

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



Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242

**Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code**

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Transportation Assistant (Fleet Management)
GS-2102-7

Organization: [appellant's organization]
U.S. Department of the Air Force
[geographic location]

OPM decision: Transportation Assistant
GS-2102-7
parenthetical title at agency discretion

OPM decision number: C-2102-07-01

/s/Bonnie J. Brandon
Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

2/5/99
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, 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]

Civilian Personnel Officer
[address of appellant's servicing personnel office]

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Introduction

On October 26, 1998, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [appellant's name]. His position is currently classified as Transportation Assistant (Fleet Management), GS-2102-7. However, he believes its classification should be at a higher grade level. He works in the [organization at an Air Force Base], [geographic location for the appellant]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

To help decide the appeal, an Oversight Division representative conducted a phone audit of the appellant's position. The audit included interviews with the appellant and his immediate supervisor. In reaching our classification decision, we have reviewed the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and his agency, including his official position description Core Personnel Document Number [number]. The appellant agrees that the official position description is current and accurate.

General Issues

The appellant cites the classification of other positions he believes are similar to his own as part of the basis for his appeal. He provided copies of position descriptions from [two other Air Force bases]. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others as a basis for deciding his appeal.

Like OPM, the appellant's agency must classify positions based on comparison to OPM standards and guidelines. However, the agency also has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant considers his position so similar to others that they all warrant the same classification, he may pursue the matter by writing to the Department of the Air Force's personnel headquarters. In doing so, he should specify the precise organizational location, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the positions in question. If the positions are found to be basically the same as his, the agency must correct their classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain to him the differences between his position and the others.

Position information

The appellant performs a variety of duties in support of the acquisition, care, accountability, maintenance, and safe operation of the vehicle fleet. The fleet is comprised of over 200 various types of vehicles owned by the Base and other entities such as the Army, Marine Corps, and General Services Administration. The appellant is responsible for processing requests for vehicle authorizations and assignments in accordance with Air Force requirements, including recommending alternatives in order to achieve greater performance and cost efficiencies. He inputs and maintains automated records in systems containing information on vehicle authorizations and assignments and equipment inventories. He performs analyses and provides recommendations to higher management

concerning priority vehicle purchases and vehicle utilization. The appellant provides guidance to unit Vehicle Control Officers (VCO's) who have responsibility for ensuring that operations, maintenance, and use of assigned vehicles comply with Air Force policy. The appellant issues and maintains records on government driver's licenses and credit cards, and reconciles credit card bills against authorized expenditures prior to forwarding for payment. The appellant plans and coordinates the conduct of the Wing Commander's Top Wheels Program, a quarterly competition to determine the best maintained vehicles.

The appellant works under the general supervision of a Vehicle Operations Manager, GS-2150-11, who is responsible for the overall direction of the combined elements of Vehicle Operations, Vehicle Maintenance, and Fleet Management.

Series determination

The appellant believes that his position should be classified in the GS-2101, Transportation Specialist Series, or GS-2150, Transportation Operations Series. The GS-2101 series includes all administrative positions the duties of which are to advise on, supervise, or perform work which involves two or more specialized transportation functions or other transportation work not specifically included in other series of the GS-2100 Transportation Group. The GS-2150 series includes all classes of positions the duties of which are to administer, supervise, or perform work involving the planning, directing, or operating of rail, motor, air, or water transportation systems and service, including positions involving responsibility for operation of both transportation service and terminal facilities. These are two-grade interval series.

The Classifier's Handbook provides general guidance on how to decide the appropriate series for various kinds of work, including determining positions properly classified in two-grade interval administrative series and those classified in one-grade interval support series. To decide the proper series, we must consider the characteristics and requirements of the work as well as management's intent for establishing the position.

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 the interrelationships among functional areas or organizations. Employees who perform support work follow established methods and procedures. They may occasionally develop work plans or recommend new procedures, but these typically are related to the employee's individual assignment or immediate work unit. Support work can be performed based on a practical knowledge of the purpose, operation, procedures, techniques, and guidelines of the specific program area or functional assignment.

