



## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of  
Raymond Scott Montagano,  
Higher Education Student Assistance  
Authority

Classification Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2022-800

ISSUED: MAY 23, 2022 (RE)

Raymond Scott Montagano appeals the decision of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) which found that his position with the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) is properly classified as Senior Investigator, Student Loans. He seeks an Program Officer, Student Assistance job classification in this proceeding.

The appellant requested a review of his position as an Senior Investigator, Student Loans, the title to which he was regularly appointed on October 31, 2015. His position is located in the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center-Education, reports to an Assistant Director, Student Loan Programs, and has supervisory responsibilities over six Investigator, Student Loans incumbents. The appellant sought a reclassification of his position, alleging that his duties are more closely aligned with the duties of a Program Officer, Student Assistance, which is an unclassified title. Agency Services reviewed all documentation supplied by the appellant including his Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ), Performance Assessment Review (PAR) an organizational chart, and statements from a telephone audit with the appellant and his supervisor. Agency Services found that the primary duties of the appellant's position included supervising a team of investigators in a Call Center environment; preparing accurate, detailed reports of investigations; assigning daily tasks to Investigators and Collectors; participating in cross divisional meetings between HESAA staff and vendors; and serving on a team of experts for User Acceptance Testing of an upcoming load servicing system. Based on its review of the information provided, Agency

Services concluded that the appellant's position was properly classified as Senior Investigator, Student Loans.

On appeal to the Civil Service Commission (Commission), the appellant states that he was purposefully not given an updated PAR since 2019 until after his desk audit had been filed. The appellant states that, on numerous occasions from 2019 to present, he asked for an updated PAR to reflect changing job duties, but his requests for PAR updates were not responded to or acknowledged. He provides three emails asking for this information. He states that his supervisor believed he was requesting the title Program Administrator, rather than Program Officer.

He states that his job duties changed drastically from 2019 to present, as HESAA is in the process of implementing a new servicing system which led to the request for a desk audit. The process has been on-going since early 2019, and his responsibilities have been shifted almost solely to concentrate on this new operating system, with some very limited duties carrying over from Senior Investigator duties. He states that his employer considers this a "special project", with has no definition or limit in scope, and has been ongoing for almost three years. He states that he has been the team lead in diagnosing and providing error tickets to Decisive Edge.

He indicates that around January 2020, HESAA transitioned from writing requirements for the system to testing the system, and he was nominated to handle the task of testing and identifying the errors of the new system, along with creating a training manual to guide staff once the system rolled out.

He explains that in the implementation of the new servicing system, staff were assigned to test the new system and the current system for accuracy, and development. He served as the team lead for servicing in diagnosing those issues, and he provides a list of error tickets, pointing out that he has diagnosed and submitted more error tickets than anyone, and that there is no other employee that has worked on this system in this capacity. He argues that this work is more than a "special project."

## CONCLUSION

*N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e)* states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide 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 Senior Investigator, Student Loans states:

Under direction of a supervisory official in the Student Loan Office, New Jersey Higher Education Assistance Authority, Department of Higher Education, supervises the field and office work of Investigators, Student Loans involved in the collection of delinquent and defaulted accounts; personally makes investigations of the more difficult and complex cases; does related work as required.

The definition section of the job specification for an Program Officer, Student Assistance states:

Under general direction of an Assistant Director or other supervisory official, interprets and administers program rules and regulations for student assistance programs; monitors procedures used to disseminate student assistance information; prepares research reports on student assistance data; recommends improvements to operating systems to increase efficiency in accessing financial aid records; prepares correspondence and reports; performs other related duties as required.

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 currently assigned to a position.

A thorough review of the information presented in the record establishes that the appellant's position is properly classified as Senior Investigator, Student Loans based on his duties and responsibilities at the time of the classification review. In that regard, the appellant indicated on his PCQ, that for 22% of the time, he leads a team implementing Oracle Financial Services Lending and Leasing; for another 22% of his time, he is the lead analyst for the system, diagnosing and providing error tickets on system-wide errors; for 21% of the time, he coordinates daily meetings to test and diagnose system issues; for 9% of the time, he authors business requirements; for 7% of the time, he coordinates meetings between HESSA staff and Decisive Edge to discuss system issues; for 5% of the time he authors a matrix catalog of test accounts; for 4% of the time he is the point of contact for Americorp Program; for 4% of the time, he supervises staff and completes PARs; and for 6% of his time, he handles eCAT submissions. These duties differ significantly from those listed by Agency Services which found that the primary duties of the appellant's position included supervising a team of investigators in a Call Center environment; preparing accurate, detailed reports of investigations; and assigning daily tasks to Investigators and Collectors.

The supervisor of the appellant's position, the Assistant Director, Student Loan Programs, disagreed with the appellant's duties. He states that the appellant is a member of a team of subject matter experts for User Acceptance Testing for a new loan servicing system; the appellant is not the training lead of a team implementing Oracle Financial Services Lending and Leasing and did not author the training manual, but made recommendations as did all members of the team; the employee is not the lead for the system, diagnosing and providing error tickets on system-wide errors, but everyone is trained and responsible for submitting their own tickets; the appellant is not a business analyst and did not author the business requirements for the new system; every team member contributes to meetings between HESSA staff and Decisive Edge to discuss system issues; and, Americorp is a relief program and all relief programs are serviced by Senior Investigator, Student Loans or Investigator, Student Loans positions. The supervisor states that the primary responsibilities of the position are supervision of a team of Investigators, Student Loans in a Call Center environment, pointing out that three Senior Investigators, Student Loans each have a team and any Investigator, Student Loans can go to any supervisor for guidance. He states that there are two other Senior Investigators, Student Loans doing the same duties. The appellant's PAR supports that the appellant is supervising a team of Investigators, Student Loans in a Call Center environment. Further, the Program Manager/Division Director also disagreed with the appellant's description of duties, the provided percentages of time, and the requested title. Lastly, the appointing authority was not in agreement with the appellant. Regardless of this fact, either set of duties does not comport to the duties of a Program Officer, Student Assistance.

A program in State government is generally considered to involve a unit responsible for performing projects and activities which are necessary to carry out a purpose or goal set forth in regulations or by law, focusing on a definite activity, providing a service to a specific third party, and generally requiring allocated funding. *See In the Matter of Michele Prusik* (CSC, decided January 16, 2019). HESSA has by statute and administrative code, various grant and scholarship programs, student loan and college savings programs, and other programs which it manages. The Program Officer, Student Assistance was created to interpret and administer the program rules and regulations for student assistance programs, to monitor procedures used to disseminate student assistance information, to prepare research reports on student assistance data, to recommend improvements to operating systems to increase efficiency in accessing financial aid records, and to prepare correspondence and reports. The appellant's job duties as he describes them touches on some of these job duties, but this is not the primary focus of the position. The appellant is not interpreting and administering the program rules and regulations for student assistance programs. Rather, his major duties as *he* describes them are assisting in analyzing, diagnosing and providing error tickets on system-wide errors, implementing an operating system, and testing and diagnosing system issues. His description of duties is more closely related to a position in Information Technology

than Program Officer, Student Assistance. As such, the Commission cannot support the finding at this time that the position is properly classified as Program Officer, Student Assistance.

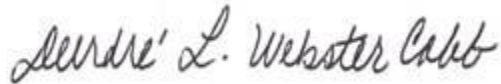
Accordingly, a thorough review of the entire record fails to establish that the appellant's position warrants a Program Officer, Student Assistance classification.

### **ORDER**

Therefore, the position of Raymond Scott Montagano is properly classified as an Senior Investigator, Student Loans.

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 18<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2022



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