, outside the organization. The employee is regarded as an expert source of information on regulatory requirements for the various transactions, and is frequently called upon to provide accurate information rapidly on short notice.

Guidelines for the work are numerous and varied, making it difficult for the employee to choose the most appropriate instruction and decide how the various transactions are to be completed. Guidelines often do not apply directly, requiring the employee to make adaptations to cover new and unusual work situations. This may involve deviating from established procedures to process transactions which cannot be completed through regular channels or involve actions where guidelines are conflicting or unusable.

Contacts are with employees in the agency, in other agencies, or with management or users or providers of agency services. The employee provides information, explains the application of regulations, or resolves problems relating to the assignment.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORK**

### *Nature of Assignment*

Technical or assistance work at this level requires considerable evaluative judgment within well-defined, commonly occurring aspects of an administrative program or function. The work may involve providing direct assistance to specialists or analysts by performing a segment of their work, or it may involve responsibility for a stream of products or continuing processes based on direct application of established policies, practices, and criteria. Assignments involve a

relatively narrow range of case situations that occur in a broad administrative program or function. This work typically involves identifying issues, problems, or conditions and seeking alternative solutions based on evaluation of the intent of applicable rules, regulations, and procedures.

Assignments requiring evaluative judgment are narrowly focused, address a single product or action, and are relatively clear cut. The employee usually deals with problems or situations that remain stable, and resemble past problems or situations. Assignments often involve problems or situations where there is not one absolutely correct solution, only a best or most appropriate one.

Work requires practical knowledge of guidelines and precedent case actions relating to a particular program area equal to that acquired through considerable work experience or specialized training. The work also requires skill to recognize the dimensions of a problem and express ideas in writing.

#### *Level of Responsibility*

The supervisor assists with precedent assignments by providing an interpretation of policy or the concepts and theories of the occupation. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting goals.

Guidelines such as regulations, instructions, evaluation criteria, and prior case or action files are available, but they are often not completely applicable to the assignment or have gaps in specificity. The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines for application to specific cases or problems. The employee bases decisions and recommendations on facts and conventional interpretations of guidelines rather than on theory or opinion.

The employee contacts others, as described above under clerical work, to provide, receive, or develop information in order to identify problems, needs or issues, and/or to coordinate work efforts or resolve problems.

#### **WORK EXAMPLE -- Reports and Financial Assistant, GS-0303-06**

##### *Nature of Assignment*

The employee runs a statistical reporting and records systems for a major division of a regional office. The division is a relatively stable organization that does not have widely diverse functions. The employee works by: analyzing feeder reports from various branches and units; preparing divisionwide reports; designing detailed charts and graphs; and conducting special management studies requiring written presentations of findings, recommendations, forecasts, and justifications.

The employee also reviews work measurement functions for the division to ensure that basic reporting requirements and procedures are being followed and that reports provide clear and concise information; analyzes data to determine and evaluate results, trends, and developments; and writes instructions as needed to implement changes in reporting procedures.

The employee consolidates annual funding estimates from subordinate offices into a complete budget request for the division; organizes estimates by appropriation, object class, and line item following current budget instructions; and prepares required supporting documentation for expenditures such as employee travel, training, and office equipment and supplies. Funding requirements for the division's are relatively stable from year to year.

Work requires an in-depth practical knowledge of the division's activities, operations, and established guidelines relating to work measurement functions, statistical reporting and records systems, and the budget process. The work also requires skill to compile and summarize information and data, identify inaccuracies or anomalies in the information, and make written recommendations to resolve discrepancies based on interpretation of applicable regulations and procedures. The employee must extract and analyze a considerable volume of information to arrive at an end product.

### *Level of Responsibility*

The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee independently gathers data, prepares reports, and makes recommendations consistent with normal practice, using experience in solving problems and handling unusual occurrences. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and effectiveness. The supervisor and users of the data are available to provide advice if significant changes in operations or data requirements occur.

The guidelines include manuals on the budget process as well as general guidance on management reporting techniques. The employee uses judgment in interpreting rather general guidelines to prepare reports, evaluate compliance with work measurement requirements, and develop findings, recommendations, and justifications.

Contacts are with co-workers and users of the information to exchange information, present findings, and improve reporting and budget development methods. Contacts are usually cooperative.

## **GS-7**

### THE LAW

Perform, under general supervision, work of considerable difficulty and responsibility along special technical or supervisory lines in office, business, or fiscal administration requiring:

- (i) considerable specialized or supervisory training and experience;
- (ii) comprehensive working knowledge of a special and complex subject matter, procedures, or practice; and



- (iii) to a considerable extent the exercise of independent judgment.