Administrative work, on the other hand, 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 effectively

both orally and in writing. Administrative positions do not require specialized education, but they do involve the type of skills (analysis, research, writing, judgment) typically gained through college level education or through progressively responsible experience. Administrative work often involves planning for and developing systems, functions, and services; formulating, developing, recommending, and establishing policies, operating methods, or procedures; and adapting established policy to the unique requirements of a particular program.

While we find the appellant does make decisions and performs analyses involving utilization of the Base's fleet, these are generally more clear-cut based on information that is readily apparent or not overly complex. The analyses performed by the appellant primarily involve gathering data on vehicle usage and making decisions and recommendations to rotate or replace vehicles when the use of a vehicle has met, exceeds, or is less than the Air Force minimum requirements. The appellant prepared a Guidebook for Vehicle Control Officers in which he provides greater detail than the Air Force policy concerning the process and procedures to be followed in carrying out their responsibilities. However, these types of assignments do not require a high order of analytical ability or problem solving techniques typical of administrative positions appropriately classified in two-grade interval series.

The appellant's organizational title is Fleet Manager. In this capacity, he states he has authority for managing the program, including developing policy. However, we find that the position description for the Vehicle Manager, the appellant's supervisor, reflects he has been assigned responsibility for the overall direction of the Fleet Management element, including providing direction, advice, coordination, and management of the entire Wing's vehicle activities. In addition, the Vehicle Manager's position description reflects that the Vehicle Manager is the authority appointed by the Chief of Transportation for resolution of problems facing vehicle requirements. Accordingly, we find that the appellant's position primarily is responsible for carrying out the day-to-day work involved in support of the mission of the Fleet Management activity. These types of duties and responsibilities are best classified in a one-grade interval support series.

The Transportation Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-2102, includes one-grade interval positions that involve supervising or performing work to arrange transportation for or perform other actions in connection with the movement of freight, passengers, or personal property by Government or commercial needs. This series also includes other transportation support work not covered specifically by another one-grade interval series in the Transportation Group. The work requires a practical knowledge of the regulations and methods governing traffic management or transportation programs. Under the Occupational Information section of the GS-2102 standard, the fleet management functional area is described as that which involves the management of Government-owned or leased passenger cars, trucks, or special purpose vehicles. It includes duties such as reviewing, recording, or compiling information related to vehicle assignment and use, income, mileage reports, preventive maintenance services, accidents, billing, or other program data; developing and maintaining accident case files; conducting or assisting in inspections or investigations of assigned vehicles; and ensuring optimum vehicle availability and use by rotating or reassigning vehicles between units. These duties and responsibilities closely match those of the appealed position and the

position most closely parallels the intent of the GS-2102 standard. Therefore, the appealed position is correctly classified in the Transportation Clerk and Assistant Series.

Title determination

Transportation Assistant is the title established by the GS-2102 standard for positions in grades GS-5 and above. According to the standard, agencies may, at their discretion, add a parenthetical title to the basic title to reflect a particular specialization or when further distinctions in the work are necessary. The agency has added the parenthetical title of “Fleet Management” to reflect the transportation specialization of the appellant’s work, which appears appropriate.

Standard determination

The standard for the GS-2102 series contains criteria for evaluating the grade level of positions in that series. We have applied those criteria to the appealed position in the discussion that follows.

Grade determination

The GS-2102 position classification standard is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, which employs nine factors. Each factor is evaluated separately and is assigned a point value consistent with factor level definitions described in the standard. The total points are converted to a grade by use of a grade conversion table. Under the FES, each factor level description describes 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. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

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

At Level 1-3, the work requires knowledge of a body of standardized transportation regulations, procedures, and operations related to one or more transportation support functions. The standard illustrates positions in a fleet management function which require this level of knowledge as those in which employees perform a variety of duties in connection with day-to-day management of assigned vehicles, such as making arrangements for vehicle use, verifying invoices for payment, maintaining records on Government-owned vehicles, etc.

