

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

Chicago Oversight Division
230 South Dearborn Street, DPN 30-6
Chicago, Illinois 60604

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

Appellant: [Name]

Representative: [Name]

Agency classification: Engineering Draftsman
GS-818-6

Organization: Department of Veterans Affairs
Medical Center
[Name] Service
[Name] Section
[City, State]

OPM decision: **GS-818-6**
Engineering Draftsman

OPM decision number: C-0818-06-02

/s/

Douglas K. Schauer
Classification Appeals Officer

January 29, 2001

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]

[name and address of appellant's servicing
personnel office]

[name and address of appellant's
representatives]

Mr. Ronald E. Cowles
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources Management
Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420

Introduction

The appellant contests the agency's classification of his position, number 4202, as Engineering Draftsman, GS-818-6. The position is located in the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC), [Name] Service, [Name] Section, [City, State]. The appellant believes his position description accurately lists his major duties, but feels his work warrants higher credit for level of responsibility.

Position information

The appellant is one of about six employees within the [Name] Section, which includes one GS-12 Supervisory General Engineer, one GS-9 Engineering Technician, one GS-9 Interior Designer, one GS-7 Engineering Technician, and one GS-7 Program Assistant (OA).

The appellant manages the Computer Aided Design (CAD) Drawing Library, ensuring that drawings are maintained in a systematic manner, both numerically and chronologically. This includes all drawings; preliminary, ongoing, final, and completed, as related to project assignments. Drawing computer files are also configured to isolate trade divisions; i.e., electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc., through the use of cross references.

The appellant participates in engineering studies and surveys to determine the feasibility and requirements of proposed projects. As projects are assigned, the appellant lays out the work to be accomplished in accordance with accepted practices, standards, criteria, and codes. He meets with the appropriate parties and physically visits the proposed site to determine specific needs to effect accurate drawings and to determine how to best accomplish desired goals of the project.

The appellant maintains the Medical Center Space Survey. He accomplishes this duty by physically surveying rooms in buildings throughout the VAMC facility for purposes of space measurements, current use of room, type of floor covering, etc. Upon completion of such reviews, the noted changes, additions, and deletions are entered into a computerized Space Control Program.

Analysis and findings

Series and title determination

The Engineering Drafting, GS-818, series covers positions like the appellant's, which involve primarily portraying engineering and architectural ideas and information through drawings. The positions require a practical knowledge of drafting methods and procedures, and skill in the application of drafting techniques.

The prescribed title for nonsupervisory positions in the GS-818 series is *Engineering Draftsman*.

Grade determination

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) *Engineering Drafting Series, GS-818*, standard, dated April 1971, is written in narrative format. This format uses two broad criteria that provide the basis for classifying positions. They are the nature of assignment and level of responsibility for each grade covered by the standard.

The appellant raises issue with the level of responsibility due to the high degree of independence he is allowed to operate within and also the level of skills and knowledge needed to accomplish his assignments. Accordingly, this decision details our analysis of both factors.

Nature of Assignment

This criteria reflects the skill and knowledge required to complete drafting assignments. This includes the following elements: complexity of the design, techniques utilized, and visual information from which draftsmen prepare drawings.

As the sole CAD Draftsman in his section, the appellant prepares engineering drawings for the maintenance, repair, alteration, modernization, and new construction projects concerned with the Medical Center. Drawings include roadways, grounds, structures, buildings, utilities, distribution systems, building service equipment systems, operations equipment, medical/laboratory equipment, and furnishings. The types of drawings range from simple designs involving mostly straight lines, arcs and circles to more complex types involving irregular and reverse curves, crowded and hidden details, three-dimensional drawings, and CAD-generated presentations. The appellant develops as-built drawings of existing structures, systems, roadways, etc., utilizing CAD software programs. He also prepares drawings, layouts, plans, and programmed slide shows required or for the use of the project engineers, as requested.

Typical assignments at the GS-6 level include preparing drawings that serve a variety of purposes: fabrication and construction; repair, maintenance and installation; reports and publications; feasibility studies; and displays. GS-6 draftsmen use the full range of drafting techniques, including three-dimensional projections. They exercise considerable versatility in preparing drawings of such breadth and variety. Other GS-6 draftsmen are assigned projects where directly applicable precedents are not available, and they instead apply more general precedents and technical guidelines to the project. In this instance the draftsman must rely on experience and utilize a practical knowledge of the engineering or architectural specializations required.