### *Nature of Assignment*

Work consists of specialized duties with continuing responsibility for projects, questions, or problems that arise within an area of a program or functional specialty as defined by management. Work assignments involve a wide variety of problems or situations common to the segment of the program or function for which the employee is responsible. Each assignment typically consists of a series of related actions or decisions prior to final completion. Decisions or recommendations are based on the development and evaluation of information that comes from various sources. The work involves identifying and studying factors or conditions and determining their interrelationships as appropriate to the defined area of work. The employee must be concerned about taking or recommending actions that are consistent with the objectives and requirements of the program or functions.

The work requires knowledge and skill to recognize the dimensions of the problems involved, collect the necessary information, establish the facts, and take or recommend action based upon application or interpretation of established guidelines. The work also requires practical knowledge, developed through increasingly difficult, on-the-job training or experience dealing with the operations, regulations, principles, and peculiarities of the assigned program, function, or activity.

### *Level of Responsibility*

The supervisor makes assignments in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee independently completes assignments in accordance with accepted practices, resolving most conflicts that arise. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and conformance to policy.

Guidelines for the work are more complex than at the next lower grade because the employee encounters a wider variety of problems and situations which require choosing alternative responses. Guides, such as regulations, policy statements, and precedent cases, tend to be general and descriptive of intent, but do not specifically cover all aspects of the assignments. Guidelines apply less to specific actions and more to the operational characteristics and procedural requirements of the program or function. Employees must use significant judgment and interpretation to apply the guides to specific cases and adapt or improvise procedures to accommodate unusual or one-of-a-kind situations.

The contacts and purpose of contacts are usually the same as at the next lower level. However, to a greater degree, the employee serves as a central point of contact to provide authoritative explanations of requirements, regulations, and procedures, and to resolve operational problems or disagreements affecting assigned areas.

### **WORK EXAMPLE -- Administrative Support Assistant, GS-0303-7**

### *Nature of Assignment*

Advises the manager of a single-function field office on the practical and technical aspects of office administration, to include budgeting, purchasing, supply management, personnel administration, data processing, and files management, and performs staff support work in each of these areas. The employee collects data for the office operating budget, reviews submissions of office staff assistants for proper format and compliance with agency budget requirements, and consolidates material into an annual office budget; sets up controls to monitor expenses during the year; and recommends budget adjustments including restructuring budget allocations or work plans to deal with changing situations such as varying costs for equipment parts, or services, and changes in the availability of funds.

The employee also updates the office's supply sources catalogues; purchases supplies, equipment, and services through open market purchase by blanket agreement, cash or field purchase order, or similar methods; processes and tracks purchase documents; completes requests for personnel actions and writes position descriptions; and distributes forms and instructions for annual performance ratings and ensures timely, proper completion. Conducts local recruitment and holds new employee orientation sessions. Maintains and revises the office filing system. Collects program information from technical specialists, enters it into electronic or manual information systems, and searches for it as requested; schedules use and maintenance of computer equipment; enters and retrieves information from a variety of systems; and helps field office employees to use the various computer systems.

The employee must maintain, and transfer funds between several unrelated appropriated fund accounts and several revolving fund accounts. The accounts are subject to different regulations and procedures. The work also involves initiating personnel actions as needed by the office. The employee tracks virtually all financial, personnel, supply, and other administrative transactions as the documentation flows through the office in both electronic form and on paper.

Work requires general knowledge of the mission and functions of the field office. The employee must understand how the office's various administrative services relate to one another and how they relate to the office's mission. The work also requires broad understanding and detailed procedural knowledge of budget, purchasing, personnel, and information processing functions of the field office.

#### *Level of Responsibility*

The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee works independently, using a general understanding of the expected outcomes and the scope of the assignments, and draws upon experience in resolving the more difficult situations that occasionally arise. The work is reviewed for technical accuracy, soundness of judgment, and adherence to program requirements and objectives.

The employee has available for use a large number of guidelines covering the various aspects of the total job. The employee uses judgment to select the correct part of the most appropriate guideline to apply to each of a large variety of actions, such as budget estimates, tracking annual spending, and initiating personnel actions. When guidelines change, the employee may obtain

assistance, as needed, from staff specialists at a higher echelon. Most of the time, the employee follows procedures, formats, and practices specified in agency supplements to broad, Governmentwide guidelines. However, situations often arise which are not specifically covered by guidelines, requiring the employee to apply general principles to specific situations.

Contacts are with co-workers, managers in the organization for which services are performed, and staff specialists at higher echelons.

The employee develops and exchanges information, resolves operating problems and makes recommendations. Contacts are usually cooperative, but there may be disagreements as to the facts in a case, or disagreements on the interpretation or application of regulations and guidelines to specific situations.