At Level 1-4, the work requires knowledge and application of an extensive body of transportation regulations, methods, and practices to perform a wide variety of interrelated or nonstandard transportation support assignments and resolve a wide range of problems. At this level, employees

in the fleet management function assist in evaluating the overall program. For example, employees collect data and review a variety of reports relating to vehicle use, expenses, and income to identify problems or trends for further review. They assist in auditing vehicle files, motor vehicle accident records, and license tag and credit card registers.

The appellant provides guidance to VCO's on acquiring vehicle authorizations and recommends decisions on requests for authorizations based on his review of the criteria outlined in Air Force's Table of Allowances. He has the authority to redistribute vehicles from units with underutilized assets or lower priority needs. He prepares and submits for approval the annual Vehicle Priority Buy listing, for which he identifies authorizations with assets that have met their life expectancy or authorizations which have not been filled and prioritizes the needs in relation to the impact on unit missions. On an annual basis, he prepares a utilization/rotation analysis which involves determining whether vehicles are used in accordance with the minimum authorization requirements, e.g., hours and miles used per month, functions performed, etc. This document is used by the appellant and management decision-makers to identify situations where vehicle authorizations must be rejustified, vehicles should be rotated to increase their longevity, etc. He conducts annual Vehicle Control Function Assistance visits with each unit that has assigned vehicles to ensure proper maintenance of records, discuss vehicle utilization histories and authorization needs, and perform inspections on vehicles to ensure vehicles are maintained properly. He provides a written summary of his site visit findings to the unit commander.

The knowledges required in the appealed position fully meet but do not exceed Level 1-4. 550 points are credited.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

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

At Level 2-2, the supervisor provides standing instructions on recurring assignments and specific guidance on new or difficult assignments. Employees perform assignments independently but refer situations not covered by initial instructions or precedents to the supervisor. The supervisor evaluates the accuracy and adequacy of assignments by reviewing the frequency and nature of resulting problems or complaints.

At Level 2-3, the supervisor outlines objectives, priorities, and deadlines and provides guidance on dealing with unusually involved or one-of-a-kind situations. Employees independently plan and carry out the successive steps to complete transportation support duties and use accepted practices to resolve problems and deviations which may result because of the specialized nature of the problems, the existence of various conflicting documentation, the lack of documentation or information available, or other conditions. The supervisor reviews completed work for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements, which in some situations may only be

after the fact in response to complaints from customers. The methods the employee uses to complete the assignments usually are not reviewed in detail.

Supervisory controls over the appellant's position equate to but do not exceed those described at Level 2-3. Similar to that depicted in the standard at this level, the appellant independently plans and carries out assignments and resolves problems encountered. While the methods the appellant uses to complete his responsibilities are not reviewed in detail, the reports, written guidance, analyses, and recommendations submitted by the appellant are reviewed by the supervisor for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformance to requirements. 275 points are credited.

Factor 3, Guidelines

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

At Level 3-2, numerous procedures for doing the work have been established, and many specific guidelines are used. Guidelines include volumes of transportation regulations, manuals, guides, directories, tenders, or operating procedures. Guides may cover the kinds of paperwork required, special instructions or markings to use, kinds of carrier equipment available, clearance requirements, conditions for authorizing various entitlements, etc. Employees must use judgment to identify and select the appropriate reference and procedure for each phase of the process, question, or condition that develops. There may be omissions in guidelines that require employees to use some judgment and initiative to handle aspects of the work not covered completely. Employees refer situations requiring significant judgment or interpretation to the supervisor for guidance or resolution.

At Level 3-3, guidelines are similar to those described in Level 3-2, but are not applicable completely to many aspects of the work because of the problem solving or complicated nature of the assignments. Employees use judgment to interpret guidelines, adapt procedures, decide approaches, and resolve specific problems.

