U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs

Washington Oversight Division
1900 E Street, NW., Room 7675
Washington, DC 20415-6000

Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant:	[name]
Agency classification:	Human Resources Officer (NAF) GS-201-11
Organization:	Human Resources Office Services Squadron [Group] [Wing] [Air Force Base] Department of the Air Force [city and State]
OPM decision:	Human Resources Officer GS-201-11
OPM decision number:	C-0201-11-04

//s//
Linda J. Kazinetz
Classification Appeals Officer

June 24, 2002
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a classification certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the Government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under the conditions and time limits specified in title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 511.605, 511.613, and 511.614, as cited in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[appellant]

[servicing personnel officer]

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Introduction

On January 17, 2002, the Washington Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a position classification appeal from [appellant], who is employed as Human Resources Officer (NAF), GS-201-11, in the Human Resources Office of the Services Squadron, [Group], [Wing], [Air Force Base], in [city and State]. The appellant requested that his position be classified at the GS-12 level. This appeal was accepted and decided under the provisions of section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

A telephone audit was conducted by a Washington Oversight Division representative on June 3, 2002, and a telephone interview with the appellant's supervisor, [name], on June 13, 2002. This appeal was decided by considering the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his agency, including his official position description, [number], and other material submitted in the agency administrative report on March 18, 2002.

Position Information

The appellant is responsible for the provision of the full range of human resources management (HRM) services for the non-appropriated fund (NAF) personnel at [Air Force Base]. The serviced population is approximately 400 employees engaged in a diverse program of combat support and community, family, and recreational services (e.g., officers' and enlisted clubs, food service, lodging, retail store, community center, child development center, library, etc.) The appellant personally performs all or most of the employee relations, labor relations, classification, and manpower work. He supervises the conduct of recruitment, staffing, and training activities through a small staff.

Series Determination

The appellant's position is properly assigned to the Human Resources Management Series, GS-201, which covers two-grade interval administrative positions that manage, supervise, administer, advise on, or deliver human resources management products or services. Neither the appellant nor the agency disagrees.

Title Determination

The authorized title for positions that involve responsibility for directing a human resources management program is Human Resources Officer. Neither the appellant nor the agency disagrees.

Grade Determination

Evaluation of Nonsupervisory Work

The position was evaluated by application of the criteria contained in the Job Family Position Classification Standard for Administrative Work in the Human Resources Management Group, GS-200. This standard is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, under which

factor levels and accompanying grade levels are to be assigned for each of the following nine factors, with the total then being converted to a grade level by use of the grade conversion table provided in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor levels. For a position to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor level description, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect that meets a higher level.

As support for his request for a higher grade, the appellant cited his recently-acquired responsibilities for training of civilian and military NAF employees and for manpower reporting. The training function is carried out through the supervision of a Training Technician, GS-1702-9, and a Staff Sergeant. Training is a traditional HRM function performed in most human resources offices; manpower reporting may reside in various administrative areas, but is often associated with the HRM position management function. Therefore, both the training and manpower functions were considered within the context of the GS-200 standard below. The training duties were also considered in the evaluation of the appellant's overall supervisory responsibilities.

The appellant also cited that he serves as "one of eleven Major Command representatives who formulate and interpret policies for their respective areas . . . and also provide valuable feedback and perspective to Headquarters, U.S. Air Force on personnel issues." One of the Air Force's eleven major commands resides at [Air Force Base]. This is a one-base command with no subordinate installations. The appellant is one of these eleven major command (MAJCOM) human resources officers (HRO's). In this capacity, he represents the command at meetings and teleconferences with his counterparts, and serves as liaison between installation management and the Air Force Services Agency on NAF human resources issues (e.g., in obtaining and transmitting input from NAF management on HRM proposals.) He also serves on working groups comprised of the MAJCOM HRO's to develop new NAF HRM processes. However, the appellant reported that that this work comprises only 15-20 percent of his time. He described the current project on which he is working (development of standardized training plans for NAF human resources staff) and two others that he has worked on since 1998. Guidance provided in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards states that in order for a set of duties to be grade-controlling, it must occupy at least 25 percent of a position's time. The appellant performs these occasional projects as a MAJCOM HRO, but given their frequency, they do not constitute 25 percent of his time on an ongoing basis. Therefore, they are not addressed in the below grade level evaluation.

