

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 511- 3

SUBJECT: Departmental Policy for Filling Vacant or Establishing New Secretary Positions for Senior Career Management Officials.

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is issuing these instructions under its authority for oversight and evaluation in the area of human resources management. OHRM review and evaluation of classification practices pertaining to the secretarial occupation disclosed a need for specific Departmental guidance. Future evaluations and reviews will result in more specific Departmental guidance for other occupations and other human resources management activities.

This Bulletin contains the Department's instructions for determining grade levels when filling vacant or establishing new secretary positions for senior career management officials.

This instruction also applies to determining grade levels when classifying principal secretarial or clerical support positions to career deputies of Subcabinet Officials and other political appointees.

These instructions govern any Secretary position vacated or otherwise newly established subsequent to the date of this Bulletin.

Lawrence Wachs
Acting Director

Attachment

INQUIRIES: Compensation and Employment Division, Curt Dahlke

(202) 720-4963, Room 314- W, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building

DISTRIBUTION: All DPM Holders

EXPIRATION DATE: December 31,2005

**DETERMINING GRADE LEVELS FOR SECRETARY
POSITIONS
FOR SENIOR CAREER MANAGEMENT
OFFICIALS**

I. Purpose

To establish a sound and consistent approach to the classification of secretarial or clerical support positions to the department's senior career management officials.

II. Department Policies

A. Title and Series

Positions serving as secretarial or clerical support to one of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) senior career management officials will be titled "Secretary" and placed in the GS-3IS Series.

For the purposes of this bulletin, USDA senior career management officials are defined as career Agency Heads and career Deputies of Subcabinet Officials and other political appointees. Secretarial or clerical support duties are defined as duties requiring a knowledge of clerical and administrative procedures and requirements, various office skills, and the ability to apply such skills in a way that increases the effectiveness of others (i.e.: USDA senior career management officials). These duties include responsibility for carrying out and coordinating all the clerical and day-to-day secretarial activities which are typically required to accomplish the work of the organization.

"Confidential Assistant", "Executive Assistant", or "Special Assistant" are titles reserved for use with Schedule "C" positions that provide principal support to political appointees and should not be used to refer to positions covered by this Bulletin.

B. Grade Determination

Secretary positions for USDA senior career management officials must be graded according to the criteria contained in the position classification standard for the Secretary Series, GS-3IS. No other standard or criteria may be used for grade level determinations unless prior written approval has been granted by the Director, Compensation and Employment Division, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). If the support position includes responsibilities that extend beyond the GS-3IS series, the position will be classified in the appropriate series and graded accordingly.

Using OPM standards for Secretary positions, the Secretary position in the office of a career Agency Head may be classified no higher than the GS-10 level. Like positions for a Deputy to one of these positions or a career deputy of a Subcabinet Official or other political appointee may be classified no higher than the GS-9 level.

C. Accountability

If incumbered positions are misclassified, managers should make every effort to reassign incumbent employees to properly graded positions for which they qualify,

When misclassified positions are vacated, they must be reclassified to the correct title, series and grade in accordance with paragraphs A and B of this Bulletin.