

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership & Merit System Accountability
Classification Appeals Program

Dallas Field Services Group
Plaza of the Americas, North Tower
700 North Pearl Street, Suite 525
Dallas, TX 75201

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

Appellant: [appellant]

Agency classification: Human Resources Assistant
GS-203-7

Organization: Human Resources Team
Division of Administration
[installation]
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
[geographic location]

OPM decision: Human Resources Assistant
GS-203-7

OPM decision number: C-0203-07-02

/s/ Robert D. Hendler

Robert D. Hendler
Classification and Pay Claims
Program Manager

December 2, 2005

Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), this decision constitutes a 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 conditions and time limits specified in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name and address]

Human Resources Officer, [name] Region
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
[address]

Director, Office of Human Resources
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW., Mail Stop 5230
Washington, DC 20240

Introduction

The Dallas Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal on August 29, 2005, submitted through the U.S. Department of the Interior on behalf of [appellant]. The administrative report was submitted with the appeal request. The appellant's position is currently classified as a Human Resources Assistant, GS-203-7, but she believes her duties should be classified as a Human Resources Specialist, GS-201-9. The position is assigned to the Human Resources Team, Division of Administration, [installation], [name] Region, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, (DOI) at [city and state]. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

Background

The appellant's supervisor requested a review of the position from the National Park Service's [name] Region based on accretion of duties. That request discussed completion of Delegated Examining Training, the addition of classification responsibilities and advising employees on pay and leave matters. The Region's evaluation, dated July 11, 2003, determined the classification was unchanged. The appellant and immediate supervisor disagreed with the Region's findings and requested another review. The [name] Region's Chief of Administration denied the request in a memorandum dated December 18, 2003, and responded to the specific issues raised. The appellant then filed a classification appeal with the DOI Office of Human Resources, which they received on January 31, 2005. DOI was unable to process the appeal in a timely manner and in accordance with the appellant's request, it was forwarded to OPM. OPM received the appeal on August 25, 2005.

General issues

The supervisor made various statements to dispute the [name] Region's evaluation of the appellant's position in a memorandum dated October 3, 2003. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make an independent decision on the proper classification of the appellant's position. Therefore, we have considered these statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. Because our decision sets aside all previous agency decisions, any concerns regarding the agency's classification review process are not germane to this decision.

The supervisor believes the appellant is performing work similar to positions in other parks that are classified differently. Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM's position classification standards and guidelines. In accordance with 5 CFR 511.612, agencies are required to review their own classification decisions for identical, similar or related positions to ensure consistency with OPM certificates. The agency has the primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant believes her position is classified inconsistently with another, then she may pursue this matter by writing to her agency's headquarters' human resources (HR) office. She should specify the precise organizational location, series, title, grade, duties and responsibilities of the positions in question. The agency should explain to her the differences between her position and the others, or classify those positions in accordance with this appeal decision.

Position information

The appellant is a member of the HR team which is responsible for delivering a wide range of HR services to approximately 130 employees located at the [installation]. The [installation] is comprised of three geographically dispersed district offices and is organized into five divisions; i.e., Ranger Activities, Facility Management, Interpretation and Cultural Resources, Administration, and Resource Management. The HR Team also provides service to approximately 15 employees at the [second installation] and 25 employees at [a third installation]. The workforce numbers fluctuate seasonally, but reflect the peak summertime employment figures. The HR Team includes a GS-201-11 HR Specialist, who provides technical direction; a GS-303-4 Administrative Operations Clerk (Office Automation); and the appellant. The appellant is supervised by the Administrative Officer who occupies a GS-341-13 position.

The appellant works in several areas including processing personnel actions, recruitment and placement, classification, pay and leave, injury claims, and employee development. She spends 30 percent of her time processing the full range of HR actions. She ensures requests for personnel actions are accurate, complete, and include adequate documentation. She uses the Federal Personnel/Payroll System and its different modules to process personnel transactions. The appellant makes coding determinations regarding tenure, veterans' preference, nature of action, legal authority, service computation date, appointment limitation, within grade increase, basic pay, and creditable service.

