BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

CAROL CONLEY, Appellant, v. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES, Respondent.	Case No. ALLO-99-0032 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, GERALD L. MORGEN, Vice Chair, and LEANA D. LAMB, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the Director's determination dated October 27, 1999. The hearing was held on March 7, 2000, in the Personnel Appeals Board hearing room in Olympia, Washington. WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair, did not participate in the hearing or in the decision in this matter.

Appearances. Appellant Carol Conley was present and appeared *pro se*. Respondent Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) was represented by Sandy LaPalm, Classification Analyst, and Helen Thurston, Human Resource Consultant.

Background. As a result of a class study, the Washington State Personnel Resources Board adopted revisions to the general government human resource class series. As a result of those revisions, Appellant's position was reviewed and her position was allocated to the Office Assistant Senior classification. Appellant's duties were reviewed a second time and her allocation was corrected to the Office Assistant Lead classification.

Appellant appealed to the Director of the Department of Personnel. The Director's designee, Mary Ann Parsons, conducted an allocation review of Appellant's position. By letter dated October 27,

1999, Ms. Parsons determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated. On November 9, 1999, Appellant filed timely exceptions to the Director's determination with the Personnel Appeals Board. Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.

In summary, Appellant disagrees with the Director's determination and asserts that the Director's designee failed to acknowledge the importance of her audit function in determining the correct allocation of her position.

Respondent has a combined personnel and payroll department. At the direction of the State Auditor, Respondent established a system for auditing personnel/payroll source documents. The auditing system is not directly involved in daily personnel/payroll transactions. Appellant is responsible for administering this auditing system.

Preliminary Matter. At the outset of the hearing on Appellant's exceptions, Appellant requested that her hearing be postponed due to her lack of representation. Respondent did not oppose Appellant's request. The Board considered the arguments of the parties and denied Appellant's request. The Board stated that Appellant's request did not comply with the notice requirement in WAC 358-30-040, that she failed to show that her request was the result of an unforeseen circumstance, that no representative had entered a notice of appearance on Appellant's behalf and that because Appellant was not represented at the Director's level, any representative who appeared before the Board would have a limited ability to respond to the Director's determination.

Summary of Appellant's Argument. Appellant argues that prior to the human resource class study, her position was allocated to the Human Resource Assistant classification and that her position has not changed. Therefore, Appellant contends that her position should remain allocated to a class in the human resource class series. Appellant asserts that her position should be reallocated to the Human Resource Consultant Assistant classification because she audits personnel/payroll actions, interprets policies and rules related to payroll actions, explains policies,

procedures and programs to employees, staff and others; assists individuals with the application process, personnel actions, benefits, etc., and maintains confidential records. Appellant asserts that the auditing function comprises 70 percent of her job. In addition, she sits at the front desk of the office and answers the telephone.

Summary of Respondent's Argument. Respondent argues that Appellant's duties are best described by the Office Assistant Lead classification. Respondent contends that the focus of Appellant's position is to ensure that source documents match the information that has been input into the computer, however, she is not responsible for computer input. Respondent further contends that Appellant advises others on the routine, proceduralized audit function, however, she does not interact with managers or interpret WACs to advise managers at the level anticipated by the human resource classifications. Respondent further argues that Appellant does not provide technical personnel advice and guidance on the hiring, recruitment, or classification processes and that she does not compute salaries as anticipated by the human resource classifications.

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

Relevant Classifications. Office Assistant Lead, class code 01012; and Human Resource Consultant Assistant; class code 19101.

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 definition and distinguishing characteristics for the Office Assistant Lead classification describe positions that lead office support staff and in addition, perform a variety of complex clerical duties that require interpreting rules, regulations, policies and procedures, following established procedures, devising work methods, and working within established parameters. In part, this classification also encompasses positions that review documents for completeness, accuracy and compliance with rules; exercise delegated approval authority for financial payments; and prepare and assist in the preparation, compilation, and coordination of reports and records such as payroll and personnel records. Appellant's position meets the intent of the Office Assistant Lead classification.

The definition and distinguishing characteristics for the Human Resource Consultant Assistant classification describes positions that perform paraprofessional or technical human resource duties utilizing established guidelines, specialized knowledge and independent judgment. In addition, positions at this level interpret and apply established human resource rules, policies, regulations and procedures. Providing general office support is not the primary function of these positions. Paraprofessional or technical responsibilities are described as: "interpreting rules and policies to direct payroll actions, explaining human resource policies, procedures, and programs to employees, managers, the public and others; providing technical assistance to support the professional responsibilities [performed by human resource professionals]; providing guidance to others in registering or applying for human resource programs, completing requests for personnel actions, benefits, etc.; providing training or orientation in area of responsibility; maintaining confidential records and generating reports." Appellant does not spend a majority of her time performing paraprofessional human resource duties. The focus of her position is to audit the personnel and payroll actions taken by others. In addition, the scope of Appellants' duties and responsibilities do

not meet the level of duties and responsibilities encompassed by the Human Resource Consultant Assistant classification.

In conclusion, we find that the scope, breadth, and level of responsibilities of Appellant's position are best described by the Office Assistant Lead classification.

Conclusion. The appeal on exceptions by Appellant should be denied and the Director's determination dated October 27, 1999, 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 October 27, 1999, is affirmed and adopted. A copy is attached.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2000.

WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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Gerald L. Morgen, Vice Chair

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Leana D. Lamb, Member