



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Elizabeth Weeast,  
Department of Law and Public Safety

CSC Docket No. 2018-32

Classification Appeal

ISSUED: August 21, 2017 (RE)

Elizabeth Weeast appeals the attached determination of the Division of Agency Services (DAS) that her position with the Department of Law and Public Safety is properly classified as Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic. The appellant seeks an Administrative Assistant 3 classification in this proceeding

Ms. Weeast received a regular appointment to the title Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic on July 18, 1995. She requested a classification review of her position, as she believed that she was working out-of-title. This position is located in the Division of State Police /Investigations Section, and does not have supervisory responsibilities. The appellant is supervised by a Captain. DAS performed a detailed analysis of the appellant's Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ) and other materials submitted, and determined that her position was properly classified as Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic, the title to which she is regularly appointed.

On appeal, Ms. Weeast argues that she performs the work of an Administrative Assistant 3, and she copied examples of work from the job specification for the requested title as examples of her work. Additionally, she states that her position has evolved with the introduction of technology, the complexity of her workload has increased, processing travel requests and voucher reimbursements are time consuming and complex, researching and compiling information is complex, she works under time constraints, and that there has been a large turnover of Captains who are functioning as of Bureau Chiefs. Lastly, she

states that other individuals are in the titles Administrative Assistant 3 and Management Assistant and work for a Captain or a Lieutenant.

### CONCLUSION

The definition section of the job specification for Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic states:

May be assigned as a secretary to Assistant Division Directors, Bureau Chiefs, or their organizational equivalents; does other related duties.

The definition section of the job specification for Administrative Assistant 3 states:

Assists the head of a Bureau or Service in a State department, institution, or agency by performing and coordinating administrative support services; does other related work.

A review of the duties of Ms. Weeast's position indicates that they most closely match the job description for Secretarial Assistant 3, Non-Stenographic. 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. In addition, 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 that are above or below the level of work that is ordinarily performed.

Further, 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 in 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 hypotheses, 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.

The Administrative Assistant 3 title 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. The duties performed by the appellant are not commensurate with the duties of the requested title.

As to the duties provided on appeal, simply quoting the duties contained in the job specification is not a sufficient basis on which to determine if a candidate's *specific* duties would qualify the position to be reclassified. The appellant's PCQ indicates that, for 35% of her time, she performs document processing, responds to correspondence, completes section requests, makes recommendations and implements changes on procedures and policies as necessary. For 25% of the time, she receives, reviews, sorts and routes mail, calls, information, and requests, coordinate as maintenance and repairs on computers, printers and office equipment, and maintains a bureau calendar. She also indicated that she investigates administrative problems and provides solutions. Nevertheless, auditees are expected to unambiguously list their duties and, according to the instructions, do so in a manner "so clear that persons unfamiliar with the work can understand exactly what is done." Phrases such as "investigates administrative problems," and "provides solutions" do not describe actual tasks and do not provide the detail required to determine exactly what problems were being investigated, and what solutions were involved. For 10% of the time, the appellant verifies completeness and accuracy of travel packages consisting of 13 sections with detailed information, and for another 10% of the time she oversees maintains the file tracking system. Her remaining duties are each performed 5% of the time or less. A review of her Performance Assessment Review indicates that her duties include being



administrative secretary to the Bureau Chief and Assistant Bureau Chief; preparing, filing and maintaining reports; preparing vouchers and justification for travel and training requests; preparing and proofing technical and statistical correspondence, letters and memorandum; receiving and responding to electronic mail; clerical support; receiving and maintaining files and requests from other agencies; preparing spreadsheets and reports; preparing written responses to matters involving daily operations; and preparing and maintaining a calendar of events and a roster of personnel. A review of the duties listed by DAS indicates that they reflect the majority of these duties, and are not at a professional level which would warrant a higher title. The appellant primarily provides essential secretarial and clerical support services consistent with the Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic title.

Lastly, the appellant refers to positions encumbered by Administrative Assistants 3 and Management Assistants who report to Captains and Lieutenants. The appellant's position stands on its own and is classified based on the duties she performs. The duties performed by other individuals, whether properly or improperly classified, are irrelevant in determining the proper classification of the appellant's position. Civil service rules only permit an employee the right to appeal the classification of the position he or she currently encumbers. *See N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9.*

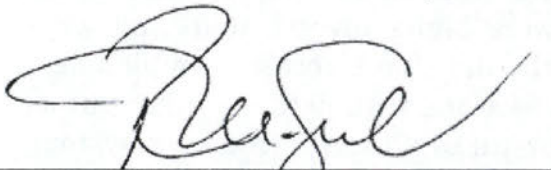
Accordingly, a thorough review of the entire record fails to establish that Elizabeth Weeast has presented a sufficient basis to warrant an Administrative Assistant 3 classification of her position.

### ORDER

Therefore, the position of Elizabeth Weeast is properly classified as a Secretarial Assistant 3, 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  
THE 16<sup>th</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Czedo', is written over a horizontal line.