Staffing responsibilities account for approximately 25 percent of her time. The appellant assists managers in conducting job analyses and developing crediting plans as well as preparing and distributing vacancy announcements. She screens applications for proper documentation, adjudicates veterans' preference determinations, evaluates applicant qualifications, convenes ranking panels, prepares certificates of eligibles, and prepares and mails letters of non-selection to applicants. Her assignments are subject to change as the workload and shifting priorities demand, but the appellant is currently responsible for staffing GS and Federal Wage System (FWS) jobs, grades one through nine, for the Divisions of Interpretation and Cultural Resources and Administration and Facility Management. These organizations primarily involve seasonal GS-4 Park Guides and lower grade level seasonal FWS maintenance worker jobs. The HR Specialist is responsible for the staffing actions for the Divisions of Ranger Activities and Resource Management for GS positions and FWS jobs, regardless of grade, as well as positions graded at 11 through 13 for the remaining divisions.

There are minor disagreements on the percentage of time spent on classification duties. The appellant estimates 25 percent of her time is spent on these duties. However, the HR Specialist, although unable to provide an exact figure, indicated that the appellant spends much more time on recruitment and placement responsibilities than classification work. Classification duties include completing the Optional Form-8 Position Description (PD) cover sheet; reviewing PDs for currency and accuracy; developing evaluation statements, if needed, for modified or new PDs; and updating organizational charts to reflect new hires and departures. The appellant is assigned the classification functions for the Divisions of Interpretation and Cultural Resources

and Ranger Activities. Ranger Activities include primarily seasonal GS-4 Visitor Use Assistants and GS-9 Park Rangers.

The appellant serves as the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) coordinator for the [installation] and is involved in reviewing injury claims for completeness and accuracy before submission to the OWCP; advising employees, supervisors, and medical offices on filing injury claims; maintaining files for claims; and providing information to OWCP. She also provides information on employee benefits. For example, she counsels employees in non-law enforcement positions on retirement options; makes annuity computations; explains health and life insurance options; and prepares, coordinates and forwards retirement actions and correspondence to the appropriate offices. These duties occupy the remainder of the appellant's time.

The appellant and her supervisor certified to the accuracy of the duties described in the PD of record, number [number]. This PD and other material of record furnish much more information about the appellant's duties and responsibilities and how they are performed. We find the PD includes the major duties and responsibilities assigned to and performed by the appellant and we hereby incorporate it into our decision.

To help decide this appeal, we conducted a telephone audit with the appellant and a telephone interview with the supervisor on October 20, 2005, as well as a telephone interview with the HR Specialist on October 21, 2005. In reaching our classification decision, we carefully considered all of the information gained from these interviews, as well as the written information furnished by the appellant and her agency, including the PD of record.

Series, title, and standard determination

The appellant disagrees with the agency's assignment of her position to the GS-203 series. This series covers one-grade interval administrative support positions that supervise, lead, or perform HR assistance work. The work requires substantial knowledge of civilian and/or military HR terminology, requirements, procedures, operations, functions and regulatory policy, and procedural requirements applicable to HR transactions. It does not require the broad knowledge of Federal HR systems or the depth of knowledge about HR concepts, principles, and techniques. HR assistants provide support for HR specialists in using information systems and in delivering services in the various specialty areas of HR. They process and document HR actions for a wide variety of employee categories that involve different forms, authorities, action codes, regulatory authorities, or pay systems.

The appellant believes her work warrants classification to the GS-201 series, which covers two-grade interval administrative positions that manage, supervise, administer, advise on, or deliver HR management products or services. She believes the GS-201 series is appropriate, in part, because the HR Team previously employed a GS-201-9 HR Specialist. However, the record shows that after the retirement of the previous incumbent, the position was redesigned as a GS-203-7 HR Assistant.

We must first determine whether the work performed by the appellant is covered by an administrative or support series. Since some tasks are common to both types of occupations, it is not always easy to distinguish between assistants classified in one-grade interval administrative support occupations and specialists classified in two-grade interval administrative occupations. Both the GS-201 and GS-203 standards discuss how to distinguish between specialist and assistant work. Guidance on distinguishing between administrative and support work is also contained in *The Classifier's Handbook*.

Support work usually involves proficiency in one or more functional areas or in certain limited phases of a specified program. Normally, a support position can be identified with the mission of a particular organization or program. The work usually does not require knowledge of interrelationships among functional areas or organizations. Employees performing support work follow established methods and procedures. Specifically, HR assistants have boundaries that narrowly restrict their work. They use a limited variety of techniques, standards, or regulations. The problems HR assistants deal with are recurring and have precedents. These limitations impact the breadth and depth of knowledge required, the complexity of problem solving, the applicability of guidelines, and the closeness of supervisory controls.