GS-7 draftsmen are senior draftsmen whose assignments are distinguished from those accomplished by the GS-6 by their originality, scope and/or complexity. GS-7 draftsmen apply initiative and resourcefulness in independently planning the methods by which to portray original designs of complexity and variety. They use the full range of projection techniques to portray unusual or complex designs, and utilize their substantial experience in the field and use appropriate technical guidelines to resolve problems. They may prepare layouts that require a high degree of precision and are used by

designers to check tolerances, clearances, and dimensions on newly designed equipment where problems are anticipated or have been discovered in the manufacturing, assembly, or operation of the equipment.

The appellant's work does not meet the GS-7 level as described in the standard for this factor. GS-7 level work includes developing or preparing designs for unusually difficult drafting assignments distinguished from the GS-6 level by their originality, scope, and/or complexity. There is no indication that the appellant performs work of such a level of complexity. The appellant's work is concerned with existing buildings, structures, facilities, utilities and utility systems, and equipment. Where the work concerns new, rather than as-built drawings, it is almost exclusively concerned with maintenance, repair, alteration, modernization, and minor new construction, engineering projects which very seldom result in the original, broad scoped, or complex assignments described at the GS-7 level in the standard. The appellant may utilize the full range of projection techniques extant; however, they are not utilized to portray unusual and complex designs. By way of illustration, the standard describes a GS-7 level draftsman as one whose designs involve crowded features, irregular shapes, multiple functional relationships, and requirements for achieving extremely precise positional relationships between components such as required to plan and prepare drawings of new avionics and fire control systems. The position meets but does not exceed the criteria for the GS-6 level for this factor.

Level of Responsibility

This criteria is measured in terms of: supervision received, guidelines and precedents utilized, and person-to-person contacts.

The appellant receives administrative supervision from the [Name] Section Manager. Assignments are given by the [Name] Section Manager and/or Engineering Technician in terms of objectives and purpose. The appellant independently analyzes problems and plans approaches and solutions based on his/her technical knowledge and experience working on his/her own initiative. Drawings are reviewed by the [Name] Section Manager and/or Engineering Technician to determine if they clearly delineate the desired objective. New and significantly changed work aspects on projects will be intensively reviewed for technical accuracy; recurring aspects are subject only to occasional spot checks. The appellant conducts field surveys when necessary, and contacts engineers, project managers or the director when necessary to obtain or clarify technical information which may have an impact on the drawings.

The appellant's position meets the GS-6 level for this factor. As at the GS-6 level, technical drafting supervision is usually available in the person of the supervisor, an engineer or an engineering technician. Instructions are given in terms of objectives and purpose, and the employee is expected to independently plan and accomplish assignments based on technical knowledge, experience, and guidelines available. The [Name] Section Manager or Engineering Technician reviews completed assignments for meeting assignment objectives. New or significantly changed work is closely reviewed while recurring type assignments receive only cursory review. Consistent with the GS-6 level the appellant uses a large number and variety of technical guidelines and directives in addition to precedent projects in accomplishing the work and contacts whoever is necessary to obtain information or clarify issues.

The level of responsibility described at the GS-7 level in the standard exceeds the level described in the appellant's position. At the GS-7 level, draftsmen receive their assignments in terms of objectives. They plan, develop, and execute their work with little or no supervisory assistance. Guides and precedents are not directly applicable. Therefore, draftsmen at this level exercise judgment in selecting, rejecting, and interpreting data based upon their knowledge of design intent, experience in the particular area of specialization, and the various uses that will be made of the completed drawings. They are relied upon to select, interpret, and apply technical guidelines in situations where precedent drawings are not applicable. GS-7 draftsmen are also normally recognized as experts in their field.

In a match to the GS-6 level in the standard, the appellant's drawings are reviewed by the [Name] Section Manager or an Engineering Technician within the section for success in meeting objectives. While routine work receives only occasional spot checks, new and significantly changed work projects are closely reviewed. This level of supervision does not meet the intent of GS-7 where draftsmen develop and execute their own work, and where all work is normally reviewed only for achievement of objectives. The appellant utilizes both precedents and a significant number and variety of guidelines. However, because of the routine nature of most assignments and the technical support available for new work, he does not exercise the independent judgment in selecting, rejecting, interpreting and applying technical guidelines as described at the GS-7 level. Therefore, the appellant's position equates to GS-6 for level of responsibility.

Decision

Both factors meet the GS-6 level of the standard. The position is properly classified as Engineering Draftsman, GS-818-6.