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information an employee must understand in order to do the work, and the skills needed to apply that knowledge.

The knowledge requirements of the position are comparable to Level 1-7. At that level, work requires knowledge of a wide range of HRM concepts, practices, laws, regulations, policies, and precedents sufficient to provide comprehensive management advisory and technical services on

substantive organizational functions; recommend appropriate interventions to resolve complex, interrelated problems; develop new or modified work methods, approaches, or procedures for delivering effective services to clients; apply consensus building, negotiation, and conflict resolution techniques; and deliver briefings, project papers, status reports, and correspondence to managers to foster understanding and acceptance of findings and recommendations.

As the organization's human resources officer, the appellant must be well versed in the regulations, policies, and practices relating to all of the HRM functional areas to provide a full range of effective technical services; to advise managers on the disposition of specific actions and approaches for resolving problems; and to resolve conflicts between management and union representatives. Basically, this level represents the fully skilled journey-level worker who provides technical and management advisory services in an operating environment.

The position does not meet Level 1-8. At that level, work requires mastery of the HRM field, the relationships between subordinate and senior levels of HR management, and a wide range of qualitative and/or quantitative methods sufficient to design and conduct comprehensive studies where the boundaries are extremely broad and undefined; identify and propose solutions to broad, severe, and important problems; develop recommendations for legislation or evaluate new legislation for projected impact on agency programs; direct team efforts to persuade management to implement recommendations where the proposals involve substantial agency resources; and evaluate and make recommendations concerning overall plans and proposals for complex agency projects.

This level relates to staff positions at higher organizational levels in the agency, where the employee examines broad HRM problems or issues throughout the agency and develops proposed administrative or legislative solutions. In contrast, the appellant provides operating-level technical services at an installation. His management advisory services relate to local concerns rather than the broad, complex issues addressed at Level 1-8.

Level 1-7 is credited. 1250 points

Factor2, Supervisory Controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

At Level 2-4, the supervisor defines overall objectives and available resources and discusses with the employee the timeframes, scope, and possible approaches for the work. The employee is responsible for determining the approach to be taken; interpreting regulations; applying new methods to complex or controversial problems; resolving most of the conflicts that arise; and keeping the supervisor informed of progress and potential controversies. The supervisor reviews completed work for soundness of overall approach, effectiveness in producing expected results, feasibility of recommendations, and adherence to requirements.

At Level 2-5, the supervisor provides administrative and policy direction in terms of *broadly defined* missions or functions of the organization. The employee is responsible for *a significant*

program or function; defines objectives; interprets policies promulgated by authorities senior to the immediate supervisor and determines their effect on program needs; independently plans, designs, and carries out the work to be done; and is a technical authority. The supervisor reviews work for potential impact on broad *agency* policy objectives and program goals, and normally accepts work as being technically authoritative and without significant change.

This factor has three components - supervisory controls, employee responsibility, and supervisory review. The appellant's position matches Level 2-4 in terms of the responsibility exercised, but exceeds that level as it relates to supervisory controls and review. Specifically, as the human resources officer for the organization, the appellant works largely independently. His supervisor does not discuss assignments with him at their onset, nor does he review his work products. The appellant has full signature authority to effect personnel actions, with supervisory review limited to broad performance considerations. However, Level 2-5 is not fully met. The appellant can be said to be working under administrative direction, but the mission and functions of his organization are not *broadly defined;* rather, they are quite specific and concrete technical HRM services, such as classifying jobs, recruiting candidates for positions, processing training requests, and preparing disciplinary actions. He does not, for example, direct an agency or Department level HRM function, where the mission is expressed in terms of a functional area, the work is largely project-oriented, and the employee identifies issues and initiates studies. Further, the work directed by the appellant does not constitute a *significant program or function* as that term is intended at Level 2-5. Obviously, any HRM operation is important to the organization that it services. However, the FES factor levels are comparative criteria representing *relative* degrees of work complexity, difficulty, and scope. Given that Level 2-5 is the highest level available under this factor, it can be assumed that a small operating HRM program at the installation level, servicing support rather than mission-oriented activities, would not be representative of the type of program contemplated at this level. Lastly, the supervisor assumes the appellant's work to be technically authoritative, as at Level 2-5. However, it is reviewed from the standpoint of the effectiveness of the services delivered, not for its impact on *broad agency policies and program goals*. This type of work review would only be applicable to positions at higher organizational levels, since the work of operating-level positions does not normally have agencywide policy and program implications.