On the other hand, administrative work primarily requires a high order of analytical ability combined with a comprehensive knowledge of (1) the functions, processes, theories and principles of management, and (2) the methods used to gather, analyze, and evaluate information. Administrative work also requires skill in applying problem solving techniques and skill in communicating both orally and in writing. Administrative positions do not require specialized education, but they do involve the types of skills typically gained through college level education or through progressively responsible experience. In particular, full-performance HR specialists use broad HR management knowledge, concepts and principles to perform a wide variety of work in one or more HR specialty areas.

To decide the proper series, we examined the characteristics and requirements of the work, as well as management's intent in establishing the position. Typical of support work, the appellant is chiefly responsible for processing HR actions for a variety of employees that involve different documentation requirements, legal authority and nature of action codes, and regulatory authorities. All requests for personnel action are first directed to the supervisor then to the HR Specialist who completes information on actions involving a potential change in classification or other unusual situations involving reassignments, transfers or promotions, and then forwards it to the appellant to finish. The appellant initiates and completes most HR transactions. Assigning the appellant's position responsibility for the majority of the processing support work and for it to constitute a significant percentage of her time, i.e., 30 percent, suggests that the position was established to augment the work of the HR specialist, who, being free from the important but time-consuming processing work, may devote more time to those duties requiring the application of broad HR knowledge, concepts and principles.

We found the appellant performs her classification related duties based primarily on her knowledge of the organizations' missions, goals and functions in combination with the practical knowledge of the requirements of position classification. The appellant reviews, modifies, or develops evaluation statements for position descriptions that have been modified at a

supervisor's request. She will review the classification from the standpoint of whether the changes are substantial enough to affect the grade. She has also classified a new position for a grade 5 Hydrologic Technician, GS-1316. However, we understand that the BNR infrequently has new positions. Neither situation required broad or in-depth knowledge and application of classification principles and concepts.

Although HR assistant duties may be similar to those of HR specialist trainees, a specialist-in-training is in a temporary stage of development and is performing assignments requiring progressively more judgment and analysis. The HR Team's work assignments are divided to avoid overlap in duties and responsibilities, but they are amended to reflect shifting priorities and fluctuating workload demands. Work, however, is not expressly assigned to the appellant with the intent of challenging her with progressively more difficult assignments, which is the hallmark of a developmental specialist position with clear progression to higher grade levels.

Furthermore, we understand the appellant receives guidance from the HR Specialist or immediate supervisor in fairly limited situations. For example, she will ask for verification on appropriate processing codes or for guidance if the situation is unique, controversial or if the situation/question involves any of the [installation's] Division Chiefs. In all other situations the appellant acts fairly independently. If the appellant's position is developmental in nature with progressively more difficult assignments being made, the level of involvement between the HR Specialist and the appellant will increase as there will be a greater need to collaborate in dealing with the increasingly difficult HR work. In contrast, the record does not show this type or degree of interaction.

We also found the appellant's position does not require the *full* application of the skills, i.e., analysis, research, writing, and judgment, indicative of administrative positions. The appellant's duties require that she use some of these skills to perform work ranging from obtaining answers to employee HR inquiries to development of local standard operating procedures. The appellant approaches these situations by referring to applicable laws and regulations, OPM operating manuals and guides, and agency-specific procedures, if any. She may also contact OPM or the [name] Region for guidance. In contrast to administrative occupations, the appellant does not have to apply a high level of analysis or judgment to make the information gathered fit her particular situation. In the appellant's work, the collection of data is typically the end in itself rather than as a means to an end. In addition, since her staffing and classification assignments are limited to a narrow range of grades and occupations, the appellant's work is conducted in a relatively static environment where many of the paths of action are predictable and information is pre-structured.

Consequently, the appellant's position is properly assigned to the GS-203 series and must be evaluated by applying the grading criteria in the Job Family Position Classification Standard (JFS) for Assistance Work in the HR Group, GS-200. The authorized title for the appellant's position is Human Resources Assistant.

Grade determination

The GS-203 JFS is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, under which factor levels and accompanying point values are assigned for each of the nine factors. The total is converted to a grade level by use of the grade conversion table provided in the JFS. Under this system, each factor level description demonstrates the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor-level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level.

Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that the employee must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, regulations, and principles) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply that knowledge.

At Level 1-5, which is the highest level identified in the JFS, the work requires knowledge of, and skill in applying, a comprehensive body of HR rules, procedures and technical methods sufficient to carry out limited projects; analyze a variety of routine facts; research minor complaints or problems that are not readily understood; and summarize HR facts and issues. Examples of work at this level include conducting recruitment/examining activities for common lower-graded positions; making appropriate modifications to standard or precedent announcements; reviewing applications to assess applicants' basic qualifications; preparing appropriate certificates; taking appropriate action upon selection; and advising selecting officials on hiring procedures and requirements. Other examples include assisting HR specialists by classifying a variety of lower grade-level positions by reviewing the PD and organizational structure, obtaining information from the supervisor, reviewing the standards, identifying issues, and answering questions from supervisors and employees regarding classification procedures.

We find the appellant's duties require a mixture of knowledge levels. Her recruitment and examining duties meet but do not exceed Level 1-5. Comparable to that level, the appellant must be knowledgeable of Federal personnel laws and regulations, as well as standard staffing principles and requirements, to conduct recruitment and examining activities for the assigned positions and organizations. This work requires the appellant to draft vacancy announcements, screen applications for appropriate documentation to prove eligibility status and to make veterans' preference determinations, make minimum qualification determinations, assemble ranking panels, prepare certificates, audit certificates for compliance with hiring procedures and requirements, and contact individuals to make job offers. While the classification functions have been more recently assigned and the appellant has not received formal classification training, she is responsible for completing the OF-8, consulting with the supervisor to determine if the duties and responsibilities of the PD are current and accurate, and making any needed changes to existing evaluation statements, organizational charts, etc. The appellant provided examples of two PDs that were redescribed with minor changes and classified, and one new GS-5 technician position that she classified. These products were completed in 2004.

We find that for the transaction processing work, the knowledge required falls short of that required at Level 1-5. For example, as at Level 1-3, the appellant's processing work requires

knowledge of a body of standardized personnel rules, procedures or requirements, namely the OPM's Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, to identify nature of action and legal authority codes to process a full range of official personnel actions involving GS and FWS positions for appointments, separations and pay changes. Guidelines generally establish what documents and information are necessary to correctly process the personnel action. The [installation] processing work does not involve the unique HR actions, appointment situations, and other HR systems typical at Level 1-4. Also equivalent to Level 1-3, the appellant prepares preliminary retirement annuity estimates and assists employees in preparing their retirement applications. She also assists employees and supervisors in preparing the appropriate forms to be completed for OWCP claims. The appellant's involvement is limited to regular retirement and does not involve law enforcement and firefighter retirement eligibilities and the more complex issues typical of Level 1-4. However, as the appellant's work requires knowledge of a variety of HR program areas and the knowledge required to perform the recruitment and examining work is consistent with that required at Level 1-5, this level is credited for 750 points since it occupies a sufficient portion of her work time to control the evaluation of this factor.

Factor 2, 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. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the employee, priorities and deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. The responsibility of the employee depends upon the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work; to modify or recommend changes to instructions; and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives.

At Level 2-3, which is the highest level identified in the JFS, HR assistants plan the work, carry out successive steps of assignments, resolve problems, and make adjustments using established practices and procedures. In addition, they recommend alternative actions to the supervisor, handle problems and/or deviations that arise in accordance with instructions, policies and guidelines, and refer new or controversial issues to the supervisor for direction. HR assistants are also responsible for job products such as vacancy announcements, ranking factors identified for rating schedules, position descriptions, job evaluation statements, recommendations for disciplinary actions, and the drafting of policy statements.

The position meets but does not exceed Level 2-3. Comparable to this level, the supervisor or the HR Specialist defines the continuing assignments and provides information on new tasks, changes in requirements, and assists with unusual or controversial problems with no clear precedents. Questions/problems raised by the Division Chiefs are referred to the supervisor for guidance. The appellant's experience and technical knowledge of the full range of HR processing allows her to work independently with little or no day-to-day supervision. This work is directed by guidelines and automated system processing procedures. She completes work in conformance with standing priorities, schedules, and deadlines. The appellant's recruitment and examining work is completed in conformance with internal priorities and deadlines, in addition to adherence to OPM's 45-Day Hiring Model. Like Level 2-3, the appellant uses initiative in carrying out recurring assignments independently without specific instructions. This includes

drafting vacancy announcements, assisting in the development of crediting plans and job analyses, screening applications for minimum qualifications, convening panels, and creating a certificate of eligibles. The appellant's work involving workers' compensation does not receive a detailed review by the HR Specialist or the supervisor as these duties are, as at Level 2-3, handled in accordance with established instructions, policies and guidelines. Concerns about delays in payment are typically referred by the appellant to the regional office.

