

**U.S. Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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EMS TRANSMISSION

Information Bulletin No. HR-2000-027

To: All Servicing Personnel Officers

From: Director, National Human Resources Management Center

Subject: Classification Appeal Decision - Engineering Training Coordinator, GS-801-13

Attached is a Bureau of Land Management Classification Appeal Decision. The Decision results in the reclassification of an Engineering Training Coordinator, GS-801-12, to an Engineering Training Coordinator, GS-801-13.

It is requested that you compare this Decision with similar or like positions within your serviced area and make any necessary adjustments.

The Point of Contact pertaining to this Decision is Mark Whitesell, 303-236-6702.

Signed by:
Linda D. Sedbrook
Director

Authenticated by:
Darlene Robitaille
Secretary

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**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION**

Appellant: XXXXXX XXXXXX

Location: XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXX (XXX), XXXXXXXX of XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXX
XXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXX

Current Classification: Engineering Training Coordinator, GS-801-12

Background: The XXX serves the Bureau and other Federal agencies by providing a variety of professional, technical, managerial, and administrative training. The center is responsible for performance assessments to identify training needs, curriculum, and instructional design, training material development, and in-depth evaluation and validation of courses presented. In addition to developing and contracting for courses that are taught at the facility or at other centralized locations, XXX develops and produces packaged courses and training modules for use at decentralized field locations.

This position was one of several XXX positions recently reviewed to determine the accuracy of title, series and grades. The classification decision is dated November 4, 1998 and sustains the position's title, series and grade as Engineering Training Coordinator, GS-801-12. Organizationally, the appellant's position is identified as "Engineering/Cadastral." No changes were made to the position description (PD) of record, which is dated April 15, 1992.

The appellant has appealed the 1998 decision and has requested that his position be reevaluated to a GS-13 grade level. He advises that he may have failed to understand the significance of his duties and their relationship to percentages of time required to perform the work. He states that 90% of his training requests are handled without requiring new design. However, that work uses only about 10% of his working time, while the remaining 10% of his work takes 90% of his time. He states that about 60% of his time is used in creating new material.

A telephone audit was performed with the appellant August 23, 1999, with follow-up interviews September 5 and 29. Telephone audits were conducted with his supervisor, XXXXXXX XXXX on September 5, and XXXXXX XXXXX, XXXXX XXXXXXX on September 13, 1999. On September 28, XXXXXX XXXXXXX of the Servicing Personnel Office provided background information on the XXX and appellant's position.

Recent organization charts show 16 positions in the Division of Minerals, Realty and Resource Protection, XXXXXX, supervised by a Supervisory Geologist, GS-1350-14. It is divided into two groups, Realty & Resource Protection and Minerals, each having a group leader at the GS-13 grade level. The appellant is assigned to Realty & Resource Protection. That group lists eight

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positions. Grades of the positions are GS-12 (two) and GS-13 (three), and two vacant assistant/technician positions. In addition there is one vacant instructional specialist position.

The charts show the Minerals group with seven positions, the grades of which are GS-14 (two); GS-13 (four); and a training technician.

References: Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work, TS-90, March 1989; Civil Engineering Series, GS-810, TS-54 December 1964 and TS-62 June 1966; Engineering Group, GS-800, TS-95, March 1990; General Grade-Evaluation Guide for Nonsupervisory Professional Engineering Positions, GS-800, TS-6, June 1971.

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DECISION

Determination of Series and Title: Positions assigned to GS-801 (General) series include those whose duties are to advise on, administer, supervise, or perform research or other professional and scientific work of a special or miscellaneous character which is not specifically classifiable in any other engineering series... or professional work in several branches of engineering. The appellant's position was assigned to the GS-801 professional general engineering series because it requires a primary knowledge of professional engineering, as well as duties directly related to those performed by training coordinators. The 801 Series is therefore still the most appropriate series in which to classify this position.

A constructed title of Engineering Training Coordinator is utilized as this best describes the nature of the work performed.

Determination of Grade: The Grade Level Guide for Instructional Work provides criteria for determining the grade level of a nonsupervisory instructor (Part I) and an instruction specialist (Part II) work that is performed in a wide range of education and training programs operated by Federal agencies. Part I covers positions whose primary duty is instructor work; that is preparing daily work plans, training in traditional classroom situations or in self-learning programs, and evaluation on the progress of students. Part II covers positions that are not primarily instructors, but rather positions that include such duties as having to ascertain needs for training and education; determines the objectives and scope of courses; develops, revises or adapts courses and instructor material; and evaluates education and program's recommending changes and improvements.