Level 2-4 is credited. 450 points

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of the guidelines used and the judgment needed to apply them.

The guidelines used by the appellant match Level 3-3. At that level, the employee uses a wide variety of reference materials and manuals; however, they are not always directly applicable to the issues or problems. Precedents are available outlining the preferred approach to more general problems. The employee interprets and adapts available guidelines to specific issues and problems.

The ongoing technical services provided by the appellant are well-established HRM operations covered by extensive OPM and DoD regulations, guidelines, and standards. The serviced

organization is a typical NAF activity; the problems encountered are not unique to the installation and tend to be recurring (e.g., retention problems for low-wage jobs, terminations due to abandonment of position.) The appellant must adapt guidelines and precedents as necessary, such as in coordinating the local wage survey and preparing a special rate request for housekeepers and custodial workers.

The position does not meet Level 3-4. At that level, the employee uses guidelines that are very general regarding agency policy statements and objectives. Guidelines specific to assignments are often scarce, inapplicable, or have gaps and require considerable interpretation or adaptation. The employee uses judgment, initiative, and resourcefulness in deviating from established methods to treat specific issues or problems, research trends and patterns, develop new methods and criteria, and/or propose new policies and practices.

The serviced organization is a small NAF activity of approximately 400 employees. The operating components are established support and recreational activities typical of others throughout the Department of the Air Force. Although the appellant performs some occasional development work that involves deviating from established methods, such as an incentive program to increase job retention rates, the organizational setting does not normally present unusual or unique problems for which guidelines and precedents would be inapplicable.

Level 3-3 is credited. 275 points

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of the tasks or processes in the work performed, the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done, and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

The complexity of the appellant's work is comparable to Level 4-4. At that level, the work consists of resolving problems that often involve conflicting or incomplete information; applying analytical techniques that frequently require modification; and/or addressing substantive and often controversial or sensitive technical issues. The employee performs such work as determining the most effective and efficient approach to meet customer requirements; identifying ways to improve or enhance HRM services; assessing situations complicated by disputed or conflicting data; analyzing the effects of changes in law and regulations; proposing recommendations to problems; defining problems in terms of the applicable laws, policies, or regulations; and formulating a legal and/or factually supportable position.

The appellant personally handles the more sensitive problems encountered, such as adverse actions and dealings with the union. He is responsible for ensuring that HRM services are provided in a timely manner, support the mission needs of the organization, and comply with governing laws and regulations.

The position does not meet Level 4-5. At that level, the work consists of such functions as addressing issues that significantly affect long-range implementation of substantive operational and/or policy programs throughout an agency, bureau, service, or major military command;

resolving problems and issues that affect long-range administration of mission-oriented programs; and developing new requirements in program operations, legislation, or agency regulations.

This level of complexity, involving policy and program development issues affecting substantive, large-scale programs, would not be encountered at the installation level.

Level 4-4 is credited. 225 points

Factor 5, Scope and Effect

This factor measures the relationship between the nature of the work, and the effect of the work products or services both within and outside the organization.

The scope and effect of the work match Level 5-3. At that level, the scope of the work involves applying accepted criteria and standard methods to resolve a variety of conventional issues and problems. The work influences management decisions and affects customer perception of the overall quality and service of the HRM program.

The appellant resolves issues and problems commonly encountered in an installation-level operating environment. His recommendations affect management decisions on personnel-related issues and the overall perception of the HRM program.

The position does not meet Level 5-4. At that level, the scope of the work involves resolving or advising on complex problems and issues and troubleshooting a wide range of unusual conditions. The work affects the objectives and effectiveness of agency HRM activities, missions, and programs.

The problems and issues that arise within an installation-level NAF component are varied (e.g., recruitment and retention problems, disciplinary issues), but would not be considered particularly complex or unusual within the HRM realm. In addition, the effect of the work is local rather than agency-level.

Level 5-3 is credited. 150 points

Factor 6, Personal Contacts
and
Factor 7, Purpose of Contacts

These factors include face-to-face and remote dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. The relationship between factors 6 and 7 presumes that the same contacts will be evaluated under both factors.