Level 2-3 is credited for 275 points.

Factor 3, Guidelines

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

At Level 3-2, HR assistants use a number of established procedural guidelines such as operating procedures and manuals, references, and work samples. They use judgment in locating and selecting appropriate guidelines, manuals, references, and procedures for application to specific cases. The assistant refers significant proposed deviations or situations to which guidelines cannot be applied to the supervisor or a higher-graded coworker.

At Level 3-3, HR assistants use guidelines that have gaps in specificity and are not applicable to all work situations. The employee selects the most appropriate guideline and decides how to complete the various transactions. Assistants use judgment to devise more efficient methods for procedural processing, gather and organize information for inquiries, or resolve problems referred by others. In some situations, guidelines do not apply directly to assignments and require the employee to make adaptations to cover new and unusual work situations.

Level 3-2 is met as the available guidelines provide enough specific information for the appellant to complete most of her work. The guidelines directly applicable to her work include Federal laws and regulations, agency-specific guidelines, OPM guides, and OWCP manuals and procedures. Comparable to Level 3-2, the appellant must select the appropriate guidance based on the circumstances of the specific case, apply judgment to determine which of several alternatives to use and then apply the criteria or established precedents. Those matters which require significant deviation from the guidelines are referred to the HR Specialist, the supervisor, or the regional office.

Level 3-3 is not met. Unlike Level 3-3, the appellant has access to established policies, procedures and precedents to assist her in delivering a variety of HR services. Although the appellant may have to choose between a number of guidelines, these guides are specific to the case and do not require, as typical of Level 3-3, that she devise new or revised HR methods or processes. According to the appellant, she deals with gaps in the guidance she receives; e.g., the agency issued unclear guidance on whether a new employee must complete a background investigation prior to entering on duty, and, if not, whether they are barred from using the agency's computers until one is obtained. In this case, the appellant is waiting for further guidance from the regional office or the supervisor. In contrast, Level 3-3 may be assigned when an individual must react, i.e., make decisions about the work in light of or despite the shortage in guidelines.

Level 3-2 is credited for 125 points.

Factor 4, Complexity

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

At Level 4-3, which is the highest level identified in the JFS, the work consists of different and unrelated steps in accomplishing HR assignments and processes. HR assistants at this level consider factual data, identify the scope and nature of the problems or issues and determine the appropriate action from many alternatives. Assistants identify and analyze HR issues and/or problems to determine their interrelationships and to determine the appropriate methods and techniques needed to resolve them.

The position meets but does not exceed Level 4-3. Similar to this level, the appellant's work involves various aspects of HR work. Like at Level 4-3, her recruitment work includes evaluating the completeness of applications, making basic qualification determinations, convening ranking panels, and preparing certificates of eligibles for a limited number of lower graded positions taking into consideration the job-relatedness, length, and level of experience from previous jobs when evaluating applications. Her classification duties are limited and involve non-controversial, generally standardized, lower-graded positions.

Like Level 4-3, the appellant processes a full range of official personnel actions pertaining to interrelated aspects of employment such as background investigations, payroll deductions, health and life insurance, retirement and, if required, medical examinations. Circumstances vary significantly and the appellant must determine the most appropriate methods or guidelines for processing each transition or pay action. She typically resolves processing problems; adds appropriate remarks to personnel actions; calculates service computation dates; determines appropriate legal authority and nature of action codes; carries out requests from employees for miscellaneous kinds of changes, e.g., to their names or addresses; and obtains appropriate documentation for within grade increases, probationary periods, and conversions. Comparable to Level 4-3, the appellant considers factual information to assist retiring employees in computing retirement annuities, explaining basic benefits information, and preparing retirement packages to be forwarded to OPM. In doing work related to workers' compensation, the appellant gives advice to employees, supervisors, and medical offices to ensure appropriate documentation is completed adequately and accurately.