The appellant uses a variety of guidelines such as Federal and state laws, regulations, multi-service instructions and manuals, and Air Force directives and letters. These are not always completely applicable to the appellant's work which requires him to use judgment in resolving problems. Problems encountered by the appellant include matters such as determining the appropriateness of requests for vehicle modifications, recommending alternatives to authorization requests, deciding to rotate vehicles from one unit to another, determining the legality of transporting dependents in Government vehicles off-base, evaluating incidents of Government vehicle misuse reports, identifying the appropriate commercial licenses required for various types of vehicles, etc.

We find that the nature of the guidelines used and the judgment needed to apply them in the appealed position fully meet but do not exceed Level 3-3. 275 points are assigned.

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 4-2, the work involves performing related processing and procedural tasks in support of transportation related functions. Employees make decisions by reviewing similar cases or standard operating procedures and selecting from among clearly recognizable alternatives. Employees take action using established instructions, practices, or precedents for format, content, and processing of documents and requests. Actions taken are similar and well-established, although the specific pattern of actions taken may differ somewhat.

At Level 4-3, the work involves performing one or more transportation support functions that require the use of different and unrelated procedures and methods. The use of different procedures may result because assignments received are relatively broad and varied; work methods are not completely standardized; or transactions are interrelated with other systems and often require extensive coordination with various, different personnel. Employees identify the nature of the request, problem, or issue, and determine the need for and obtain additional information through oral or written contacts and review of regulations and manuals. Employees may have to consider previous actions and understand how these actions differ from or are similar to the issue at hand before deciding on an approach. Employees make recommendations or take actions based on a case-by-case review of pertinent transportation regulations and documents.

The appealed position is responsible for performing a variety of duties in support of the Base vehicle fleet program which requires use of different and unrelated procedures. In addition to the duties outlined earlier under Factor 1, the appellant provides guidance, both orally and in writing, to VCO's on carrying out their responsibilities. On a semiannual basis, he plans and conducts meetings for VCO's for which he arranges various speakers to provide information on topics such as common maintenance problems, safety issues, fueling problems, determining accident liability and reporting procedures, etc. The appellant provides advice to VCO's on how to request and complete vehicle modifications such as the addition of special tools, hydraulic tailgates, camper shells, radios, etc. On a semiannual basis, he conducts an analysis of how effectively [the appellant's organization] utilizes its fleet by comparing mileage criteria with dispatch records, determining if manpower/workload data is captured properly, ensuring assets are used in accordance with authorization records, etc. The appellant controls the issuance of credit cards used by vehicle drivers for off-base fuel and minor maintenance needs. He receives all receipts from credit card uses and reconciles these with billing statements prior to forwarding bills for payment, resolving any discrepancies with VCO's or the financial institution. The appellant plans and carries out the Wing Commander's Top Wheels Program, which consists of an annual roll-by inspection of the vehicle fleet by the Wing Commander and a quarterly competition to determine the best maintained vehicles. The appellant arranges for competition judges, develops judging criteria, and obtains prizes.

The complexity of the appellant's work fully meets but does not exceed Level 4-3. 150 points are assigned.

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 assignment, and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-2, the purpose of the work is to provide a full range of transportation services or to perform other transportation support work that is covered by well-defined and precise program procedures and regulations. Work products affect the accuracy and reliability of further processes or services.

At Level 5-3, the purpose of the work is to apply conventional practices to treat a variety of problems in transportation transactions. The employee treats problems encountered by applying established procedures. In some situations, the work results in recommendations, actions, or reports that affect the ability of serviced programs to conduct business adequately. In other work situations, the quality of the transportation advice and decisions may affect the operation of certain programs. In still other situations, the work may affect the physical well-being of persons, or it may affect substantial costs incurred by the agency or activity.