The appellant's personal contacts match Level 2, where contacts are with agency employees and managers, applicants, retirees, beneficiaries, and/or the general public. The appellant has contacts with installation employees, staff in various DoD components, and members of the

general public. The position does not meet Level 3, where contacts are with persons outside the agency, including consultants, contractors, or business executives, or with agency officials several managerial levels removed from the employee when such contacts occur on an ad hoc basis. The appellant does not routinely have any contacts of this nature.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts match Level B, where contacts involve planning, coordinating, or advising on work efforts, or identifying options for and resolving issues or operating problems. These represent the types of interpersonal dealings normally encountered in a typical operating environment. The position does not meet Level C, where contacts are to influence and persuade employees and managers to accept and implement findings and recommendations where resistance is encountered due to organizational conflict, competing objectives, or resource problems. Although the appellant may use persuasion in recommending particular courses of action, these relate to individual case problems rather than the broader types of issues that would be complicated by organizational conflict or resource problems.

Level 2B is credited. 75 points

Factor 8, Physical Demands

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the employee by the work situation.

The position matches Level 8-1, which covers sedentary work.

Level 8-1 is credited. 5 points

Factor 9, Work Environment

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the employee's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required.

The position matches Level 9-1, which describes a typical office environment.

Level 9-1 is credited. 5 points

Summary

Factors	Level	Points
Knowledge Required	1-7	1250
Supervisory Controls	2-4	450
Guidelines	3-3	275
Complexity	4-4	225
Scope and Effect	5-3	150
Personal Contacts/ Purpose of Contacts	2B	75

Physical Demands	8-1	5
Wok Environment	9-1	5
Total		2435

The total of 2435 points falls within the GS-11 range (2355-2750) on the grade conversion table provided in the GSSG.

Evaluation of Supervisory Work

The General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) is used to determine the grade level of supervisory positions in the General Schedule. However, it only covers positions where supervisory work occupies at least 25 percent of the position's time. The appellant reported that he spends only 10-15 percent of his time on supervisory functions, with the remainder of his time spent on the personally-performed human resources management work addressed above. Therefore, the grade of his position may not be based solely on application of the GSSG. However, we used the GSSG to determine the grade value of his supervisory duties to ensure that all aspects of his position were fully considered.

Factor 1, Program Scope and Effect

This factor assesses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including its organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization.

The position meets Level 1-2 both in terms of the complexity of the work directed (i.e., administrative or complex clerical work), the organizational coverage of the work (an agency field office or small to medium military installation), and the impact of the work (installation or field office level). Level 1-3 is not met, since that level involves providing complex administrative, technical, or professional services directly affecting a large or complex multimission military installation (defined in the GSSG as having a serviced population of over 4000 personnel, and including at least four allied activities such as a garrison, hospital, research laboratory, service school, supply or maintenance depot, or equivalent.) The organizational coverage of the appellant's supervisory work is limited to the NAF activity at [Air Force Base], or coverage comparable to a small field office.

Level 1-2 is credited. 350 points

Factor 2, Organizational Setting

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher levels of management.

The appellant's immediate supervisor is the Deputy Services Director (Captain, USAF), his second-level supervisor is the Services Director (GS-14), who in turn reports to the Support Group Commander (Colonel, USAF). Therefore, his position is accountable to a position that is

two or more levels below the first SES, flag, or general officer (i.e., Admiral or General) position in the direct supervisory chain.

Level 2-1 is credited. 100 points

Factor 3, Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised

This factor considers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities exercised on a recurring basis.

The appellant's delegated supervisory authorities meet Level 3-2c, which describes the full range of first-line supervisory functions. Level 3-3 is not met, as it applies to either second-level supervisors or higher, or managerial positions with delegated authority to set annual, multiyear, or similar long-range work plans. The appellant supervises six employees as a first-line supervisor.

Level 3-2 is credited. 450 points

Factor 4, Personal Contacts

This is a two-part factor which assesses the nature and purpose of the personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities. The nature of the contacts, credited under subfactor 4A, and the purpose of those contacts, credited under subfactor 4B, must be based on the same contacts.