Since the primary purpose of the appellant's position is to provide training coordination duties, Part II best describes the work of the position and is the appropriate guide to use in assigning a grade. In addition, for consistency purposes, Bureau guidance recommends the use of this guide to assign grades to NTC training positions.

Criteria developed to assign grades are the two broad classification factors of nature of assignment and level of responsibility.

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Nature of Assignment: This factor encompasses such aspects as the knowledge, skill, and ability required to perform the work, and the complexity and difficulty of the duties and responsibilities assigned.

At the GS-12 grade, the guide describes employees who establish instructional design, development, or evaluative criteria through the analysis of educational or instructional problems or questions. Assignments may be in a functional specialty area of education and training, in a subject-matter area, or may involve a grouping of courses. The work at this grade level is characterized by complicating factors, such as changing situations or educational developments in the field which outdate established guideline material, or the need to pull together two different but partially related field which requires the employee to have knowledge of more than one field. Employees at this level often deal with controversial, unconventional, or novel matters. They frequently are required to make substantial adaptations or extensions of available guides and established procedures, or in some instances, develop new approaches, methods, or technical for specific applications.

At the GS-13 grade, the guide describes instructional specialists as recognized authoritative consultants who plan and develop experimental programs, evaluate results, and use the findings in planning, developing and installing new or modified programs. These assignments often involve program innovations or modifications, which result in the need to provide training to staff who will be using the new programs or product. They troubleshoot, frequently providing problem-solving assistance to, technical review and leadership over other facets of and agencies' education and training organization. Employees at this level resolve matters which are often controversial, complicated, or set general precedent; involve coordinating, negotiating matters of considerable consequence; or affect prominent and fundamental policy issues in the subject-matter field. Assignments typically require the development and application of new program methods, approaches, and technology. The employee's conclusions, recommendations, or determinations may result in setting official policy or obligating substantial program resources.

At the GS-14 grade, the guide describes instructional specialists who typically provide leadership, advice, and guidance throughout their organizations and serve in key staff positions, such as a specialist at the agency level, or in a generalist capacity as top educator in a technical service school. They anticipate changes or new developments in the technology or in the educational field affecting changes in their specialty areas and program operations. They develop advance plans to insure timely introduction of new or revised procedures, techniques, or operation concepts into the training program, and design instruments to measure their effectiveness.

The appellant is a professionally licensed engineer. He is the XXX engineering specialist and in fact, is the only engineer on staff. His primary work assignment is to coordinate civil engineering and to a lesser degree mechanical and electrical training courses. Classroom instruction takes up about 10 percent of his time. His course work includes "train the trainer" classes. He conducts needs' assessments, designs courses, develops course material, conducts

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course validations, etc. The courses are varied from technical courses developed for high school graduates in technical positions to advanced courses for engineering students and graduate engineers. His experience with colleges and schools include Wayne State University (hazardous waste), Wisconsin University (construction and construction management), and the University of Arizona (U of A).

The appellant was a member of the group that designed the cadastral survey course, "Advanced Rectangular Coordinate System (ARCS)." Once completed, the course was turned over to the cadastral training coordinator. That position is identified above which was vacated about two months ago and is being rewritten and recruited, and the appellant was reassigned the cadastral work on an interim basis. The appellant successfully worked with the U of A to provide continuing education credit for employees completing the ARCS course. He is currently working with the university system to provide continuing education units to licensed engineers that will meet the 15-hour requirement to maintain their licenses. The courses will also be available for undergraduate, and graduate credit to assist in completing the courses needed to become a licensed engineer. Because of the limited number of licensed engineers, the appellant is assigned the task of developing/ designing/contracting/etc. courses that would assist with efforts to increase the number of government employed licensed engineers.

The appellant is also a law school graduate. With this background, his assignments have included developing and teaching (minerals and hydrology) adjudication courses. The courses are designed in courtroom setting, provides hands on training to employees on the various aspects of legal proceedings and in particular what to expect as a witness, and also what is expected of expert witnesses. Other courses include cadastral survey courses on the foundations of land tenure, minerals' technical reporting and legal aspects of hazardous waste.

