

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that classification appeals be submitted in writing within 20 days of receipt of the decision letter and include copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the job specification for Secretarial Assistant 1 (Non-Stenographic) states:

May be assigned as a secretary to deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners or division directors or their organizational equivalents, superintendents or chief administrators of institutions, or vice presidents of State colleges; does other related work as required.

The definition section of the job specification for Administrative Assistant 1 states:

Assists an Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, or other executive officer in a State department, institution, or agency by performing and coordinating administrative support services; does other related duties.

It is long-standing policy that upon review of a request for position classification, when it is found that the majority of an incumbent's duties and responsibilities are related to the examples of work found in a particular job specification, that title is deemed the appropriate title for the position. In this regard, it is noted that titles are categorized as professional, para-professional or non-professional. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.5(a)1 states that professional titles require at least a Bachelor's or higher level degree, with or without a clause to substitute experience. Professional work is predominantly intellectual and character, as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work, and it involves the consistent exercise of judgment. It is basically interpretive, evaluative, analytical and/or creative, requiring knowledge or expertise in a specialized field of knowledge. This is generally acquired by a course of intellectual or technical instruction, study and/or research at an institution of higher learning or acquired through an in-depth grasp of cumulative experience. However, there must be thorough familiarity with all the information, theories and assumptions implicit in the chosen field. Persons in professional work should be able to perceive, evaluate, analyze, formulate hypothesis, and think in the abstract. Positions are considered professional when the work requires *application* of professional knowledge and abilities, as

distinguished from either the desirability of such application or the simple possession of professional knowledge and abilities.

An incumbent Administrative Assistant acts as a principal assistant to a manager or executive on administrative matters, relieving the supervisor of details related to the internal operation of the unit. The Administrative Assistant title series is professional, requiring a Bachelor's degree, and is not a "super-clerical" or para-professional title. The focus of the duties of an Administrative Assistant are performing and coordinating administrative support services. This includes acting as a liaison with personnel, accounting, purchasing and, assisting in the preparation of the budget, coordinating fiscal procedures and personnel activities, making sure that expenditures are in accordance with the allocation of funds, keeping current with personnel policies, conducting interviews, implementing and planning organizational changes, coordinating maintenance and repairs, investigating administrative or operational problems, and coordinating office operations such as office space and office equipment. What separates the Administrative Assistant from the Secretarial Assistant is the more comprehensive analysis of unit operational needs performed by the Administrative Assistant, including the preparation of the administrative aspects of the annual budget, coordination of fiscal and personnel procedures, and the investigation of administrative or operational problems. The Secretarial Assistant performs a variety of support functions requiring the utilization of base level analytical skills where some independent judgment is required.

The outcome of position classification is not to provide a career path to the incumbents, but rather is to ensure that the position is classified in the most appropriate title available within the state's classification plan. *See In the Matter of Patricia Lightsey* (MSB, decided June 8, 2005), *aff'd on reconsideration* (MSB, decided November 22, 2005). Further, how well or efficiently an employee does his or her job, their length of service, and their qualifications have no effect on the classification of a position currently occupied, as *positions*, not employees, are classified. Also, the fact that some of an employee's assigned duties may compare favorably with some examples of work found in a given job specification is not determinative for classification purposes, since, by nature, examples of work are utilized for illustrative purposes only. Moreover, it is not uncommon for an employee to perform some duties which are above or below the level of work which is ordinarily performed. Typically, classification determinations list only those duties which are considered to be the primary focus of an employee's duties and responsibilities that are performed on a regular, recurring basis. *See In the Matter of David Baldasari* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided August 22, 2006). Also, the classification of a position is determined based on the duties and responsibilities assigned to a position at the time the request for reclassification is received by Agency Services as verified by audit or other formal study. Duties performed in the past, or expected to be performed in the future are not considered.

A review of the duties of the appellant's position indicates that they most closely match the job description for Secretarial Assistant 1 (Non-Stenographic). A review of the appellant's Position Classification Questionnaire indicates that the majority of her work is secretarial in nature. Her first duty, performed 25% of the time, was to maintain an Assistant Commissioner's schedule and ensure that he has appropriate paperwork, reports, and documentation required for meetings, conferences and reviews. The appellant maintains that this is out-of-title Administrative Assistant 1 work. However, maintaining a schedule and ensuring that an executive is prepared with appropriate documentation is not professional work. The appellant also worked on "letters reports and mail;" maintained schedules and prepared letters; screened phone calls; maintained office supplies; downloaded monthly overseas telephone bills and generated reports; tracked, copied and distributed documents using the tracking system; performed data entry of voucher information and tuition requests; forwarded documentation with a forwarding letter; and maintained files. A review of these duties indicates that the appellant is not *primarily* performing the professional duties required of an Administrative Assistant 1, who coordinates support services to insure the availability and efficient use of resources needed to accomplish the goals of the unit. Her tasks are not at a professional level which would warrant a higher title, and she primarily provides essential secretarial and clerical support services consistent with the title of Secretarial Assistant 1 (Non-Stenographic).

Accordingly, a thorough review of the entire record fails to establish that Lisa Flagg has presented a sufficient basis to warrant an Administrative Assistant 1 classification of her position.

ORDER

Therefore, the position of Lisa Flagg is properly classified as a Secretarial Assistant 1 (Non-Stenographic).

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 23rd DAY OF OCTOBER, 2019



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