Subfactor 4A, Nature of Contacts

The appellant's contacts meet Level 4A-2, where contacts are with higher ranking managers and staff throughout the agency; technical or operating level employees of State or local governments; and members of the business community or the general public. Most of the appellant's contacts are with supervisors and employees at the installation, his counterparts at other installations and other agency staff, and members of the general public. Level 4A-3 is not met, where contacts are with, for example, higher ranking civilian or military managers at bureau or major organization levels of the agency; contracting officials and high level technical staff of large industrial firms; or State and local government managers. These contacts take place in meetings and conferences and often require extensive preparation of briefing materials or up-to-date familiarity with complex subject matter. The appellant does not have routine contacts of this nature.

Level 4A-2 is credited. 50 points

Subfactor 4B, Purpose of Contacts

This subfactor covers the purpose of the personal contacts credited under subfactor 4A, including the advisory, representational, negotiating, and commitment making responsibilities.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts is consistent with Level 4B-2 (i.e., planning and coordinating work, resolving differences of opinion), rather than Level 4B-3, where the primary purpose of the contacts is managerial in nature, to include representing the organizational unit in negotiations, in obtaining and committing resources, *and* in gaining compliance with policies, regulations, or contracts. The appellant's contacts are for the purpose of accomplishing the basic work of the unit rather than for carrying out program management functions.

Level 4B-2 is credited. 75 points

Factor 5, Difficulty of Typical Work Directed

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization directed. It involves determining the highest grade of basic (mission-oriented) nonsupervisory work performed that constitutes 25 percent or more of the workload of the organization. In assessing the level of work performed by non-General Schedule employees, the GSSG instructs that the pertinent classification standards be consulted to derive the GS equivalent grades.

The appellant supervises one NF-201-IV Human Resources Specialist, one GS-1702-9 Training Technician, one GS-201-7 HRM intern, two NF-203-II/III Human Resources Assistants, and a Staff Sergeant. The appellant indicated that the primary duties of the NF-201-IV are to oversee personnel processing and to perform staffing functions. Personnel processing is covered by the one-grade interval Human Resources Assistance Series, GS-203, and would not normally be classifiable higher than the GS-8 level. The staffing work would be classified using the GS-200 standard as above, but would support no higher than Levels 1-6 and 4-3, which address "moderately difficult but well-precedented and/or recurring issues an problems" and "work related to an HR recruitment, examination, selection, and/or placement program at a facility." If the remaining factors were credited at the same levels as the appellant's position, the point total derived would be 2060 points, which is within the GS-9 range. The HRM intern is assigned to the appellant's organization as a three-year training experience for eventual reassignment elsewhere as a human resources officer. Although the position has a career ladder to GS-11, this is a condition of the intern program and not necessarily a reflection of the workload of the organization. There is no indication that there is an additional full staff year of GS-11 work in the appellant's unit. Therefore, GS-9 represents the highest grade of nonsupervisory work supervised that constitutes at least 25 percent of the overall workload.

Level 5-5 is credited. 650 points

Factor 6, Other Conditions

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions contribute to the difficulty and complexity of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities. The difficulty of work is measured primarily by the level of work credited under factor 5. Complexity is measured by the level of coordination required.

The difficulty of the work supervised by the appellant is indicative of Level 6-3, where supervision requires coordinating and integrating administrative, technical, or complex clerical work comparable to GS-9, this being the base level of work in his unit. It also matches the coordination required at this level, which ensures consistency of product, service, interpretation, or advice; conformance with formal standards or agency policy; and coordination with other units to deal with requirements and problems affecting others outside the organization. Level 6-4 is not met, where supervision requires substantial coordination and integration of a number of major work assignments, projects, or program segments of professional, scientific, technical, or administrative work comparable in difficulty to the GS-11 level.

Level 6-3 is credited. 975 points

None of the Special Situations, for which an additional level may be credited, apply to the appellant's position. These include such complicating conditions as variety of work, shift operations, fluctuating work force, physical dispersion, special staffing situations, specialized programs, changing technology, and special hazard and safety conditions. (At least three of these conditions must be met for crediting.)

Summary

Factors	Level	Points
Program Scope and Effect	1-2	350
Organizational Setting	2-1	100
Supervisory/Managerial Authority	3-2	450
Personal Contacts		
of Contacts	4A-2	50
Purpose of Contacts	4B-2	75
Difficulty of Work Directed	5-5	650
Other Conditions	6-3	975
Total		2650

The total of 2650 points falls within the GS-11 range (2355-2750) on the grade conversion table provided in the GSSG.

Decision

The appealed position is properly classified as Human Resources Officer, GS-201-11.