BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

HELEN DECOTO, Appellant, v. DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY, Respondent.	)	Case No. ALLO-00-0006 ORDER OF THE BOARD FOLLOWING HEARING ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Appeals Board, WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair, and LEANA D. LAMB, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the Director's determination dated March 24, 2000. The hearing was held on July 27, 2000, in the Personnel Appeals Board hearing room in Olympia, Washington. GERALD L. MORGEN, Vice Chair, did not participate in the hearing or in the decision in this matter.

Appearances. Appellant Helen Decoto was present and was represented by Robert Chauvin, Area Representative for the Washington Federation of State Employees. Respondent Department of Ecology was represented by Jan Bacon, Human Resource Consultant, and Gary Yurkas, Department of Personnel (DOP) Classification and Pay Analyst.

Background. As a result of a class study, the Washington State Personnel Resources Board adopted revisions to the general government clerical classes and Appellant's Word Processing Specialist position was reallocated to the Office Assistant Senior classification. Appellant was notified of the reallocation of her position by letter dated October 20, 1999 from Gary Yurkas.

On November 17, 1999, Appellant appealed to the Director of the Department of Personnel (DOP). In her letter of appeal, Appellant requested that her position be reallocated to the Publications Specialist classification.

On March 20, 2000, the DOP Director's designee, Paul Peterson, conducted an allocation review of Appellant's position and by letter dated March 24, 2000, he determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the Office Assistant Senior classification. On April 10, 2000, Appellant filed timely exceptions to the Director's determination with the Personnel Appeals Board. Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.

Summary of Appellant's Argument. Appellant argues that the primary duties and responsibilities of her position involve compiling and editing draft Reports of the Referee for the Yakima River Basin Adjudication for federal, state and tribal agencies. Appellant contends these duties meet the definition of the Publications Specialist classification. Appellant states that her supervisor, Douglas Clausing, is the referee and he is responsible for the content of the reports while she is responsible for compiling, formatting and grammatical editing of the reports. Appellant contends that she does not answer the phone, take messages or open mail as regular assignments and that at the most, her office support duties compromise 25 percent of her time. Appellant maintains that the focus of her position is compiling reports and that her position is best described by the Publications Specialist classification.

Summary of Respondent's Argument. Respondent acknowledges that Appellant's duties are demanding and that she produces quality reports. However, Respondent contends that the preponderance of Appellant's duties do not meet the intent of the Publications Specialist classification. Respondent asserts that incumbents in the Publications Specialist classification integrate a variety of original draft materials into a variety of publications, design and integrate graphics with text, edit text for clarity of expression and continuity of writing style, write text as

directed, and produce final documents. Respondent asserts that the repetitive nature of Appellant's duties are best described as office support duties such as keyboarding, proofreading for grammar, spelling and punctuation, and incorporating materials into a standard format. Respondent contends that Appellant's position is best described by the Office Assistant Senior classification.

Primary Issue. Whether the Director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated to the Office Assistant Senior classification should be affirmed.

Relevant Classifications. Office Assistant Senior, class code 01011, and Publications Specialist, class code 01300.

Decision of the Board. The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by employees in similar positions. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class which best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

The Publications Specialist classification is intended to encompass positions that do initial editing of text from various sources for style, grammar, punctuation, continuity and clarity of expression and then produce publications, presentation materials, reports and/or articles. Appellant edits reports that are drafted by her supervisor for grammar and punctuation. Appellant then produces the final reports which her supervisor approves prior to distribution. Appellant's position does not have the scope, breadth or level of responsibility intended to be encompassed by the Publications Specialist classification.

The Office Assistant Senior classification is intended to encompass positions that perform a wide variety of complex clerical duties including preparing, compiling, and keyboarding reports. In addition, positions in this classification proofread material to correct sentence structure, spelling, grammar and punctuation requiring the utilization of specialized knowledge and judgment in the selection and treatment of information and format. This classification describes the scope of Appellant's responsibilities and the work she does to produce Reports of the Referee for the Yakima River Basin Adjudication. Although Appellant does not perform the wide variety of clerical duties envisioned by this classification, the overall scope and level of responsibilities of her position fall within the description of duties encompassed by the class. Therefore, on a best fit basis, Appellant's position is properly allocated to the Office Assistant Senior classification.

Conclusion. The appeal on exceptions by Appellant should be denied and the Director's determination dated March 24, 2000, should be affirmed and adopted.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Appellant is denied and the Director's determination dated March 24, 2000, is affirmed and adopted. A copy is attached.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2000.

WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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Walter T. Hubbard, Chair

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Leana D. Lamb, Member

Personnel Appeals Board
2828 Capitol Boulevard
Olympia, Washington 98504