Level 4-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factor 5, Scope and Effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignments, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-3, which is the highest level identified in the JFS, the work involves treating a variety of routine problems, questions, or situations within the HR office. It also involves resolving problems using established procedures, such as rating employees based on abilities, ranking employees into categories, applying appropriate standards to determine the classification of lower-graded positions, or counseling employees on a variety of minor disciplinary problems. Work has a direct effect on the quality and adequacy of employee records, program operations, and services provided. The work also affects the social and economic well-being of persons serviced through the HR office.

The position meets but does not exceed Level 5-3. As at this level, the appellant's work involves applying specific rules or procedures to resolve a variety of conventional problems encountered in delivering a variety of HR services. For example, the appellant applies the Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions and the X-118C Job Qualification System for Trades and Labor Occupations in screening, reviewing, and processing applications. She also applies appropriate OPM standards to determine the classification of the GS positions and FWS jobs, grades one through nine, for those positions assigned to her. The work also involves reviewing processing actions to ensure the proper documentation is provided and the codes are correct prior to inputting information into the automated system. Comparable to Level 5-3, the results of the appellant's work affect the quality and adequacy of employee records, program operations, and services provided. Incorrectly processing actions may result in negatively affecting an employee's future employment, pay, or leave. The appellant's classification actions can affect the pay and future employment opportunities of their clients.

Level 5-3 is credited for 150 points.

Factor 6 and 7, Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contacts

Personal contacts include face-to-face and telephone contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain. Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place. These factors are interdependent. The same contacts selected for crediting Factor 6 must be used to evaluate Factor 7. The appropriate level for personal contacts and the corresponding level for purpose of contacts are determined by applying the point assignment chart for factors 6 and 7.

Personal Contacts

At Level 1, the HR assistant has personal contacts with other employees in the immediate office or related units. Typically, they have limited contact with the general public.

At Level 2, which is the highest level identified in the JFS, the HR assistant has contact with employees and managers in the agency, both inside and outside the immediate office or related units, as well as applicants, retirees and/or the general public, in moderately structured settings. Contact with employees and managers may be from various levels within the agency, such as headquarters, regions, districts, field offices or other operating offices at the same location.

The position meets but does not exceed Level 2. In addition to contacts typical at Level 1 with peers and coworkers, the appellant's personal contacts include all levels of employees and supervisors, general public, OWCP staff, medical offices, and regional office staff.

Purpose of Contacts

At Level b, which is the highest level identified in the JFS, the purpose of contacts is to plan, coordinate or advise on work efforts, or to resolve issues or operating problems by influencing or persuading people who are working toward mutual goals and have basically cooperating attitudes.

The position meets but does not exceed Level b. The purpose of the appellant's contacts range from exchanging factual information to resolving issues by persuading people who are typically working toward the same goals and have basically cooperative attitudes. For example, the appellant responds to applicant inquiries concerning Federal employment, application procedures, and documentation requirements. Contacts with hiring officials are to discuss their recruitment needs, status of pending actions, selection procedures, or to provide information about particular applicants. She advises selecting officials on hiring procedures including the rule of three and veterans' preference. Similar to Level b, the appellant contacts appropriate officials to resolve problems relating to the processing of HR actions, recruitment requests, and OWCP claims.

Level 2b is credited for 75 points.

Factor 8, Physical Demands

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

At Level 8-1, which is the only level identified in the JFS, the work is primarily sedentary. Some work may require periods of standing at a counter. Employees frequently carry light items such as employee files or pamphlets. The work does not require any special physical effort. The appellant's position meets but does not exceed Level 8-1. The appellant's work is primarily sedentary and does not involve any special physical effort. Level 8-1 is credited for 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.

At Level 9-1, which is the only level identified in the JFS, the work environment consists of an area that is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated. The work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts requiring normal safety precautions. The appellant's position meets but does not exceed Level 9-1. The work is conducted in an adequately lit, heated, and ventilated office. Level 9-1 is credited for 5 points.

Summary

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-5	750
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-2	125
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6. & 7. Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contacts	2-b	75
8. Physical Demands	8-1	5
9. Work Environment	9-1	<u>5</u>
<i>Total points</i>		1,535

A total of 1,535 points falls within the GS-7 point range (1,355 to 1,600 points) on the grade conversion table in the JFS.

Decision

The position is properly classified as Human Resources Assistant, GS-203-7.