The appellant's work matches but does not exceed Level 5-3. The purpose of his work is to recommend decisions on unit requests for vehicle authorizations in relation to Air Force requirements, identify circumstances necessitating the redistribution of vehicles among units, determine whether VCO's carry out their responsibilities in accordance with Air Force policy, and ensure vehicle drivers are issued proper licenses. His work affects the ability of units with vehicle needs to operate and achieve their missions, since his recommendations result in the acquisition or removal of assigned vehicles. He inspects vehicles to determine vehicle condition and operator care which affects the well-being of drivers and longevity of vehicles. Like the description in the standard, his work affects costs incurred by the agency in that he recommends alternative vehicle authorizations which may meet unit needs at reduced operating costs and recommends decisions concerning whether to repair or salvage vehicles. 150 points are assigned for this factor.

Factors 6 and 7, Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts

These factors include face-to-face contacts and telephone dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain and pertain to the reasons the contacts are made.

The standard describes two levels of persons contacted: (1) employees within the immediate organizational unit or in closely related support units, or members of the general public in very highly structured situations and (2) employees in the same agency but outside the immediate organization who are seeking advice or information. Contacts at Level 2 also may include employees at other installations or employees in other agencies who are providing, requesting, or coordinating actions and information. Some positions at this level may involve contacts with members of the general public, as individuals or groups, in moderately structured settings.

The standard also describes two levels for the purpose of contacts: (a) to obtain, clarify, or provide facts or information and (b) to plan and coordinate actions to prevent or correct errors, delays, or other complications from occurring.

The appellant has contacts with agency employees at all levels, both within and outside the immediate organization, and with individuals outside the agency. These include the Wing Commander, Support Group Commander, Unit Commanders and Vehicle Control Officers in units with vehicle assignments, personnel of other bases and agencies involved in vehicle authorizations and deliveries, and personnel of the State of Texas Department of Public Safety. These contacts equate to but do not exceed those described in Level 2 under Persons Contacted.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts is to provide or request information relating to vehicle utilization and driver's license requirements and to coordinate the conduct of the Top Wheels Program. He advises VCO's and Unit Commanders on the status of their vehicle control program and identifies alternatives and recommends ways for resolving problems that may be encountered. This is equivalent to but does not exceed Level b under Purpose of Contacts.

Reference to the chart outlined in the standard reflects that 75 points are credited for these factors when Level 2b is assigned.

Factor 8, Physical demands

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

At Level 8-1, the work may require some physical effort, such as standing, walking, bending, or sitting. There are no special physical demands.

At Level 8-2, the work requires above average physical agility, such as regular and recurring periods of prolonged standing, bending, stretching, and lifting.

The physical demands on the appellant meet Level 8-2. On a recurring basis, the appellant performs inspections to ensure the condition of vehicles assigned to Base organizations is maintained in accordance with requirements. This work involves periods of prolonged standing, bending, stretching, and some lifting. 20 points are assigned.

Factor 9, Work environment

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

At Level 9-1, the employee works primarily in an office setting involving everyday risks or discomforts. Normal safety precautions are adequate.

At Level 9-2, the employee works in areas with moderate risks or discomforts that require the use of special safety precautions.

The appellant's work environment is evaluated at Level 9-2. While inspecting vehicles, the appellant must use safety precautions working around moving parts, materials handling equipment, etc. 20 points are assigned.

Summary

The following table summarizes our evaluation of the appellant's position:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-4	550
2. Supervisory Controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6. and 7. Personal Contacts and Purpose of Contacts	2-b	75
8. Physical Demands	8-2	20
9. Work Environment	9-2	20
TOTAL POINTS		1515

The total points assigned to the appellant's position equal 1515 . Therefore, in accordance with the grade conversion table in the standard, the position is properly graded at GS-7.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Transportation Assistant, GS-2102-7. Addition of a parenthetical title to reflect a specialized transportation function is at the agency's discretion.