Robert M. Czedo, Chairperson  
Civil Service Commission

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Robert M. Czech  
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June 1, 2017

Ms. Elizabeth Weeast  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Classification Determination – Elizabeth Weeast (000338832); Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic (24531C/A15); New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety; Division of State Police/Investigation Section; POS# [REDACTED] DAS# [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Weeast:

This is in response to the classification appeal submitted to this office on your behalf by Ms. Ruth Burkley, Personnel Assistant, Office of the Attorney General and received on December 15, 2016. The package indicates you are appealing your current permanent title of Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic (24531C/A15) and you believe the appropriate classification of your position is that of Administrative Assistant 3 (59903/P18) or Management Assistant (56492/P18).

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission, Division of Agency Services has conducted a review to determine the proper title classification of your position at the New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety, Division of State Police. This review is the result of information provided by yourself and the Appointing Authority including a recent performance assessment (PAR); organization chart of your work unit; and comments provided by yourself, and your immediate supervisor, on a Position Classification Questionnaire (DPF-44S).

**Organization:**

Your position's current title classification is that of Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic (24531C/A15). You are currently assigned to the Division of State Police / Investigation Section and your immediate supervisor is Captain Stanley Field.

**Findings of Fact:**

The primary responsibilities of the position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Provides confidential assistance to the Bureau Chief and Assistant Bureau Chief in regard to the administrative aspect of the bureau and its six specialized units. Maintains the bureau calendar. Verifies completeness and accuracy of travel documentation/packages of bureau employees.
- Provides support on document processing and correspondence – Receives, reviews, sorts and routs various correspondence (mail, phone calls, requests etc...)

- Reports issues and coordinates maintenance/repairs of office equipment (computers, printers etc...)
- Oversees and maintains the bureau filing tracking system.
- Other organizationally supportive duties including coordination/compilation of data and reports; serve as liaison between bureau command and personnel; troubleshoot discrepancies on a time sheet reporting system (TALRS) etc...

**Review and Analysis:**

The requested title(s) of the position are those of Administrative Assistant 3 (59903/P18) or Management Assistant (56492/P18). The definition section of the job classification specification for the title of Administrative Assistant 3 states:

Assists the head of a Bureau or Service in a state department, institution, or agency by performing and coordinating administrative support services; does other related work.

An employee serving in the title of Administrative Assistant 3 provides administrative support which includes para-professional level responsibilities including research, policy interpretation and fiscal procedures. The duties of the position in question are of a complex clerical nature including the processing of travel documentation, document processing; dissemination of correspondence; maintaining a calendar and ensuring office equipment issues are addressed. For this reason the duties of the position are not commensurate with the title of Administrative Assistant 3.

The definition section of the job classification specification for the title of Management Assistant states:

Under the direction of a manager in a state department, institution or agency, or within a local government jurisdiction, provides a wide range of administrative services in support of a manager(s) within the area of assignment; assists in the coordination of management/administrative activities of an assigned unit or work area; does other related duties.

An employee serving in the title of Management Assistant is assigned professional duties such as administrative research; identifying/analyzing and recommending solutions to operational problems and report preparation. Management Assistant work is typically assigned on a project basis. Although clerical work may be assigned to an employee serving in the title of Management Assistant, such work should not be the emphasis of the position. For these reasons, the duties of the position are not commensurate with the title of Management Assistant.

The current title of the position is that of Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic (24531C/A15). The definition section of the job classification specification for the title of Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic states:

May be assigned as a secretary to Assistant Division Directors, Bureau Chiefs, or their organizational equivalents; does other related duties.



An employee serving in the title of Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic provides complex clerical/secretarial support to a Bureau Chief (or the organizational equivalent). The position in question reports to Captain Stanley Field, who organizationally serves as the Bureau Chief of the State Police High Tech Crime Bureau of the Investigation Section. This aligns with the Secretarial Assistant Entitlement Plan for the Department of Law and Public Safety. For these reasons, the assigned duties of the position are commensurate with the title Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic.


**Determination:**

The review revealed the current duties and responsibilities assigned are commensurate with the attached job specification for the title of Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic (24531C/A15). This specification is descriptive of the general nature and scope of the functions which may be performed by an incumbent in this position. Please note the examples of work are for illustrative purposes and are not intended to restrict or limit the performance of related tasks not specifically listed. The relevance of such specific tasks is determined by an overall evaluation of their relationship to the general classification factors listed in the specification.

Therefore, it is determined the position is properly classified with the title of Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic (24531C/A15).

According to the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9), either the affected employee or the employee's authorized representative may appeal this determination within 20 days of receipt of this notice. This appeal should be addressed to Written Record Appeals Unit, Division of Merit System Practices and Labor Relations, P.O. Box 312, Trenton, New Jersey 086225-0312. Please note the submission of an appeal must include written documentation and/or argument substantiating the portions of the determination being disputed and the basis for appeal.

Sincerely,



Mark B. Van Bruggen,  
Supervising HR Consultant

Enclosure  
MVB

C: Mirella Bednar, Director of Human Resources  
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