Due to his unique background and according to his supervisor, the appellant "is one of three troubleshooters on the XXXXX staff who gets assigned the hard projects, the unusual problems, and the last minute projects that requires immediate implementation and/or attention" and any special projects commensurate with his background.

Although the appellant performs some generalist works that are typical of the GS-12 grade, it is readily apparent that he possesses, and his supervisors utilize, the necessary special in depth subject matter expertise that would be typically found at the GS-13 grade. The appellant functions as the XXX's authoritative consultant in the Bureau's engineering program.

The position does not meet the requirements of the GS-14 grade. The appellant is not a top educator of the school and does not serve in a key staff position at the Bureau or Department level. The course work he is assigned does not typically involve multiple changes or new developments that need new or revised techniques or operational concepts to be introduced into the training program.

Level of Responsibility: This factor includes such things as freedom to make independent

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decisions; the extent to which guidelines for the work is available or must be developed; and the kinds of contacts required to perform the work.

At the GS-12 grade, the guide describes assignments made on a project or continuing basis; or they may be self-initiated on an apparent need basis in which case the supervisor is consulted for approval. The employee is expected to perform services, develop products and take actions that are technically sound and valid. Supervisory review of the completed work is primarily to

determine general effectiveness and consistency with educational philosophy and objectives of the program and with policies of the organization. The work affects a considerable number and variety of users such as elementary and secondary schools of a geographic area, instructors in a technical service school that has various levels of complexity or students in large numbers of schools.

At the GS-13 grade, the guide describes specialists that are required to typically ascertain the need for and generate surveys and studies. Supervisory review of initial plans is to primarily assess priorities, the feasibility of program and project proposals, and available budget and other resources. Employees at this level independently carry projects through to their conclusions and completed work products are relied upon for soundness, accuracy and adequacy of technical detail, and are normally not reviewed for such purposes. Review of work performance at this level is primarily for accomplishment of project and program objectives; for consistency with agency policies, philosophy, and goals; and of the quality of contributions to education and training programs. Also at this level, employees are expected to establish and maintain professional contacts with leading practitioners; researchers, and others in education and training institutions, research organizations, and industry. Work projects have a significant impact on a broad segment of the staff or student body. Products typically change the training content or the education and training techniques and methods used in teaching of certain subjects to specific segments of the student population. For example, the specialist serves a consultant and troubleshooter in a major service school on the most difficult training and developmental design problems.

At the GS-14 grade, the guide describes specialists that generate most of their own work and independently plan, organize, and carry out their studies. Their plans and proposals for major changes and/or new projects and programs are reviewed for priority, budget limitations, and for consistency with the broad objectives and policies of the organization. Review of completed work is to assess degree of success in accomplishing objectives and the work has broad impact on a large number of education and training staff and students, usually in a service wide technical training program or in an agency's entire education and training program.

The appellant's responsibilities meet Grade 13. As the only professionally licensed engineer on the XXX staff, he troubleshoots all training and developmental design problems from the technical to graduate level and developmental design problems, as well as any legal aspects having to do with his particular area of expertise. He determines the effectiveness and consistency with the educational philosophy of the Bureau (and other government

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bureaus/departments) and for the accomplishment of their engineering program goals. As discussed above, he works with various college/universities to develop and approve accreditation of college level courses.

He is a member of the DOI Facility Maintenance Training Coordinating Committee. This group determines when new training courses are needed, when existing courses require updating due to changes in policy at both the professional engineering and departmental administrative levels, and courses that may be justified if the combined bureaus offer the course. As a member of the

BLM Engineering Assistance Team (EAT), the appellant attends meetings 2-3 times per year with the various State Office civil engineering staffs to discuss any new and/or changes made in the field and determines whether new/changes in training offered are necessary. As the only licensed engineer on XXX staff, the appellant reviews all engineering policy statements prior to distribution to the field.

The level of responsibility exceeds the GS-12 grade due to the specialized level of expertise of the appellant's authoritative consultation and his troubleshooters' designation. However, it does not meet Grade 14, which requires that the appellant regularly work with major changes and/or new projects and programs. His work does not have broad impact on the agency's training programs.

Summary: This position meets the GS-13 grade level and meets the criteria for assignment to the GS-801 Series.

Conclusion: Engineering Training Coordinator, GS-801-13

Interviews conducted and evaluation prepared by Shirley A. Girard

Mark W. Whitesell
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